

HIST 328: THE EARLY CHURCH TO 395
SYLLABUS FOR FALL 2006
INSTRUCTOR: PROF. MEGAN WILLIAMS
MWF 2:10-3:00

INSTRUCTOR:

Prof. Megan Williams

Office: Science 267B

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 3-5 PM, or by appointment

Contact: mhw@sfsu.edu (e-mail only; do not leave messages on my office voicemail)

PREREQUISITE:

ENG 214 required; minimum third-semester sophomore standing recommended

DESCRIPTION: Christian Church from its beginnings to the death of Theodosius I. Christian origins; orthodoxy and “Gnosticism”; the phenomenon of martyrdom; origins of monasticism; Trinitarian controversies; Church and Empire in the East.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

1. be familiar with the geography of the Mediterranean and Near East, with the basic outline of Roman history, and with major events, persons, and developments in the history of the Christian church from its origins to the end of the fourth century
2. be familiar with the types of evidence available for the early church (including documents, archaeological material, art, architecture, and literary evidence)
3. study, interpret and critically evaluate historical evidence in all these forms in its appropriate chronological, geographic and cultural contexts
4. read and critically evaluate modern scholarly interpretations and reconstructions of early church history in light of relevant evidence
5. recognize the limitations of evidence and understand the constraints these place upon historical reconstruction, and the limitations of working with translations
6. use research tools competently, including print reference books, electronic databases of books and journal articles, and appropriate internet resources
7. develop, formulate and investigate a specific historical question on a topic of significance in the history of the church in the first four centuries
8. produce a research paper presenting evidence and evaluating previous scholarly opinion in order to propose a persuasive and interesting answer to that question
9. further develop historical imagination and empathy, so as to enter into a real dialogue with the past rather than simply viewing past persons and events through the lens of present realities and values
10. become more aware of what is taken for granted in present cultures and of the limitations our own cultures place upon our imaginations and our critical faculties

BOOKS:

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Eerdmans, 2003.
Rousseau, Philip. *The Early Christian Centuries*. Longman, 2002.
Eusebius. *Life of Constantine*. Tr. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall. OUP, 1999.
Athanasius. *Life of Anthony and Letter to Marcellinus*. Tr. Robert Gregg. Paulist Press, 1979.
Bart Ehrman, ed. *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity*. OUP, 1998.
The HarperCollins Study Bible. HarperCollins, 1999. (Optional: you may substitute various other modern English Bible translations for the HCSB; please check with me to see if a specific Bible you already own is acceptable.)

COURSE POLICIES:

WEIGHTING OF ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE FINAL GRADE:

iLearn activities and participation in discussions	20%
Quiz (20 minutes)	5%
Midterm exam (50 minutes)	15%
Abstract	5%
Research paper	30%
Final exam (120 minutes)	25%

Assignment descriptions, guidelines, and other resources will be available online.

MISSED EXAMS, LATE PAPERS, ATTENDANCE AND EXCUSES:

All assignments **must** be completed to pass the course. Students who fail to complete any one assignment **automatically fail** the course. Papers are to be submitted **in class at 12:10 exactly**. Late papers will be penalized one full grade for every 24 hours late or fraction thereof (e.g., a B paper turned in on the due date at 12:11 pm will receive a grade of C). Papers submitted more than three days (72 hours) after the deadline will receive a grade of F regardless of quality. Regular attendance is necessary to pass the exams; the readings alone will not be sufficient. Attendance will be taken at discussion sessions, with two unexcused absences permitted during the semester. Every student should be prepared to participate in every discussion section; specific guidelines for preparation for each discussion will be posted online in advance. Participation grades will be based on grades for 4 discussions and 6 iLearn activities, for a total of up to 20 points towards the final grade. Make-up tests will be given, late writing assignments excused, and further absences excused, only in the case of **emergencies** documented by (1) an original, signed letter, on letterhead or its equivalent, from a medical professional (in case of illness) or (2) an original death certificate or notarized copy (in case of attendance at a funeral). **No other excuses of any kind will be accepted.**

BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM:

