

New Brunswick Theological Seminary
History of Global Christianity I

CH 510 B1
Fall 2020, ONLINE, Synchronous Format
Fridays, 6:30 - 9 pm

Instructor: **Nathan Jérémie-Brink, Ph.D.**
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Virtual office hours: Mon 11 am-1 pm,
Wed 9-10 pm, and available by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the history of Christianity from the second century to the middle of the fifteenth century. We will identify formative stages in Christianity's development as a world religious movement and engage in various methods to consider key theological texts, terms, and traditions in historical context.

Attention will be paid to issues of power and authority, violence and imperialism, gender, and diverse or contested religious and social identities. Christianity's complex historical relationships with Judaism and Islam will be discussed. Students will investigate Christian institutions, theology, practice, and social engagement from the emergence of early Christian communities through the Middle Ages.

No Prerequisites. A required course in the M.Div. and M.T.S. programs.

M.Div. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

As the student fulfills the requirements of this program, they will:

1. Think critically and theologically, gaining basic literacy within the distinctives of the Christian faith and tradition through biblical studies, theological and historical studies, and ministry studies. In these fields, they can identify, locate, organize, critically analyze, compare and utilize diverse sources of information for present and life-long learning.
4. Analyze dynamics of power and privilege as these intersect the self, institutions (including the church), and society. They formulate appropriate responses to injustices and violence across race, class, gender, and other oppressive structures. They foster social engagement, ecumenical dialogue and interfaith cooperation in pursuit of peace and justice.



Ansate Cross, from Coptic Acts of the Apostles, Middle Egypt, 5th century. Reproduced by permission of the Pierpont Morgan Library/Art Resource, New York City.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Successful completion of this course will require that we:

Identify major movements, issues, persons and events in the history of Christianity from the second century through the fifteenth century, in terms of time, place, and broad significance, in order to acquire a broad context and a sense of historical sequence for understanding ideas and issues relating to Christian faith. Reading of your Irvin and Sunquist textbook will offer this overview.

Think critically and engage in rigorous textual and contextual analysis. Engaging in historical analysis of Christian expressions, communities, practices, and various scholarly explanations of these developments moves us beyond biblical narratives and devotional reflection. At times, this requires us to debunk myths, challenge popular assertions, or complicate received narratives. These tasks requires that we examine and explain the significance of particular Christian movements, institutions and ideas, especially theological ideas, on the basis of direct evidence from primary texts and artifacts, in conversation with appropriate scholarly interpretation from secondary sources. Course readings, especially our examination of primary sources will engage us in this process.

Utilize a broad range of sources to construct a cogent explanation and interpretation of the development of Christianity as a global movement. Be able to analyze doctrines, structures, forms of intercultural witness, and spiritualities that developed across a range of communities from specific areas and regions over the first fifteen hundred years of Christianity, and how these continue to shape, in various and contested ways, the identity of the church. You will do this kind of analysis of multiple sources and interpretation in both short, low-stakes writing assignments, and in the course examinations and essays.

Develop cross-cultural competencies by comparing and contrasting Christian theological traditions from different cultural settings, and the history of Christianity as a global movement among various religious movements and diverse cultural and geographic landscapes and across time. You will be invited to participate in these tasks in course discussions, but also in an assignment promoting exposure to experience of a faith tradition previously unknown to you.

Communicate effectively in writing assignments including written summaries, oral discussion, essay composition, small group participation, and examinations covering the content of the course and demonstrating textual and historical analysis.

TIME AND FORMAT

The class will be synchronous, with a weekly meet online, via our SAKAI learning management system, on Fridays, from September 4 through December 18. Each session will begin at 6:30 p.m. and extend to 9 p.m. and will include both some lecture and discussion components. Discussion will also take place online, through our weekly discussion board, with the particular focus of discussion drawing from the weekly readings from primary sources.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

We recommend you start building a library for your present and future ministries or vocations. The following are the books required for this course. All students are expected to have purchased the books by the first day of the class. However, I have included links for your consideration to the online versions of each of these two texts for this class, held by our institution through the Digital Theological Library.

