



Nipawin Bible College
GE212 Reformation to the Present
Instructor: Mr. David J. Smith
Winter 2019
3 Credit Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Even though evangelical Christians typically ignore, or at best downplay, our historical roots, we are the progeny of formative days and people long past. For better or worse, Christian history shows us how we came to be where, and who, we are today. Thus, the story of the Church is not only its continued witness to the first century events of Jesus' ministry, but also the activities, theological developments, struggles and triumphs of successive generations of believers. In examining the traditions, rituals, doctrines and thought that came out of these times, we establish a better context for understanding Christianity in our own times. If a principle theme is to emerge it will be how the Christian community of each generation and culture dealt (and deals) with the tension of translating and accommodating the Gospel to the specific culture and society with which it interacts, while at the same time speaking prophetically in calling a people to a counter culture faith. This course is a survey of the history of the Church (Christianity) from the Reformation through to the present day, including the emergence of contemporary denominations and Church issues.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2, The Reformation to the Present*. Revised and updated. New York: HarperCollins, [1985] 2010. [pp. 7-530]

THE BIG QUESTION

How will the contemporary believer establish a more informed context for understanding the Christian faith in his or her own time?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

With successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Improve their knowledge of the development and spread of the Christian community;
2. Comprehend with clearer insight the nature of Christian identity from believers who lived out their faith in the dialectic of cultural appropriation and confrontation;

3. Develop greater skill in the craft of historical research and writing through responsible evaluation and interpretation of primary source documents, and through critical engagement with the work of other historians and theologians;
4. Appraise with greater critical insight the Christian faith as it moved (and continues to move) across cultures and through time.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All written assignments are to be word-processed on a computer in accordance with the prescribed requirements in the NBC *Student Handbook*. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, spelling and the student's ability to follow instructions. Times New Roman font is required. Pagination is a must. All assignments are due no later than 5:00 PM on the day specified.

1. **Church Biographical Timeline (20%).** To enhance the student's appreciation of this course material, and its connection to present realities, design a chronological timeline of your home church that records the dates of major persons, events, significant ministries begun/ended, splits and documents. In other words, whatever has contributed to shaping the life and character of your Church. Potentially outstanding efforts will antedate the actual beginnings of the local congregation in view. This assignment concerns itself with content and organization, not analysis. Creativity is encouraged. A title page is not required, but the important information (your name, instructor's name, course name and assignment title) must be clearly provided.

Due: Wednesday, Mar. 20, 2019

2. **Textbook Reading (25%).** Each student is expected to read the course text, *The Story of Christianity* vol. 2 by Gonzalez in its entirety. Having done so, in 3 full pages provide a summary and critique of the book that assesses its value as a resource in understanding the expansion of Christianity from the Reformation through to the present day. Students are expected to exercise a good measure of Christian **and** academic charity and respect when disagreeing with scholars. An excellent critique will include the following components.

- Begin by providing the basic bibliographic data (in proper form) along with the total number of pages (not percentage) you have read.
- Your first paragraph should identify the author and give their credentials for writing the book. This need not be extensive.
- State the subject of the book as well as the intended audience. This can be accomplished in one well-written sentence.
- *Briefly* (but adequately) summarize the book in terms of the content read.
- Then, evaluate the clarity and content of the book by thinking through such questions as: Does the author write in such a way as to explain concepts, facts and historical circumstances and situations clearly? Is this work balanced and comprehensive? Does the author effectively develop the

subject and the intended purpose? Does the author provide insightful analysis? Have my presuppositions been affirmed or challenged? Has reading this material impacted my worldview? Does this book's content provoke me to think in terms of personal application? What is one significant aspect of this period in church history that the author has helped you to see and understand which you did not previously grasp? And do you recommend this book as a serious resource on this subject? Why or why not?

- Do not consult outside sources or book reviews.
- A title page.

