



History of Christianity, 100-1300

WOH 3233
Fall 2025

Instructor: Zachary Young

Course Description: What did it mean to be a “good Christian” throughout the first 1200 years of Christianity? By reading primary sources from Europe, Asia, and Africa, this course traces the images of sanctity that were developed, conceptualized, and contested within the global Christian movement from c. 100-1300. Ultimately, this course aims to contextualize the contemporary practice of Christianity by examining the historical discourse surrounding emergent models of Christian holiness and orthodoxy.

Course Meets: Tuesdays, 8:30-10:25am, and Thursdays, 9:35-10:25am, in Keene-Flint 0119 (3 credits)

Instructor Contact Information: I am accessible and responsive to any student needs, concerns, or questions. You can reach me by email at young.zachary@ufl.edu. I will hold office hours at (time TBA); if you would like to arrange a meeting at a different time, please email me or talk to me after class.

Course Objectives: Students in this class will develop their knowledge and skills in terms of:

- Understanding the main themes, developments and narratives of Christianity from 100-1300;
- Reading primary sources and engaging with their perspectives;
- Learning how to ask good questions;
- Conducting independent research; and
- Thinking with history and historicizing contemporary practices.

Grading and Assignments: My grading rubric for this course is as follows.

Attendance (20%). I will take attendance in class! I will drop one absence. To be excused, subsequent absences require a doctor's note. Please make every effort to be on time to class.

Church observation (30% overall -- 10% each). For each of these three assignments, I will ask you to reflect on the ways that the topics we are discussing in class are reflected in contemporary Christian practice. I will be asking you to look at contemporary practice as a **historian**, not as a worshiper or as an anthropologist. How did these contemporary practices evolve as a result of the historical processes that we are discussing? To what extent are the conflicts and tensions that we are discussing still reflected in contemporary practices? What are the continuities and changes that you observe between historic and contemporary Christianity? Why have these elements either changed or remained the same?

For each church observation assignment, please complete the following steps:

1. Pick a local church and attend a service at that church. You should pick a different type of church for each of the three assignments. At least two of these churches should be unfamiliar (i.e. not a tradition that you practice or have practiced). If you need help identifying a local church, please consult with me. You can also do this part of the assignment with your classmates. **NB: When you attend each service, remember to gather a proof-of-attendance (selfie, copy of worship aid, etc.) that you will submit with your assignment.**
2. Reflect on your experience and identify at least three characteristics of the service that you can connect to our discussions in class. You can collaborate with your classmates for this part of the assignment.
3. Research the historical evolution of the characteristics that you have identified (i.e. historicize them). Some starting places might include denominational websites; religious encyclopedias; etc. If you need help finding research resources, please consult with me. This research should be your own work. It is strongly encouraged to have an informal conversation with pastoral leadership in that church (i.e. immediately after the service, or arranged via email) to engage their perspective on the historical evolution of the characteristics that you have identified. Extra points will be given if you include such a conversation in your writeup.
4. Write a 1000-word summary of the characteristics you have identified, the historical evolution of those characteristics, and the broader historical questions that are engaged by your insights. Submit this to Canvas along with your proof of attendance. I will grade for engagement with course themes, for depth of research, and for writing style. These assignments will be due on **Thursday, September 18th**; on **Thursday, October 16th**; and on **Thursday, November 6th at class time** (submit via Canvas).

Christian Texts Project (50%). This project will ask you individually – and the class as a whole – to examine primary sources from the time period of this course, read them closely, and broadly contextualize them. This assignment is made up of the following components:

1. Topic selection (5%: graded for completion). Identify **three** Christian texts from the time period of this course that you would be interested in annotating. Some of the best resources for searching for and identifying these texts are: [Early Christian Writings](#); [New Advent](#); [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#); [Internet Medieval Sourcebook](#); and so on. Sections of texts listed on the syllabus are off limits (you may request to annotate a different portion of one of the text from the syllabus). Submit your three selected texts in order of preference by **Tuesday, September 2nd, at class time, via Canvas**. I will then respond to you confirming which text, out of the three you selected, that you will use for your project.
2. Highlight the points you intend to annotate (5%: graded for completion). Read your assigned text and highlight 20 points (sentences, phrases, words) that are interesting in some way and that invite comment. Submit your text (or section of the text) with these highlights made. For one of the highlighted points, write a paragraph-long (150 word) annotation in which you explain why this phrase is interesting, contextualize it, relate it to something we talked about in class or to contemporary Christian practice, etc. You may wish to do outside research for these annotations, but it is not strictly required. At the bottom of your paragraph, provide 3 keywords. **Due Thursday, October 2nd, at class time, via Canvas**.

