

CH 501 - Overview of Church History

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Online Course Syllabus

I. Course Overview

This course offers a survey of the entire history of the church, in its many branches from the Apostles to the Pre-Reformation. Special emphasis will be given to standard theological themes, studied in their historical context, with people, places, and events, as well as to the spread of the church into all lands.

II. Purpose

Students need to have a storehouse of the facts of the church's history and to be able to arrange those facts in terms of general principles. Jesus said that He would build His church on the rock. Peter's confession must lie at the root of our study of the church; hence, the study of church history must be a study of *ideas*. Students must be familiar with the men, both orthodox and heretic, whose ideas shaped the church, defended it from its enemies, and brought about doctrinal and ethical development. The church both shapes the world, and is shaped by it. The work of apologetics continues, and history is an important part of that work. Our mission is to take the Gospel to the world; our discipline is to be diligent that what we take is the truth.

III. Procedure

A. Method: Students will be expected to become familiar with the literature of Church History, by researching and organizing material according to assignments. At the conclusion of the course, students should have developed their own materials, which should prove valuable in their future ministerial and teaching duties.

B. Schedule: You have up to fifteen weeks to complete this course. The course reading schedule is included in the Course Resources module. The weekly assignments are spelled out in each module.

C. Assignments, Grades and Credit: An assignment will be due for each module and will be given a number grade. These assignments will be averaged for a final assignment grade.

D. Quizzes and Final Exam: Both the weekly quizzes and the final examination will consist of short essay and fill-in questions that focus on the material covered in the questions at the end of each chapter of Kuiper's book. (Ignore questions asking for information from outside resources.) The quizzes will also ask you to report on the extent of your completion of the Latourette reading, though specific content from Latourette will not be covered in the quizzes or final.

E. Grading

The course will be graded using the New Geneva grading scale (see the course catalog for specifics), in which a final grade below 79% is considered a failing grade.

- Weekly Assignments: 50%
- Reading Quizzes: 25%
- Final Exam: 15%
- Interaction (mentor report, conferencing, forum posting): 10%

IV. Books

Required:

- Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christianity*, Vol. I, Prince Press, Peabody, MA, 1975
- Kuiper, B.K. *The Church in History*, Eerdmans, 1982

Recommended:

- Gibbons, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
- Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*.
- Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States of America*
- Intervarsity, *Dictionary of Christianity in America*
- Lion's *The History of Christianity*
- Lane, *Book of Christian Thought*

V. Goals for Church History Students:

A. Knowledge:

- To make you acquainted with the facts of Church History from the events leading up to the beginning in Acts to the period before the Reformation.
- To grasp the world-wide mission of the church to all people and nations.
- To whet your appetite to dig deeper into the rich mine of history.
- To raise theological and doctrinal questions as preparation for further studies in Systematic and Biblical Theology.
- To emphasize the development and contextualization of ideas and their results in the life of the Church.

B. Skills:

- To be able to see the effects of ideas as they have played out in the history of the church.
- To be able to think inductively in the study of history.
- To be able to think globally in terms of the call to missions and evangelism.
- To be able to teach, illustrate, and explain the main themes of Church History;
- To interpret orthodox doctrines in the light of their historical context and development
- To refute all heresies, innovations, and novelties that are fashioned by Satan and the imaginations of men.

C. Character:

- To strengthen joy because of God's care and preservation of the Church
- To learn faithfulness from the examples of faithful men and women
- To encourage love and communion for all the saints in the earth
- To encourage zeal for evangelism and missions
- To encourage broadness of vision that includes the work of the church in all lands, cultures, and races.
- To gain wisdom and discernment for our own day in the light of the struggles and trials of the Church in history.

VI. Schedule

Class One - Introduction; Philosophy of Church History

Class Two - Historical Background: Philosophy and Empire

Class Three – The Founder and Creed of the Church; The Apostles and Power of the Church.

Class Four - Persecutions: Israel and Empire; Heresies and Apologists: Ebionism; Gnosticism; Montanism; Manichaeism

Class Five – Apostolic Fathers, Missions: Conversion of the Roman World.

