



CH501 Church History: The First Millennium

Short Syllabus

Instructor: Stephen L. Dolson-Andrew, PhD

Course Description

Church History 501: The First Millennium is a survey of the events, people, and ideas of Christianity from Jesus's ascension to the "Great Schism" of 1054. The focus is on mastering the key events and cultural contexts of each period and how they affected God's people. The course introduces the student to the challenges facing the church as it developed and the devotional legacies, writings, and leaders of the church's first millennium that resulted from it. Proctored final exam.

Estimated workload: For a student to do well in this course, the student will need to invest a total of 150 hours, or about 12 hours per week of reading, participating on the website, and writing papers.

Required Textbooks

Please obtain these books before the course begins. To find the lowest prices, you may find it helpful to use www.bookfinder.com.

Bass, Diana Butler. *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story*. New York: Harper Collins, 2009. ISBN 978-0-06-144871-3.

Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*: Popular Patristic Series. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980. ISBN 978-0-913836-74-3.

This text is available as a .pdf online, so there is no need to buy the book.

Gonzalez, Justo. *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2010. ISBN 978-0-06-185588-7.

Jenkins, Philip. *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa and Asia and How It Died*. New York: HarperOne, 2008. ISBN 978-0-06-147281-7. 297 pages. About \$15.

You will also need a fourth book for a book review chosen from the list below:

Augustine, *Confessions*. Varied publishers. Wide range of prices.

Ignatius of Antioch: *The Epistles of Ignatius*. Irenaeus of Lyon: *Against Heresies, Book 3*. Athanasius: *On the Incarnation*. **Report on all three**. These texts are in the Popular Patristic Series but also available as a .pdf online.

Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. London: Penguin Books, 1990 Revision. About \$14. A renowned work of history, it gives the flavor of the middle of the first millennium.

Boin, Douglas. *Coming Out Christian in the Roman World: How the Followers of Jesus Made a Place in Caesar's Empire*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-62040-317-4. \$19.99 pb, \$28 hardcover. Freewheeling but stimulating reappraisal of how the Roman Empire was Christianized.

Cahill, Thomas. *How The Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995. ISBN 978-0-385-41849-2. \$10.66 pb. An enjoyable if incomplete history.

Copan, Paul and Matthew Flannagan. *Did God Really Command Genocide? Coming to Terms with the Justice of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014. ISBN 978-0-0810-1622-6. \$16.99. A rigorous and thorough study of how Old Testament precedents affect Christian ethics on this subject.

Crossan, John Dominic, and Jonathan L. Reed. *In Search of Paul: How Jesus's Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004. ISBN 0-06-051457-4. \$13.65 pb. The very liberal Crossan is balanced by Reed's expertise on archaeology.

- Evans, Craig A., and Donald A. Hagner (eds.) *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith* (to page 252). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8006-2748-2. Solid evangelical study of a timeless subject.
- Kreider, Alan. *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8010-4849-4. \$22 est.
- Leithart, Peter J. *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8308-2722-0. \$23.82 pb.
- Menocal, Maria Rosa. *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002. ISBN 0-316-16871-8. Barnes and Noble, 10.66 pb. Very timely study even if a bit idealistic.
- Moss, Candida. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: HarperOne, 2013. A challenging account by a young scholar that needs critiquing. About \$26 hardcover, \$10.58 pb.
- Walker, Williston, and Richard A. Norris, David W. Lotz, and Robert T. Handy. *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. New York: Scribner's, 1985. ISBN 0-684-18417-6. A brand-new hardcover will cost \$50, but used copies are available on Amazon from \$7.45.

Requirements and assignments

1. **Read the lessons.** They will be posted each Monday for ten weeks.
2. **Read the textbooks.** Students should allow about five hours per week.
3. **Quiz.** Open book, multiple choice quiz. (10% of final grade.)
4. **Two Book Reports.** One on the text by Jenkins, the other selected from the list of additional texts. Each report will be worth 20% of the final grade.

5. **Participate in forum discussions.** Part of the learning that occurs in a course comes through discussion and interaction with other students. In an online course, this is done through comments posted on a discussion forum. This is 10% of the final grade.
6. **Final exam in Week Eleven** consisting of a multiple answer quiz (see above) worth 25 points and a 15 point 3-page response paper totaling 40 points—15 for the response paper and 25 for the quiz.