John W. Coakley and Andrea Sterk, Editors. *Readings in World Christian History*. Vol. 1 (to 1453) (Orbis 2004). <https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1050566702>

Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist. *History of the World Christian Movement*. Vol. 1 (Orbis, 2001). <https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1077711550>

You may purchase the course textbooks at a local bookstore and/or utilize a book distributor such as www.amazon.com; www.bn.com; <http://www.cokesbury.com>; or www.bibliofind.com. Books may be purchased in physical or electronic form, but if in electronic form make sure it includes the physical page numbers. Since online purchases can take a week or longer, make sure to order the textbooks as soon as possible. Most required material may be found in our library and some of it also can be downloaded from various academic websites. Any additional materials (e.g., articles, etc.) may be found on Sakai.

TECHNOLOGY NEEDED

- 1) Computer: desktop or laptop with these recommended minimum standards:
 - Windows 10 / OS X
 - 8 GB of RAM
 - 240GB of SSD Hard Drive
 - Camera [built in or additional purchase]

This amount of computing power will allow you use the software offered by NBTS. Note: Students will have difficulty accessing and using course materials and communicating with faculty and staff if their equipment does not meet minimum standards. For questions about computer equipment, please contact Jeanette Carrillo jcarrillo@nbs.edu

- 2) Ability to access to the Internet and a supported Web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, or Safari). Note: Most of the components in Sakai work best with Firefox, Chrome or Safari
- 3) A headset for plugging into your computer for video conferencing and synchronous classes.
- 4) Students in hybrid and online courses usually need both a webcam and microphone for communication with students and instructors.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

You will need to make sure that you have an up-to-date version of your browser as well as an operating system and some additional software on your computer to take this class. Some of the documents in this course will be available to you in PDF form. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your computer, you can download it by going to <http://get.adobe.com/reader>, Microsoft Office products (or equivalent – Office 365 is included with a student's email account).

Sakai Use

SAKAI is the Learning Management System (LMS) for New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Course materials are available within this system. Please log-in and look over your classes on SAKAI as soon as you can. It is important that you familiarize yourself with how the course has been organized. **Online and hybrid classes begin on the first scheduled day of the class in the first week of the semester.** There may be assignments students need to complete before the first face-to-face meeting of the class.

If you have problems and/or are not able to login, have questions concerning the use of Sakai or NetClassroom, send an email to jcarrillo@nbts.edu . Describe the problem in detail and include your full name, your email address, and telephone number(s). If you have technical problems, send an email to jchoi@nbts.edu. Describe the problem in detail and include your full name, your email address, and telephone number(s).

Internet Service Providers (ISP)

A reliable, preferably high speed, internet connection, which includes direct access to the worldwide web is needed. In situations of emergency (i.e. pandemic, etc.), students may be required to shelter in place and will need to access their courses from home.

COURSE DELIVERY

FULLY ONLINE COURSE

This course is conducted entirely online, which means you do not have to be on campus to complete any portion of it. You will participate in the course using New Brunswick Theological Seminary's Learning Management Systems (LMS) Sakai.

In Sakai, you will access online lessons, course materials, and resources. At designated times throughout the semester, students will participate in a blend of self-paced and group-paced activities using Sakai and alternative Internet-based technologies.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Announcements will be posted in Sakai. They will appear when you log in and/or will be sent to you directly through Sakai messages. Please make certain to check them regularly as they will contain any important information about upcoming projects or class concerns. Note: professors will only communicate information concerning the course using the NBTS mail system. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name, week and message subject. For example: YOURNAMEWK2ASSIGNMENT.
- Students should always include their first and last name at the end of all e-mail messages. This will enable the professor to quickly identify the student and course, facilitating a timely response. The professor will make every attempt to respond to email inquiries as soon as possible. In view of the unusual circumstances of global pandemic, please allow extra time for your instructor to respond to emails.
- Send email only to and from your NBTS email account and not your personal email. Also, do not send emails to my personal account, please submit all emails through the messaging (email) feature in Sakai.