Due: Friday, Mar. 1, 2019

3. Research Paper (35%). This assignment is a standard historical paper in which students will select a topic that falls within the parameters of church history from the era of the Reformation through to the present day. Select a topic early giving consideration to such *critical* factors as personal interest, prior knowledge and the availability of source documents. Broad categories might include some missionary endeavor, a personality, a document, a theological issue, or some unique movement (eg. asceticism, revivalism, monasticism, a phase of church architecture). Begin narrowing your topic by asking yourself, "What do I want to know about this topic?"

This is a scholarly assignment in which the student is expected to research data, interpret it and fit it into a coherent and extended discussion/argument. Therefore, this paper is not simply a report of an event or the retelling of someone else's work; rather, it is a critical work in which you will present a clear thesis (an interpretive truth claim) and then use your sources to support your claim. It is important that your thesis deal with some interpretive dispute. Avoid simply restating a position that is overwhelmingly agreed upon.

Your essay will be 12 pages in length and supported by a minimum of 10 relevant sources. It is highly recommended that you work from the bibliography provided. Your link to "Galaxie" may help. Confine your use of the World Wide Web to primary sources documents. Exercise discernment in its use. Without question, Wikipedia is unacceptable as a legitimate resource.

Due: Friday, Feb. 15, 2019.

4. Local Church Visit (20%). This assignment is designed to give the student exposure and perspective to faith traditions and worship practices that are both historic and outside the Free Church movement. Throughout this winter semester visit two (2) of these five churches in Nipawin: Zion Lutheran Church, St. John's Anglican Church, St. Eugene Roman Catholic Church, Ukrainian Catholic Church of All Saints, or United Church. You must identify the church you visit by name. As follow-up to *each* of your visits write a full 3-page summary (6 pages in total) which answers the following questions:

- What are some ways in which this church service differed from the one you are accustomed to regularly attending?

- What was *one* aspect of this experience that you were unfamiliar with, but appreciated being incorporated into the church service? Explain.
- Did the church's architecture or aesthetics contribute or detract from your worship experience? Why do you think that was so?
- What *one* component did the whole worship service seem to revolve around? Why do you think this was so?
- If you had the opportunity to ask the priest/minister, or member of that congregation, one question, what would it be?

Remember, you will be a guest visiting another church and participating in a Christian tradition different from your own. Make every effort to be respectful and a positive representative of NBC and the Lord Jesus.

Due: Thursday, Apr. 4, 2019

These assignments represent approx. 530 pages of textbook reading and 18+ pages of written work.

CALENDAR OF LECTURES/READING SCHEDULE

Wed. Jan. 30 Syllabus/Why Study Church History?

Thur. Jan. 31 The Age of Reformation(s)

Wed. Feb. 6 Reformation(s) cont.

Thur. Feb. 7 Reformation(s) cont.

Fri. Feb. 8 A Fractionated Orthodoxy

Wed. Feb. 13 The Pietist Leaven

Thur. Feb. 14 The Pietist Leaven cont.

Fri. Feb. 15 In Search of Rationalism

Thur. Feb. 28 In Search of Rationalism cont.

Fri. Mar. 1 The Evangelical Impulse: Awakenings, Revival and Revivalism

Wed. Mar. 6 Evangelical Impulse cont.

Wed. Mar. 20 Evangelical Impulse cont.

Thur. Mar. 21 The Missionary Endeavour

Thur. Mar. 28 Missionary Endeavour cont.

Fri. Mar. 29 The Nineteenth Century: That Long Century

Thur. Apr. 4 Nineteenth Century cont.

Fri. Apr. 5 The Twentieth Century

Wed. Apr. 10 Twentieth Century cont.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Refer to the *NBC Student Handbook 2018-2019*

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Refer to the *NBC Student Handbook 2018-2019*

Please note: If you are hindered in any way because of a learning disability please speak with the course instructor as soon as possible. It is their desire to develop strategies that accommodate your need and make your learning experience as rewarding as possible.

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In addition to these titles, students are directed toward the numerous volumes of *Christian History* available in the reference section of our library, as well as the excellent "Suggested Readings" section of your text.