In order for the classroom to serve as a learning environment, students must be courteous to each other and to the instructor, and must show respect for the course material. For example, differences of viewpoint should be expressed with courtesy and without personal hostility; at the same time, students should show respect for the course material by accepting that intellectual debate and disagreement are not personal, but an essential

part of the learning process. Disruptive behavior is unacceptable at any time. This includes talking or making noise during lecture, leaving cell phones on during class, interrupting the instructor or other students, speaking at great length during discussions, and so on. Students who are disruptive will be asked to leave the room. Do not make a habit of coming to class late, leaving during class and returning, or leaving class early, as this is very disruptive to the instructor and to other students.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Integrity is essential to learning as it is to the good life. Its opposite in the academic context, dishonesty in the form of cheating or plagiarism, is unfair to your fellow students and is prohibited by the San Francisco State University Student Code of Conduct. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying other students' work and helping other students to cheat. All exams in this course will be closed-book; you may have only blank blue books and pens or pencils during the exam. Plagiarism means using someone else's work without proper acknowledgment (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism> for further discussion of the concept, and more resources). Students in this course are encouraged to work together in preparing for discussions and other group activities, reviewing for exams, and improving their writing, but should not contribute substantial content to other students' papers. Penalties for cheating and plagiarism range from, at minimum, a failing grade on the specific assignment, to expulsion from the University. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Chair and College Dean. Students are responsible for knowing the SFSU regulations concerning cheating and plagiarism, to be found at <http://www.sfsu.edu/~helpdesk/docs/rules/conduct.htm>.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) ACCOMMODATION:

The University is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodation to students with disabilities. The Disability Programs and Resources Center (DPRC) provides academic support services and specialized assistance to students with disabilities. In order to receive accommodation through the ADA, you must make a formal request through the DPRC in SSB 110 (415-338-2472). If you are registered with the DPRC, please let me know so that I can be prepared to accommodate you.

WARNING:

This syllabus is **for informational purposes only**. It is not a final statement of the policies, assignments, or schedule for this course. **Only the online course materials can be considered authoritative, and these are subject to change at any time.** Students are responsible for checking the online course materials regularly (at least three times a week) for any changes. If class must be cancelled, for example because I am ill, this will be announced online, and the syllabus will be adjusted appropriately.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1 (8/27-9/2/2006)

Wednesday: Introduction

Friday: Geography and climate

Take first iLearn quiz before class

Brown, 10-21 (e-reserve)

WEEK 2 (9/3-9/2006)

Monday: Labor Day, no class

Wednesday: Roman culture

Reading: Ferguson, 48-99

Friday: Video 1: *Roman City*

Reading: Ferguson, 100-136

WEEK 3 (9/10-16/2006)

Monday: Mediterranean religions

Reading: Ferguson, 161-234; optional: Apuleius, *Golden Ass*, book 11 (e-reserve)

Wednesday: Early Judaism

Reading: Ferguson, 373-405, 480-501; optional: 4 Ezra (in HCSB Apocrypha)

Friday: Video 2: *From Jesus to Christ*, episode 1

Reading: Ferguson, 502-532, 538-546; Rousseau, 7-14; optional: Rousseau, 1-22

WEEK 4 (9/17-23/2006) 30-60 CE

Monday: The New Testament as historical evidence

Quiz on map exercise and background material, 20 minutes

No reading

Wednesday: Paul's career and the first Jesus followers

Reading: Rousseau, 23-46; Galatians (Bible)

Friday: Discussion 1: Paul

Preparation: read 1 Corinthians 1-3.4, 7-8, 11-12, 15; review Galatians (Bible)

WEEK 5 (9/24-30/2006) 60-100 CE

Monday: The Gospels

Reading: Rousseau, 47-64; Gospel of Mark (Bible)

Wednesday: Jesus and the Jesus movements to 100 CE

Reading: Matthew 1-2, 5-7, 13, 21.1-11, 24-25, 26.47-56, 27.45-end; Luke 1-2, 6.17-49, 9.57-62, 10.25-42, 15.1-7, 19.28-44, 22.47-53, 23.39-end (Bible);

compare parallel passages between Mt, Lk, and Mk

Friday: Video 3: *From Jesus to Christ*, episode 2

Reading: Gen. 1-3; John 1.1-18, 2.13-25 (cf. parallels in Mt, Mk, Lk), 4.1-26, 12.12-19, 14-17, 19.28-end; Acts 1-2, 5.1-11, 9.1-22, 10-11.18, 14-15 (Bible)

WEEK 6 (10/1-7/2006) 100-140 CE

Monday: Social structure and dynamics of early Christian groups

Reading: Hopkins, "Christian Number" (e-reserve)

Wednesday: “Gnosticism” and the model of the philosophical circle
Reading: Ferguson, 300-315, 319-325; Gospel of Thomas (Ehrman, 237-244);
optional: Ferguson, 326-381
Friday: Discussion 2: Jesus movements and charismatic Christianities
Preparation: read Acts of Thecla (Ehrman, 278-284); review Gospel of Thomas