- Submit assignments in Sakai using the “assignments tab.” Do not use submit by email or SAKAI messages unless otherwise directed.
- Make certain to check your messages frequently.

QUESTIONS - In online courses/hybrid courses it is normal to have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments, course materials, or assessments.

LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR ALL CAMPUSES

All NBTS students can access online resources including the Sage Library catalog, journals, databases, and ebooks 24/7, by visiting <https://www.nbts.edu/sagelibrary/>. Resource guides are on the Sage Library page link in Sakai. To obtain a free library card, stop at the circulation desk or access an online card: visit <https://www.nbts.edu/sage-library/digital-library-card-application-form/>. Reference services are available virtually by Zoom or telephone. For information contact, the Sage Circulation Desk at 732-247-5241 or sage.library@nbts.edu. Students also have access to Rutgers University Libraries and SEPTLA member institution libraries. Local libraries may also offer guest privileges. For more information contact Laura Giacobbe at 848-237-1773 or lgiacobbe@nbts.edu. For help with theological writing, contact James Brumm at jbrumm@nbts.edu. Stay up to date on library news on Facebook @sagelibrary or on Instagram @sage.library.

Library Resources at the St. John's Campus

NBTS students studying on the St. John's campus have borrowing privileges at the University's Library. To obtain access, follow the instructions in the email sent out by Dr. Faye Taylor, Director of the NY Campus, at the beginning of the semester. For more information about St. John's Library, contact the Circulation Desk by phone at 719-990-6850, text at 719-652-6936, or by email at <http://stjohns.libanswers.com/>.

NBTS students taking St. John's electives have access to the St. John's databases, at <http://campusguides.stjohns.edu/databasesA-Z>. To obtain access, contact Laura Giacobbe at 848-237-1773 or lgiacobbe@nbts.edu.

INCLUSIVE AND EMANCIPATORY LANGUAGE

NBTS is committed to an inclusive theological agenda. The use of inclusive language is a requirement for all written work and encouraged in all other written or oral communications. Students are urged to develop greater sensitivity in their written work to issues of inclusion in all forms, but especially regarding humankind. Terms such as “mankind” or “sons of God” are not inclusive of women. Instead, students could say humanity and children of God. Students will be urged in classes to consider more inclusive ways of speaking about God as well.

Dr. J-B note: Words have power. Human language is also wrapped in many layers of culture and embedded in historical contexts. We ought to commit to think careful about our language because our choices to include or exclude people or groups or to think in closed or expansive language for God both reveal and participate in structures that were designed to privilege and

empower some at the disadvantage or for the oppression of others. Such structures include deep patterns of and various systems of patriarchy, sexism and heteronormativity, binary constructions of gender, ethnocentrism and White supremacy, Eurocentrism and Anglocentrism, and Christian domination or Protestant superiority. Let us commit to strive (albeit imperfectly, and with grace for one another) toward language that emancipates from oppressive structures and fosters creative possibilities in language (including and especially theological language) that seeks to empower and recognize common good and affirm shared humanity. Please do not hesitate to interrogate in our class the ways words and terms are used, or to openly discuss language used in our primary sources, secondary text, or by the instructor.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

This course will engage students in a diversity of assignments in order to spread out the workload throughout the semester, and to encourage students to think through the various ways history can be studied, interpreted, and presented through diverse platforms for diverse publics. Grading is a subjective process. The following breakdown of percentages will be subject to the flexibility of the instructor's discernment in evaluation.