Class Six - Councils and Heresies I: Jerusalem; Nicaea;

Class Seven – Councils and Heresies II: Constantinople I, Ephesus

Class Eight – Councils and Heresies III: Constantinople II, III; Synod of Toledo

Class Nine – Medieval Europe: HRE; Byzantium; Church vs. State

Class Ten - Rise of the Papacy; Episcopacy; Sacerdotalism

Class Eleven - Eastern Church; Crusades: Islam

Class Twelve - Missions; Asceticism; Monasticism

VII. Assignments

Week Two: Chart the philosophical background of the Pre-Christian World. Give special emphasis to the following: Epicureanism; Stoicism; Jewish-Greek (Philo); Neo-Platonism.

Your chart should include the following categories:

Name

- Teacher/Dates
- Philosophical Problem (Which the philosophy tried to solve.)
- Epistemological/Logic
- Metaphysical/Cosmology
- Psychology
- Ethics
- Politics

This is a very important unit, and will set the tone for much of what we will do in the future. You will gain a great deal from this class if you come with your vessel full.

Week Three: To continue our examination of the intellectual climate that the church faced in the first centuries, chart the following heresies: Ebionism, Gnosticism, Montanism, Manichaeism. You should have at least four columns: Heresy, Teachers (if known), History/Geography, and Important Teachings. An 8.5x11 chart should be sufficient. Remember that someday you may want to use this material for teaching and a chart of this type is easy to reproduce.

Week Four: Make a chart of the Fathers:

- Apostolic Fathers: Clement of Rome, Hermas of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas.
- Church Fathers: Irenaeus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian.
- Eastern Church Fathers: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom
- Latin Church Fathers: Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Augustine
- Other Fathers: Justin Martyr, Cyprian, St. Anthony, Eusebius, Athanasius, Pope Leo I.

- You should make four columns:

Name Place Dates Major Items.

The purpose for this assignment is for you to become familiar with the major players in the first centuries of Christianity. You should list several Major Items about each of these fathers, so that you will have some familiarity with the discussions over the next weeks.

Week Five: In preparation for our study of the major church councils, prepare charts on the following heresies condemned by the councils: Eunomianism, Monophysitism, Monotheletism, Photinians, Arians, Semi-Arians, Macedonians, Pneumatomachi, Appolinarians, Subordinationism.

Make your column heads to be: Heresy, Type (Trinitarian or Christological), Major Teachers, Centuries (Dates), Main Ideas.

Week Six: Make a chart of the first three Ecumenical Councils of the Church: Nicaea, Constantinople I, Ephesus. Include in your chart: Major Problems, People, Decisions.

Week Seven: Chart the councils: Chalcedon, Constantinople II, Constantinople III, (Toledo). Include Toledo in your chart, even though it was a regional Synod, and not a Council. Include in your chart: Major Problems; People, Decisions.

Week Eight: Chart the Frankish Kingdom/Holy Roman Empire from the conversion of Clovis to the accession of Charles V. Give the emphasis in your charts to major political events and the relationship between major popes and emperors.

Week Nine: Chart the rise of the Papacy/Episcopacy. Include the source and rise of episcopacy and sacerdotalism. Make a sub-chart: Reasons/Causes for Schism of 1054

Week Ten: Make a time-line of Islam from the Birth of Mohammed to modern times.

Week Eleven: The Crusades. Make certain that you understand the reasons for the crusades: political, social, philosophical, theological, and emotional.

Week Twelve: Chart the rise of Asceticism and Monasticism with the causes and the orders. Try to see the driving force, the benefits, and the defects of Monasticism.

VIII. Reading Schedule: All Quizzes will be taken from Kuiper’s book. On all the quizzes you will be ask to affirm (5 points) that you have done the reading in Latourette.

	Kuiper	Latourette
Week 2	Chapters 1, 2	Chapters 1-4
Week 3	Chapters 3, 4	Chapter 5
Week 4	Chapters 5, 6	Chapter 6
Week 5	Chapter 7	Chapters 7, 8
Week 6	Chapters 8, 9	Chapters 9,10
Week 7	Chapters 10, 11	Chapters 11, 12
Week 8	Chapters 12, 13	Chapters 13, 14
Week 9	Chapters 14, 15	Chapters 15-18
Week 10	Chapters 16, 17	Chapters 19, 20
Week 11	Chapters 18, 19	Chapters 21, 22
Week 12	Chapter 20	Chapters 24-27