

## **I. Course Description**

This course will introduce students to important themes, issues and individuals in the 2000-year history of Christianity. Attention will focus on the global dimensions of Christian experience with an emphasis on distinctive traditions and practices. Students will also engage in understanding the various contexts for critical themes in the history of Christianity.

We are also going to engage with Christianity in the U.S. throughout the entire semester. Our deep dive into U.S. history will help us to understand how Christianity has shaped the country's social and political landscape. Furthermore, this course integrates scientific content to explore how U.S. Christians have responded to pandemics prior to COVID-19, and how Christianity played a vital role in the creation of race.

## **II. Course Objectives**

Historians are deeply engaged in understanding the stories of how institutions and individuals came about in societies. While you more than likely have other vocational plans in mind, thinking like a historian – deeply and critically about the past – can help you make sense of the present and become more understanding and respectful of differing perspectives and unique people.

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

- Exercise historical research skills by locating and using primary sources and secondary scholarship
- Interpret historical materials and support your interpretation with evidence
- Recognize the variety of ways that Christians have historically understood and expressed their faith, and treat these perspectives with empathy, respect, and appropriate critical judgment
- Probe the relationship between the historical method and your own theological, social and political beliefs
- Draw on history as a practical resource in your professional and vocational context
- Facilitate conversations about pandemics, the biological consequences of racism, and the history of Christianity in the U.S.

#### **IV. Textbooks**

##### **Required Texts**

Du Mez Kobes, Kristin. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. Liveright. 2020.

Gates Jr., Henry Louis. *The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is Our Song*. Penguin Press, 2021.

Jacobsen, Douglas. *Global Gospel: An Introduction to Christianity on Five Continents*. Baker Academic. 2015.

Keel, Terence. *Divine Variations: How Christian Thought Became Racial Science*. Stanford University Press, 2019.

#### **V. Course Requirements**

Historians spend their time reading, writing, thinking, and talking about their research. In this class, we will spend a great deal of time doing as historians do.

##### **Class Participation (15% of your final grade)**

**Science for Seminaries Tests.** As a part of MTSO's relationship with the American Association for the Advancement of Science/Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion, this core course has been adapted to integrate science into our curricula. Students enrolled in the selected core courses must complete surveys to share information on their previous experience with science course and to report on how the class has increased your scientific knowledge. The data provided will help faculty and staff to think through science programming in the future. **There is a pre-test and a post-test. Please complete the post-test by Friday, September 10. The post-test should be completed by Friday, December 10.** The surveys will be available on the Syllabus page of Populi under Links.

**On October 26 and November 2**, we will have guest lecturers on science and Christian history. Your active attention and engagement are expected.

##### **Review of Book Reviews Project (20% of your final grade)**

Book reviews are significant pieces of scholarship. They not only describe and analyze a book's theories and methods, but they also provide clarity on a book's significance to a particular field/discipline. **Choose two** of the following three books:

*Divine Variations* by Terrence Keel.

**Review Due: Friday, September 24 by 11:59pm**

*The Black Church* by Henry Louis Gates.

**Review Due: Friday, October 8 by 11:59pm**

*Jesus and John Wayne* by Kristin Kobes Du Mez.

**Review Due: Friday, November 19 by 11:59pm**

Once you make your selection, find 2-3 scholarly or popular reviews on your books. Write a 2-3 page paper that highlights what reviewers have said about the book you selected.

### **Mini Research Projects Handouts (30% of your final grade)**

Each week of the assigned readings, there will be a list of primary source documents from the vast history of Christianity around the globe. After your reading and research, create a 1-page handout.

### **Final Paper Options (35% of your final grade=30% writing or video+5% presentation)**

Your final project should logically flow out of your engagement with course materials. Here are your options for your final paper:

#### **1. Option One: Biographical Research Paper or Video**

Here is your opportunity to get to spend some time getting to know one specific historical person who made a significant contribution to Christianity in the U.S. and/or abroad.