Weekly Reading Responses	20%
My Name & Spiritual Autobiography Video	5%
Exposure Experience Report	15%
Primary Source Essay	20%
Quest I	10%
Quest II	10%
Quest III	10%
Quest IV	10%

Assignments (unless otherwise instructed) will be submitted via Sakai.

Readings and Participation

Our textbook presents some consensus themes within the field of scholarship and attempts perhaps the broadest global scope of any textbook on our subject. Primary sources will provide windows into the thoughts and actions of particular historical actors and institutions, or explore theology and Christian practice from the author's various contexts, eras, and social locations. Our critical examination of these sources will hone our skill at historical interpretation.

At any point in this course, please ask how the methods of the course might inform your vocation and how class materials might be connected with your worship community. In what ways does the local experience of a person or community, or your interpretive context differ/reflect/broaden/complicate the historical narrative and our collective discussion of the readings? We ought to regularly consider how the themes of the course or particular readings might be taught to others in congregational settings or other public venues in which we serve.

Assignments

Reading Responses (Reading Response due by Wednesday, 11:59 pm, uploaded to Sakai under Forums Tab, in topic assigned to each week before class; Comment on a classmate's Response due by Friday, 5:59 pm.)

Each student is expected to prepare an informal ~200 word written response to the readings each week, that will be posted to the forums tab in SAKAI. These weekly reading responses will be posted to SAKAI before Wednesday, at 11:55 pm. Each student will also provide comment to others weekly reading responses, offering ~100 words of feedback to another classmates as a response through the SAKAI system. These are low-stakes writing opportunities to practice interrogating a primary document and situating it in historical context. You will offer each other feedback and the professor will offer feedback as well, encouraging you to think critically and historically about sources. This is an integral part of course participation, a necessary preparation for discussion, and will assist you in writing your primary source essay and quests.

Responses must specifically address at least one of the primary source readings for the week. Cite specific authors and the pages in the secondary texts that contextualize the primary source. Each response should venture a brief historical interpretation of the document. Responses should not cite other material. Feel free to note points of interest or ideas for further interrogation. You can interpret primary sources in many ways. Students are encouraged to explore how the primary source(s) support, complicate, or challenge the consensus narrative and conceptual paradigms. Offer close readings of the source and your own interpretive positions based off of how Irvin and Sunquist frame the period or place or figure or event.

Weekly responses must be no less than 200 words. There are 13 class periods in which you can submit a reading response assignment, so you do not need to submit every week of the semester. Each response will earn up to 2 points toward your final grade, and each comment you make on a classmate's response will earn you 1 point. There will be a maximum of 20 points that you can earn on reading responses toward your course grade. This incentivizes early submission but allows ample opportunity to earn all of the points for reading participation.

For primary sources, your responses should include specifics that show you have carefully interrogated the text, including where you found evidence that supports your findings and evaluations. Key examinations ought to include elements of the following questions: When was the document written? Who was the author? Who was the intended audience or reader? Where was the document written? How and where might the intended and unintended audiences have encountered the text? What is the issue identified and how is it framed? What is the document advocating or debunking? How might the text and its claims have been received in context?

To sum up:

- **Read the assigned readings for the week.**
- **By Wednesday, write your reading response, posting it to that week's thread.**
- **On Thursday or Friday, offer comment on a classmate's Reading Response.**
- **Review the weekly Powerpoint/Video in preparation for discussion.**

My Name and Spiritual Autobiography Videos (Due September 9)

In this short video of no less than 3 and no more than 7 minutes, tell us about your name and share with the class a brief spiritual autobiography.

Tell us about your name: Does it have a meaning? Who gave it to you? Has it changed in your life? Are there parts of your name, titles, prefixes, or suffixes that locate you within a particular family, linguistic tradition, ethnic community, religious heritage? Are there tips or pronunciation helps that might assist us in saying your name correctly and in ways that honors you and those who gave you that name? Anything else you'd like to tell us about your name?

