

HIST 235; RS 240; CHRISTIAN HISTORY
FALL 2015: TTH 1:00-2:20
CGR 1302

Instructor Contact Information:

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(Email is the easiest way to contact me)

Office Hours Office Hours: Wednesday 3:-4:30 (Or other times by appointment or luck)

- You can find the syllabus for this course on [the course's learn page](#) .

This course will survey the history of Christianity from its Mediterranean origins in the first century through its contemporary global nature. This broad chronological approach will allow us to consider the major events and trends in the history of Christianity, including the early Church and its growth in the Roman Empire; the Orthodox Churches; Medieval Christianity in the West; Early Modern reforming movements; modern Christianity; and the contemporary church. Although there will be more coverage of the western Christian traditions, the course will try to be globally inclusive whenever possible.

The learning objectives for the semester will be to understand:

- the basic outline and course of Christian History over the past 2,000 years;
- how Christianity has been shaped by changing social, political, and cultural contexts;
- the ways that Christianity has, in turn, shaped the surrounding society, politics, and culture;
- a variety of scholarly interpretations of Christian history.

By the end of the course, you should have gained an appreciation for the values of past societies, learned how historians piece together the past, and gained an appreciation for the difficult nature of historical argumentation. It is my hope that you will have learned some of the historian's craft and that you will have developed the skills of "thinking historically."

Studying any period of Christian history can help us think more clearly about our own convictions. However, this class is not intended to promote a particular belief or criticize the religious traditions of others. The historical legacy of the Church is still tangible today, but this course's primary focus is on the past. As with all historical writing, it is impossible for us to completely abandon our own commitments and presuppositions. Nonetheless, I hope that we can approach the topic with a certain amount of intellectual detachment, while, at the same time acknowledging that Christianity continues to be important to many people.

GRADED REQUIREMENTS: This course is designed to foster critical thinking and communication skills that are central to your education in the Liberal Arts tradition and will be important to your life after university. During the semester, you will read challenging texts and be encouraged to think carefully about the ideas and evidence of the sources. You should, in turn, also, skillfully communicate your analysis of the material **in discussions** and when writing your **exams**. I have tried to design this course in a manner that allows you to show me what you have learned and to give you the opportunity to improve in your analysis and communication.

Attendance– 10 percent total: Excused absences are those caused by documented illness, family/personal emergencies, or participation in college-sponsored activities. (The supervisor of the activities must provide a letter stating the dates, times, and details of the absences.) In the case of excused absences, it will always be possible to make-up exams, quizzes, or papers. Up to three excused absences per semester are acceptable. If you will have to miss more than this, see me as soon as possible. **Unexcused absences** are inevitable, but more than three absences *will result in a lowering of your attendance grade* by 3 points per absence.

Reading Quizzes – 5 percent total (average of quiz scores): In order to encourage you to come prepared with the readings, I will quiz you on the Chidester text on the days that it is assigned. These quizzes will not be designed to be tricky or obscure, but will reward reading of the texts.

Three Exams – 75 percent total: The exams will be a combination of short answer objective questions and longer analytical essays, with the analytical portion of the exam worth more than the objective section. The questions will draw from assigned readings, discussions, and lectures. They will reward you for your ability to illustrate comprehension of and think critically about the course content. I will distribute study guides at least one week before the day of the exam.

Short Paper = 10 percent Total:

There will be a short paper (ca. 4-6 pages) evaluating Philip Jenkins' book, *The Lost History of Christianity*. Students will analyze Jenkins' argument in light of previous course material. Students will receive additional information on the assignment later in the semester.

NOTE: You must attend class regularly, take **all** exams, and participate in an informed manner in order to pass the course. If you think that you may have difficulties fulfilling aspects of the course, see me as soon as possible (that is, before it becomes a problem!).

HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

Attendance: In order to master the course material, it is important that you attend all class sessions and come prepared to participate *actively* in the day's discussion. If you are to become a critical learner, you should try to enter into an active conversation with the material and the other students in the course. The class schedule indicates which readings you will be discussing and I will try to provide study questions for the readings in advance. *Remember, asking informed questions is an important part of active participation.*

Read the course materials: The literature and background material we read will provide us with the common ground upon which we base our conversations. Without that common ground, our conversations will lose some of their richness. **You are *expected* to bring the appropriate books or printouts with you to class.** If overall participation wanes, I may decide to introduce additional quizzes and in-class writing assignments to encourage you to keep up with the reading and to aid class participation.

Late Work: In order that you get prompt feedback on your work, I encourage you to complete all of your assignments on time. In the rare circumstance of a documented family or medical emergency, I will grant an extension. In such a circumstance, you should contact me **as soon as possible** in order to make alternate arrangements. Otherwise, late work will be marked 1/3 grade off for every day that it is late. A mark that would have been an 85 will become an 82 for a paper that is one day late. Remember...it is always better to turn something in late than to get zero points for an assignment. You cannot make up a missed exam without an excused absence form.

Miscellaneous: Since discussion will be so important in our time together, it is important that *respect* and *courtesy* characterize all of our interactions. Disagreement and dissent are vital to the intellectual life of a university and I welcome both. While disagreement may make us uncomfortable, it can make learning meaningful, interesting, and fun. Diverse views can make us think more deeply about the basis of our opinions and give us practice in the kind of debate that lies at the heart of a democratic society. Even so, disagreement and dissent must be expressed in ways that remain respectful of other people and of their right to hold different opinions.

Another way to show respect is by arriving on time instead of straggling late and interrupting the class proceedings. If you arrive late, please enter unobtrusively and take the first available seat so as not to distract the rest of the class. In addition, students should not start packing up their notes and books until I have excused them. Make sure to turn off all cell phones before class starts. If you have to leave early or are expecting an important phone call, please let me know before class begins. You are welcome to bring something to drink with you (no food please), but make sure that you clean up after yourself. If you take notes on a laptop, please make sure that you limit your computer use to course content. I would strongly encourage students to take notes by hand since laptop use [distracts other students](#) around you, and you [learn more when taking notes by hand](#).

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Other sources of information for students:

[Academic Integrity website \(Arts\)](#)

[Academic Integrity Office \(UWaterloo\)](#)

Turnitin.com: Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course. *If you do not want to use Turnitin*, you may email the assignment directly to me before the start of class on the day that the assignment is due. Should you choose the alternate method, you must let me know by September 22.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Finally: If you have questions about *anything* this semester, ASK ME. If you are unsure about whether you should ask me about something, you are better off checking with me.

The following required texts are available in The Bookstore:

David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*

Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity*

	TOPIC	READINGS
September 15	Course Introduction: Orientation	Syllabus
September 17	Religious currents in the Mediterranean World	Chidester, 1
September 22	The Jesus Movement	Chidester, 2-3
September 24	The Early Church	Chidester 4-6
September 29	Imperial Religion, part 1	Chidester, 7,8
October 1	Imperial Religion, part 2	Chidester, 9, 10
October 6	EXAM ONE	
October 8	Rise of Christendom	Chidester, 11, 12
October 13	Byzantine and Islam	
October 15	Christian Culture and Society in the West part one	Chidester, 13, 14
October 20	Christian Culture and Society in the West, part two	Chidester, 15, 16, 17
October 22	Reform, Renewal, or Restoration?	Chidester 18, 19
October 27	Catholic Response and Resurgence	

October 29	Lost Christianity	Jenkins – All Jenkins Paper due!
November 3	EXAM TWO	
November 5	Christianity and Modernity: Orientation	Chidester, 20
November 10	Global Christianity – Latin America	Chidester, 21
November 12	Global Christianity – Russia	Chidester 22
November 17	Global Christianity – North America	Chidester, 23
November 19	Global Christianity – Africa	Chidester 24
November 24	Global Christianity -- Asia	Chidester, 25
November 26	Global Christianity -- India	Chidester 26
December 1	Twentieth-century challenges	Chidester, 28, 29
December 3	Twenty-first-century horizons	Chidester, 30

Exam #3—Date during exam period will be announced