

# **CH 505 - American Church History**

## **Online Course Syllabus**

New Geneva Theological Seminary  
Dr. Dominic A. Aquila

### **Course Description**

This course will consider topics such as: the transition of European churches to America; the development of theological, liturgical, social and political issues; the nature and influence of Puritanism; separation of church and state; awakenings and revivals; the development of the church on the frontier; liberalism, fundamentalism, neo-orthodoxy, and contemporary evangelicalism.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To acquaint students with the major personalities, schools of thought, political, social and cultural trends that characterizes the period of our study?
2. To widen students' comprehension of the historian's role as a creative and discerning thinker.
3. To increase students understanding of past discussions about pivotal issues and doctrines of the church.
4. To expand students' awareness of the lives of men and women of the past who knew God through Jesus Christ.

### **Course Text**

Noll, Mark A., *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Eerdmans, 1992).

### **Course Requirements**

1. The careful reading of the text. Students will submit a 500-word report summarizing and briefly assessing each reading assignment.
2. Throughout the course there will be a number of small papers due related to people, events, or movements. You will find information first in your text and then you may use other books or articles on the web. All papers should be double spaced and conform to Turabian style. No title page or bibliography is required for these short papers. Footnotes are optional.
  - a. Read the Mayflower Compact and write 800-1200 words assessing this document in light of its time.
  - b. Read the Cambridge Platform of 1648 and write 1500-2000 words assessing the importance of this document and its significance.
  - c. Read "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards; write 800-1200 words evaluating the sermon and its importance.
  - d. Read about George Whitefield and his ministry in the American colonies and his impact and influence on the Great Awakening. Write a 1500-2000-word report.
  - e. Read about Gilbert Tennant and Theodore Frelinghuysen and write a 1500-2000-word report on their impact on the Great Awakening and development of the Log College.
  - f. Read about John Wesley and his influence in the development of the church in America, especially the development of the Methodist Church; write a 800-1200- word report.

- g. Read about Charles Finney and write a 1500-2000-word report on his impact on nineteenth-century evangelicalism and revivalism.
  - h. Read about J. Gresham Machen and write a 1500-2000-word report on his involvement at Princeton Seminary, beginning Westminster Seminary and his influence in the Presbyterian Church, USA.
  - i. Write a 2000-2500-word personal assessment and evaluation of where you see the present evangelical church. Explain your assessment with some anecdotal examples.
3. There will be a final examination for this course covering your reading and the lecture material.

### **Grading**

- Reading Assignment Summaries 40%
- Short Papers 30%
- Final Exam 30%

### **Course Outline**

1. Old World Influences and Settlements
2. Colonial Expansion
3. The Colonial Period
4. Puritan Influences
5. The Beginnings of Other Churches
6. The Great Awakening
7. The Church and the Revolutionary War
8. The Church in a New Nation
9. The Americanization of Christianity
10. Education and Politics
11. The Second Great Awakening
12. Church Growth on the Frontier
13. The Church and Slavery
14. The Church and the Civil War
15. Post-Civil War America
16. Mass Crusades and Revivals
17. Missions and an Era of Optimism
18. The Growth of Theological Diversity
19. Controversies: Fundamentalists and Modernists; Science and Religion
20. The "Christian" (20th) Century
21. The Challenge of Urbanization
22. The Rise and Decline of Mainline Churches
23. A Resurgence of Evangelicalism
24. Charismatic Renewal: Protestant and Catholic
25. Postscript: A Post-Christian America