WEEK 7 (10/8-14/2006) 140-180 CE

Monday: “Orthodoxy” and the episcopal model
Reading: Rousseau, 84-103; Ignatius (Ehrman, 325-328); 1 Timothy (Bible)
Wednesday: Church, gender, and society
Reading: Rousseau, 103-123; Clement, *The Instructor*, selection (Ehrman, 387-399); Tertullian, *On the veiling of virgins*, selection (e-reserve); Eusebius, *Church History*, selection 1 (e-reserve)
Friday: Discussion 3: Gender and *cosmos* in the Christian imagination
Reading: Martyrdom of Perpetua (Ehrman, 42-50)

WEEK 8 (10/15-21/2006) 180-250 CE

Monday: Rise of the bishop
Reading: Rousseau, 124-136
Wednesday: Origen and “Alexandrian Christianity”
Reading: Rousseau, 136-152; Origen, *Homilies on Luke* and *Genesis* (Ehrman, 369-382), selections from *On First Principles* (Ehrman, 413-430)
Friday: **Midterm exam**

WEEK 9 (10/22-28/2006) 250-306 CE

Monday: Why were Christians persecuted?
Reading: Ferguson, 360-369, 547-549, 556-571; Origen, selections from *Against Celsus* (Ehrman, 82-94); *libelli* from Egypt (e-reserve); Eusebius, *Church History*, selection 2 (e-reserve)
Wednesday: Martyrdom and the consequences of persecution
Reading: Ferguson, 97-108; Rousseau, 153-167; Novatian, *On the Trinity* (Ehrman, 430-435); Eusebius, *Church History*, selection 3 (e-reserve)
Friday: Library research session (MANDATORY)
Meet at the library
Preparation: bring a list of keywords and ancient authors relevant to your topic (about 5 of each)

WEEK 10 (10/29-11/4/2006) 306-312 CE

Monday: Video 5: *From Jesus to Christ*, episode 4
Reading: Rousseau, 214-220; begin Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*
Wednesday: Constantine and the Church
Reading: Continue Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*
Friday: Discussion 3: Constantine’s conversion
Preparation: compare in detail Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, selection (e-reserve); Eusebius, *Church History*, selection 4 (e-reserve); *Panegyrici Latini*, selection (e-reserve); review *Life of Constantine* on conversion

WEEK 11 (11/5-11/2006) 312-339 CE

Monday: Early Arianism

Reading: Rousseau, 220-224; documents for the Arian Controversy I (e-reserve)

Abstracts due

Wednesday: The Council of Nicea and its aftermath

Reading: Rousseau, 224-231; continue Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*; Creed and Canons of the Council of Nicea (e-reserve)

Friday: Veterans' Day, no class

WEEK 12 (11/12-18/2006) Topics in fourth century Christianity

Monday: Origins of Asceticism

Reading: start *Life of Anthony*; review *Acts of Thecla*

Wednesday: Early Monasticism

Reading: continue *Life of Anthony*; Pachomian Rule (e-reserve)

Friday: Discussion 4: *Life of Anthony*

Reading: finish *Life of Anthony*; Anthony, *Letters* (e-reserve)

11/19-25/2006: Thanksgiving Break, no classes

WEEK 13 (11/26-12/2/2006) Topics in fourth century Christianity continued

Monday: Christianity outside the Roman empire

Reading: Agathangelos on Gregory the Illuminator (e-reserve)

Wednesday: Athanasius and the Cappadocians

Reading: TBA

Friday: No class (finish research papers)

WEEK 14 (12/3-9/2006) 340-363

Monday: The church under Constantius II

Reading: Auxentius, *Life of Ulfila*; documents for the Arian Controversy II (e-reserve)

Research papers due

Wednesday: Julian the Apostate

Reading: TBA

Friday: Discussion 5: Pagan Revival?

Reading: TBA

WEEK 15 (12/10-16/2006) 363-395

Monday: Theodosius I and the triumph of Nicea; Canons of Constantinople I, 381

Reading: TBA

Wednesday: Conclusion: church and emperor after Theodosius I

Reading: TBA

Friday: Review session for the final exam

PERSONAL PROFILE:

Name:

SFSU e-mail address:

Class rank:

Are you a transfer student?

What is your major? How and why did you choose it?

What was the last book you read for pleasure? Would you recommend it to someone else? Why or why not?

If you had a time machine, where would you go and why?

Why are you taking this class? What do you expect to enjoy most about it?