#### **2. Option Two: A Topical Paper or Video**

Your topical paper should not only include the facts of that topic but should offer an analysis of that topic's significance to the history of Christianity at a specific time and setting. You should engage available primary and secondary sources. No matter which topic you choose, you are to critically engage the theme and demonstrate a strong historical analysis. The paper should be 12-15 pages in length.

## **VI. Course Schedule**

### **Week 1: August 24**

#### **Course Introductions**

### **Week 2: August 31 – Global Gospel Survey I**

Jacobsen, Preface – Chapter 4

**Mini Research Documents:**

- *The Odes of Solomon*
- *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*
- *The Didache*
- *Tertullian, On Idolatry*

**Week 3: September 7 – Global Gospel Survey II**

Jacobsen, Chapter 5 – Conclusion

**Mini Research Documents:**

- *The Didache*
- *Tertullian, On Idolatry*
- *The Gnostic Scriptures*
- *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*

**Week 4: September 14 – Christianity and Racial Thought I**

Keel, Introduction-Chapter 3

**Mini Research Documents:**

- *The Nicene Creed*
- *Augustine, Enchiridion*
- *The Heiland*
- *The Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon*
- *The Jesus Sutras*

**Week 5: September 21 – Christianity and Racial Thought II**

Keel, Chapter 4-5

Graves, “Races & Racism”

**Mini Research Documents:**

- Anna Commena [Kommene], *The Alexiad*
- St. Patrick, *Confessions*
- Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*
- *The Nican Mopohua*

**Friday, September 24, Review of Reviews of Keel due by 11:59pm.**

**Week 6: September 28 – A Survey of Black Church History I**

Gates, Introduction – Chapter 2

**Mini Research Documents:**

- *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*
- Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, Answer by the Poet to the Most Illustrious ‘Sor Filotela de la Cruz’

- Ntsikana, *Hymns*
- Omar Ibn Said, *Autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, Slave in North Carolina, 1831*

**Week 7: October 5- A Survey of Black Church History II**

Gates, Chapter 3 – Conclusion

**Mini Research Documents:**

- Jarena Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal*
- Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*
- Pandita Ramabai, *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*
- Worth M. Trippy, *The Church a Community Force*

**Friday, October 8, Review of Reviews of Gates due by 11:59pm.**

**Week 8: October 12 – Fall Break**

**Week 9: October 19 – Christian Responses to Pandemics**

Read the following news articles. They are located on the Syllabus page

- “AME and the 1787 Yellow Fever Epidemic”
- “Christianity Has Ancient Lessons”
- “Clergy During the 1918 Pandemic”
- “Cotton Mather, 1721 Boston” – Under Files
- “Fear Not, Sneer Not”
- “Our Closed Churches Will Not ‘Forsake the Assembly’”
- “The President, A War, Virus”
- “Wear a Mask and I’ll Ask You to Leave”

**Mini Research Documents:**

- Gil Seon-Ju, “Love is the Seed of Paradise”
- Toyohiko Kagawa, *Love is the Law of Life*
- Bayard Rustin, “Black and Gay in the Civil Rights Movement”
- Wangari Maathai, “The Cracked Mirror”

**Week 10: October 26 – Guest Lecturer on Science and Christianity I – Dr. Sarah Richart**

**Friday, October 29, Email on Thesis Statement and Sources due by 11:59pm**

**Week 11: November 2 – Guest Lecturer on Science and Christianity II – Dr. Joseph Graves**

**Week 12: November 9 – Christianity and U.S. Politics I**

Du Mez, Introduction – Chapter 8

**Week 13: November 16 - Christianity and U.S. Politics II**

Du Mez, Chapter 8 – Chapter 16

**Sign Up for Research Presentations**

**Friday, November 19, Review of Reviews on Du Mez due by 11:59pm.**

**Week 14: November 23 - Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 15: November 30 – Research Presentations**

**Week 16: December 7 - Final Exam Week/Research Presentations**

**Final Papers Due December 10 by 11:59pm**