Give us your brief spiritual autobiography. Give us some sense of your own religious history. How do you describe your faith, religious identities or communities? What are the traditions that inform how you think about and practice your faith? Please note all congregations/denominations that you have affiliated with, as well as offices or leadership positions you held or hold.

Primary Source Analysis Paper (Due November 2)

Submit a document analysis essay of 3-4 pages (between 800 and 1000 words) in which you examine a primary source from the course and offer both a close reading of the primary document(s) and critically analyze the source within the themes and issues pertinent to the document's historical context. The essay should include these five sections: (1) a statement of the thesis that the student will develop or argue in the essay regarding the historical subject, and a very brief introduction; (2) a summary of the key events shaping the context in which the document was written; (3) a discussion of the connections between the document and the major events and debates of the era in which the person lived; (4) a discussion of the significance of the document in view of themes scholars have used to interpret that document or the themes it presents or the period or context in which it was created; (5) conclusion and minimal personal reflections.

The paper must be double spaced in 12 point, standard-style font, with 1 inch margins, and conform to Chicago-Turabian footnote style. Provide proper citation for all sources. You are expected to properly cite your primary source throughout the paper. However, you may not use block quotes or long quotations of primary or secondary material, as the exercise of this essay is to critically engage the available sources, situate them in theological and historical context for the sake of rigorous analysis, and present your own interpretive voice.

Exposure Experience Report (Due November 25)

To complete this assignment, you will attend (virtually is fine, and encouraged) a religious event (outside your home institution or community of faith) or a conference or exhibit, an academic lecture about a topic pertaining to a religious topic about which you are not familiar, before the Thanksgiving break. Compose a written report of no less than 2 full pages, and no more than 5 full pages. Please consult with me in identifying suitable ways of meeting this requirement, or with any questions about ideas you might have for completing this assignment.

Quests (Due: I – 10/5; II – 10/19; III – 12/7; IV – 12/21)

(Closed OR open book; Prompts to be posted in Assignments tab in SAKAI)

In lieu of traditional midterm and final exams, or weekly quizzes, the evaluation of students' engagement with the content and interpretation of the course material will take the form of quests. This portmanteau implies an intermediate frequency and weight to these assignments, that is aimed to spread the workload of exams, offering opportunities to share what students have learned without requiring constant evaluation.

Quests will be written at home on the student's own time, in either an open or closed book format. Each quest will be posted a week before it is due, and consist of multiple interpretive essay questions. Students will select the quest prompt they would like to write and submit it under the appropriate assignment tab in SAKAI as a Microsoft Word document. Students have a choice whether their quest is open or closed book and note. They should indicate the prompt they are answering and their choice of open or closed book at the top of their page, along with their name and the course information.

The student will be given no more than two hours of writing to complete the closed book quest and must complete the open-book exam within a 12 hour period. For the open-book quest, the student can access lecture notes and all books during the 12 hour period, and each answer should be approximately 750 words. Citations are required only for the open book quest and conform to Chicago-Turabian footnote style. Both the open and closed book quests are to be typewritten, double spaced in 12 point, standard-style font, with 1 inch margins. The completed quests must be posted to Sakai within either 2 or 12 hours after the questions are read.

E-portfolio Posting & Assessment

The quest that a student feels is the best representation of their work in this course will be loaded into the student's e-portfolio **by Monday, December 21**. Once papers are loaded, students are to hand in proof of the upload (i.e. email or web receipt received after loading) to earn points for the course. Please note student assignments, projects or presentations maybe randomly selected by NBTS for assessing our course and program effectiveness. **Such selections will in no way affect the student's grade.**

In keeping with the Seminary's assessment practices, all required materials must be submitted to the student's portfolio at the end of the course. Instructions for uploading materials to your portfolio **will be uploaded to Sakai**. Note: Course grades will not be released to the student until this requirement has been met.