The purpose of this phase is for you to practice annotations and for me to provide feedback on your annotations before you move into the completion of the broader project. I will provide a sample of a highlighted and annotated text. Note that, especially for a longer text, you may wish to draw your 20 points of interest from a particular section instead of from the entire text. Please email me if you would like to change your selected text at this phase of the project.

3. Annotate the text (30%). Complete your individual project by writing 150-word annotations for each of the 20 points that you selected (or other points that you wish to select). Be sure to include keywords for each annotation. **Due Thursday, November 13th, at class time, via Canvas**.
4. Analyze the broader corpus of texts (10%). I will upload every text together with its annotations to digital humanities software. Starting on November 16th, you will be able to access all of your classmates' annotations, organized by keywords. This part of the project asks you to browse your classmates' annotations and identify and analyze key themes. After this analysis, write a 1000-word paper identifying what you feel are the most important through-lines across this corpus of texts, the stories these through-lines tell about the development of Christianity, and the way that these historic texts contextualize contemporary Christianity. **Due Wednesday, December 3rd, at 11:59pm, via Canvas**.

A course grade > 93% will earn an A. A course grade between 90% and 93% will earn an A-. Between 87% and 90% will earn a B+. Between 83% and 87% will earn a B, and so on. Here are the current UF grading policies for converting grades into grade points:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradestext>

Course Materials: All required readings will be posted on Canvas.

Schedule for Readings and Discussions: See the following table. We will read each day's readings together in class; you are encouraged (but not required) to read these readings before our class meeting.

Week 0: Introduction

Thursday, August 21 st	What does it mean to be a "good Christian" from a historian's perspective? How do the characteristics of a "good Christian" change over time?	Syllabus review
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Week 1: Judaism and Christianity

Tuesday, August 26 th	<p>To what extent did one need to be Jewish to be a good Christian?</p> <p>To what extent did one need to be *not Jewish* to be a good Christian?</p>	<p><i>Acts of the Apostles</i>, ch. 11, 13, 15, 16, 28</p> <p><i>Didache</i>, nn. 7-10, 14-15</p> <p><i>Letter of Barnabas</i>, ch. 13-17; also 2-5</p>
Thursday, August 28 th	How was the idea of Judaism continually contested within the Church?	<p><i>Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History</i>, Book III, ch. 28</p> <p><i>Jerome, Letter to Augustine</i>, ch. 4</p> <p><i>Memorial of the Jews of Visigothic Spain to King Recceswinth</i></p>

Week 2: Christianity and Hierarchy

Tuesday, September 2 nd	<p>To what extent did "good Christianity" constitute obedience to the hierarchy?</p> <p>Topic Selection Due</p>	<p><i>Ignatius, Letter to the Trallians</i>, ch. 2-3, 12-13</p> <p><i>Irenaeus, Against Heresies</i>, Book III, ch. 3</p> <p><i>Epistle of Clement</i>, ch. 40-44</p> <p><i>Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition</i></p>
Thursday, September 4 th	Who was uncomfortable with Christian hierarchy, and why?	<p><i>Tertullian, On Modesty</i>, ch. 21</p> <p><i>Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History</i>, Book V, ch. 16</p>

Week 3: Martyrdom

Tuesday, September 9 th	Could only martyrs become good Christians?	<u><i>The Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>, ch. 1, 6, 9-18</u> <u><i>The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity</i>, no. 2-3, 7-10, 15-21</u>
Thursday, September 11 th	Was the exaltation of martyrdom considered to be spiritually dangerous?	<u>Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>, Book VI, ch. 2-3, 8</u> <u>Augustine, <i>Tractates on the Gospel of John</i>, tr. 11, no. 15</u> <u>Eulogius, <i>Defense of the Martyrs</i> (excerpts)</u>

Week 4: Christianity and the Scriptures

Tuesday, September 16 th	How did good Christians utilize the Scriptures?	<u>Justin Martyr, <i>First Apology</i>, ch. 55-58</u> <u>Jerome, <i>Prologue of the Commentary to Isaiah</i></u> <u>Augustine, <i>Confessions</i>, Book VIII, no. 29</u>
Thursday, September 18 th	Who contested the Scriptures and why? First Church Observation Paper Due	<u><i>The Gospel of Thomas</i></u> <u>Muratorian Canon</u> <u>Irenaeus, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book I, chapter 27</u>

Week 5: Monasticism

Tuesday, September 23 rd	Was monasticism perceived as the purest form of Christianity?	<u>Athanasius, <i>Life of Anthony</i>, no. 1-5, 12-15, 46-47, 92-94</u> <u><i>Apophthegmata Patrum</i> (excerpts)</u>
Thursday, September 25 th	How and why did later monasticism differ from earlier monasticism?	<u><i>Rule of St. Benedict</i>, ch. 1, 5, 20</u> <u>Gregory, <i>Life of Benedict</i>, ch. 2</u>