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 4

Week 1 – Introductions

My Name & Spiritual Autobiography Video, due via Sakai by September 9, by 11:59 pm.

September 11

Week 2 – Geography and Culture in the First Two Centuries of Christianity

Irvin and Sunquist [hereafter abbreviated IS]: 1-97 (Chapters 1-9)

Coakley and Sterk [hereafter abbreviated CS]: 1-22 (Readings 1-4)

Recommended, not required:

Hong You, Review of Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), in *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 88, 3 (July 2008): 437-438. (Available on Sakai)

If you are interested in reading further on this theorization (not required): Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

September 18

Week 3 – Gnosticism and Authority; Christians and Jews in Roman Society and Empire

IS: 99- 153 (Chs. 10-13)

CS: 23-84 (Readings 5-17)

Paul G. Hiebert, "Sets and Structures: A Study of Church Patterns," *New Horizons in World Mission*, David J. Hesselgrave, Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 217-227. (Sakai)

September 25

Week 4 – The Imperial Church, Division, and Dissent

IS: 155-208 (Chs. 14-18)

CS: 87-130 (Readings 18-28)

October 2

Week 5 – North African Origins of Monasticism, Attempts at Authority, Augustine

IS: 209-259, (Chs. 19-21)

CS: 131-147, 155-163 (29-30, 32-33)

Quest I, due via Sakai by Monday, October 5, 11:59 pm

October 9

Week 6 – The Rise and Expansion of Islam; Christians and the Caliphate

IS: 260-288 (Chs. 22-23)

CS: 231-242 (Reading 45)

October 16

Week 7 – Reading/Discussion Catch-up Week (Quest 2 due this week)

Introduce questions of disease, health, & christian view of science & medicine in Roman Empire

Discuss Justinian Plague

Discuss Augustine vs. Mani on body & implications for science, explanations of human suffering.

Discuss advances in medicine from the Arab world, spread through Mediterranean.

Quest II, due via Sakai by Monday, October 19, 11:59 pm

October 23

Week 8 – Early Medieval Christianity in Africa and Asia

IS: 289-322 (Chs. 24-25)

CS: 188-193, 243-251 (Readings 38-39, 46-47)

October 30

Week 9 – Early Medieval Christianity in Western Europe

IS: 323-353 (Chs. 26-27)

CS: 253-255, 258-280 (Readings 48, 50-52)

Primary Source Essay, due via Sakai by Monday, November 2, at 11:59 pm.

November 6

Week 10 – Latin/Greek/Syriac Distinctions, Northward Expansion

IS: 354-381 (Chs. 28-29)

CS: 289-297, 310-315 (Readings 55, 58)

November 13

Week 11 – European Christianity and Geopolitical Ambitions; Crisis and Crusades

IS: 383-405 (Chs. 30-31)

CS: 319-336 (Readings 59-62)

Discussion of Public Health implications of crusades

November 20

Week 12 – Christian Response to Disease and Pandemic

Online Timeline and Readings (SAKAI, explanation will be provided)

Entire week thinking about biological explanations & various early-medieval plagues

Exposure Experience Report due, via Sakai, by Wednesday, November 25, by 11:59 pm.

November 27 – NO CLASS, “National Day of Mourning” Break

For more on why “National Day of Mourning” rather than Thanksgiving, see:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2019/11/27/do-american-indians-celebrate-thanksgiving/>

December 4

Week 13 – Spiritual and Intellectual Movements in Europe in the High Middle Ages

IS: 406-439 (Chs. 32-33)

CS: 354-371 (Readings 66-68)

Quest 3 due via Sakai, by Monday, December 7, by 11:59 pm.

December 11

Week 14 – Christianity’s Global Configurations; Christendom and European Colonialism

IS: 440-506 (Chs. 34-38)

CS: 373-395, (Readings 69-71)

December 18

Week 15 – Perspectives and Challenges

Quest 4 due via Sakai, by Monday, December 21, by 11:59 pm.