Week 6: Christianity and Secular Authority

Tuesday, September 30 th	Was Romanness a sign of authentic Christianity?	<u>Eusebius, <i>Life of Constantine</i>, ch. 24-32; 41-42</u> <u><i>Donation of Constantine</i></u>
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Thursday, October 2 nd	(How) did Greco-Latin and Syriac Christianities diverge? Annotation Highlighting Due	<u>Texts of the Persian Martyrs</u> <u>Demonstration of Aphrahat, no. 17</u> Liturgical and artistic comparison (handout)
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Week 7: Ecumenical Councils

Tuesday, October 7 th	How did ecumenical councils shape orthodoxy?	<u>Canons of the Council of Nicaea</u> <u>Canons of the Council of Chalcedon</u> <u>Canons of the Second Council of Nicaea</u>
Thursday, October 9 th	Who “lost” ecumenical councils?	<u>Dioscorus, Letter to the Monks</u> <u>Liturgy of St. Basil (Coptic)</u>

Week 8: Global Missions in the First Millennium

Tuesday, October 14 th	How did Christianity spread beyond the Mediterranean world? What did it mean to be a “good Christian” beyond the Mediterranean?	<u>Bede, Ecclesiastical History of the English People, book 1, ch. 23, 25-27; book 5, ch. 9, 15</u> <u>Boniface, Letters</u> <u>Life of Constantine [Cyril], ch. 16</u> <u>Nicholas I, Response to the Bulgarians, ch. 4-15</u>
Thursday, October 16 th	How did the “losers” of ecumenical councils develop the notion of a “good Christian?” Second Church Observation Paper Due	<u>Auxentius, On the Life and Work of Ulfila</u> <u>Xi'an Stele</u> <u>Garima Gospels</u>

Week 9: Papal Authority

Tuesday, October 21 st	What was the role of the Pope in ordering (Latin) Christianity?	<u>Gregory VII, Letter to Henry IV</u> <u>Excommunication of Cerularius</u> <u>Decrees of the 4th Lateran Council</u>
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		<u>Boniface VIII, <i>Unam Sanctam</i></u>
Thursday, October 23 rd	How did non-Latin Christians relate to the Pope?	Guest lecture (details TBA)

Week 10: The Crusades

Tuesday, October 28 th	Did being a “good Christian” require living in Jerusalem?	<u>Urban II, <i>Clermont Speech</i></u> <u><i>The Deeds of the Franks</i>, ch. 1, 14, 17-18</u> Jerusalem-inspired art and architecture (handout)
Thursday, October 30 th	How did the Crusades exacerbate differences within Christianity?	<u>Anna Comnena, <i>Alexiad</i>, book 11, ch. 2</u> <u>Pope Innocent III, <i>Letter to Peter</i></u>

Week 11: Mendicants

Tuesday, November 4 th	How could a city-dweller live the Gospel?	<u>Thomas of Celano, <i>First Life of St. Francis</i> (excerpts)</u> <u>Francis of Assisi, <i>Testament</i></u>
Thursday, November 6 th	What other ways of life were developed by medieval laity? Third Church Observation Paper Due	<u>Conversion of Peter Waldo</u> <u>Caesarius of Heisterbach, <i>Dialogue on Miracles</i>, Book V, ch. 20-22</u>

Week 12: Christianity and other religions

Tuesday, November 11 th	Holiday – Veterans’ Day – No Class	
Thursday, November 13 th	Were members of other religions just “bad Christians?” Annotations Due	<u>John of Damascus, <i>On Heresies</i> (excerpts)</u> <u>Peter the Venerable, <i>Refutation of the Heresy of the Saracens</i> (excerpts)</u> Christian texts on the Talmud (handout)

Week 13: Scholasticism

Tuesday, November 18 th	How was a university student to live the Gospel?	<u>Abelard, <i>History of My Calamities</i>, ch. 6-7</u>
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		<u>Bernard of Clairvaux, <i>On Loving God</i></u> <u>Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>, Second Part of the Second Part, no. 189</u>
Thursday, November 20 th	What were the liturgical and ritual developments of the high medieval period?	<u>Abbot Suger, <i>On Administration</i>, ch. 26-27</u> <u>William Durandus, <i>Explanation of the Divine Offices</i>, pg. 1-11 (PDF 143-153)</u> High medieval art and architecture (handout)

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break – No Class

Week 15: Conclusion

Tuesday, December 2 nd	Conclusions: how has “good Christianity” changed over time? How was “good Christianity” related to the teachings and ministry of Jesus? Reflection on Annotations due Wednesday, 12/3 at 11:59pm	
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Course Disclaimer: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.

For students with disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways: 1. The email they receive from GatorEvals, 2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or 3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluer.com>. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will

be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Campus Resources: U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress. Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website. University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website. GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.