



Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. "Ikona Spasitelia v Smolenskom soborie v Moskve, pis'ma Simona Ushakova, 1862 g." New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed February 12,

History of Global Christianity

Adaptation, Power, Transformation

Spring 2018 – Section 1 & 2

Overview & Objectives

This course surveys the development and adaptation of Christianity starting with the shocking death of a Jewish religious leader and what his followers did afterwards. We consider the next generation of followers and teachers who took the Jesus' message and adapted it for their time and place. We see how politics and location shaped Christianity in the east and west. We will explore the themes of adaptation, diversity, and power through primary readings from voices you may not have heard before.

- Students will synthesize the global Christianity traditions by identifying key events, figures, groups, and ideas along with the forces and connections that shaped them.
- Students will learn to recognize how the material, social and cultural worlds of Christianity helped shape it.
- Students will learn to recognize non-institutional forms of Christianity.
- Students will explore the importance of location in the development, adaptation, and practice of Christianity.

Chicago Intensive
March 19-23, 2018, Monday-Friday
Dr. Nicole C. Kirk
nkirk@meadville.edu
Office hours by appointment

Grade Distribution

- Class Presentation **20%**
- Paper One **15%**
- Paper Two **25%**
- Discussion Board **20%**
- Class Participation **20%**

Dates and Deadlines

Class Presentation

Presented During Intensive

Paper One

Due April 16 @ midnight CT

Paper Two

Due May 1 @ midnight CT

Discussion Board Posts

As assigned for second-half of the semester

Course Books

All readings are to be read in advance of the class under which they are listed. All readings must be brought to class for discussion purposes. Students are expected to acquire two course books:

- David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*
ISBN-13: 978-0062517708
- John W. Coakley & Andrea Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History: Volume 1*
ISBN: 1570755205
- Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
ISBN: 1583670254
- A Bible, preferably a New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), could be helpful but not required.
- Additional primary and secondary readings are on Populi
- The reading will span the entire course...in other words you do have to read all the texts prior to the March intensive but pay attention to the syllabus and Populi for the assignments. Sometimes we will skip chapters, etc.
- All other readings are available on POPULI under Lessons for the week it is assigned. If you have trouble opening a reading or find it missing, please contact Dr. Kirk.
- It is recommended you print the readings. As [many studies](#) demonstrate, reading comprehension of printed material is generally better than reading comprehension of digital texts. You are strongly encouraged to annotate your printed texts (if you own the book) and engage in [active reading](#) by underlining or highlighting and making annotations of the texts. (Use sticky notes if you prefer not to write in a book-and ONLY write in a book if you own it.)

Assignments

Throughout the semester, students are expected to complete the following:

Participation. Our class is a community based on intellectual engagement. Preparation of assigned material, including reading written material and exploring assigned course materials before coming to class, attendance, and active participation in class discussions are essential. Active participation may include listening intently to others, taking notes on lectures, and asking questions, as well as sharing interpretations and opinions. There are always multiple ways to interpret the primary material, and when we disagree, respectful is demanded. **20%**

- Full attendance at the MARCH Intensive is required in order to pass this class.
- Students will be evaluated according to how they contribute to a dynamic and engaging learning environment. The participation grade reflects preparation of assigned material and how students' contributions to class discussion display informed and thoughtful engagement with course materials and concepts, rather than the quantity of comments.
- Cell phones must be on silent and put away during class. Laptops must be put away during class discussion, as the screen blocks class participants from one another.
- **Listen** to course podcasts posted on Populi when available. I have been experimenting with podcasts for several years trying to find a good balance for your work and my ability to produce them! In them, I often give introductory information about readings, helpful hints on assignments, and other information.
- **Checking your Meadville email account and Populi regularly.** You will be asked to certify you read

the syllabus, provide a biography, and introduction the first week of class. Do check your email and our course Populi site on the regular basis for announcements, corrections, etc. Facebook is not your source for information about the course. If you have a question about the course, email me directly.

Nkirk@meadville.edu

- **Discussion Board.** After intensives, students will be responsible for participating in the discussion board posts several times during the spring semester. *Leaders post by Saturday at midnight.* Discussion board leaders are encouraged to summarize the highlights of the reading and either do one of the following:
 - **Leaders.** After providing a brief-summary and highlights of the reading, you can do one of the following:
 - Consider the text in relation to its historical or theoretical context.
 - Write about an aspect of text that you do not understand or something that jars you.
 - Formulate an insightful question or two about the reading and then attempt to answer your own questions. Use the Reading Primary Sources and Reading Secondary Sources as guides (see later in the syllabus).
 - As you read, reflect on the guiding reading questions on the syllabus, marked by a ➤ symbol. You are not limited to answering these questions in your discussion posts, but they can provide a helpful beginning.
 - **Responder Groups.** This means you DO NOT have to respond on the discussion board every week. You will be responsible for two weeks of responses. The Group listing will be listed on Populi, under the Info tab, under files. Find your name, and note the weeks you are supposed to respond/add/contribute to the Leaders' postings. Their entries and yours should make solid contributions to the discussion. 150-200 *word response* to others' posts. Responders should demonstrate an engagement with the assigned texts in their responses. Responses should be posted by *Noon on the following Monday after a post. For example: Week 3 reading starts on Monday, February 13. Students in the assigned Response Group need to post by Monday, February 20 at midnight CT.*
- **Discussion Board.** Posting on time and meeting basic criteria will receive credit. Not posting or missing a missing a post will mean no points. **(20%)**
- **Papers:** Two short papers—4-7 pages in length are required. The goal of these papers is to synthesize the material of the course in a helpful way. Both papers will be due after the intensive. The papers are to focus on the primary texts of the course and provide an analysis of the text(s). Are you reading the syllabus-if you are post in Populi under syllabus verification a picture/image of Jesus or email your Jesus picture if it is easier, nkirk@meadville.edu. More information on the papers will be posted prior to the intensives. **Paper One (15%) and Paper Two (20%)**
- **Class Presentation (Due during intensives):**
More information will be distributed during the intensive for this group project by the second week of class. **(20%)**

Statement Regarding Accommodations

Meadville Lombard is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, they should contact the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Ken McHugh (kmchugh@meadville.edu) (312) 212-0673. Please note that classroom accommodations cannot be provided without an approved Accommodations Form.

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Syllabus Changes

While every effort has been made to make this syllabus as accurate as possible, from time to time modifications may be required—especially with a new teaching team in place. If changes to the syllabus are necessary, we will notify the class by sending an email to students via your Meadville Lombard email address. We reserve the right to add or delete assignments.

****Use the reading guides to help you formulate responses to the readings in discussion posts and papers.**

Reading Primary Sources (aka the readings from Coakley & Sterk)

Primary sources are readings, images, objects, etc created or “produced by people or groups directly involved in the event or topic under consideration, either as participants or witnesses.”* Reading and writing well involves asking questions of your sources. Even if you believe you cannot arrive at the answers, imagining possible answers will aid your comprehension. This process is all about your willingness and ability to ask questions of the material, imagine possible answers, and explain your reasoning.

An acronym that may help guide your evaluation of primary source texts: **PAPER**.

- Purpose of the author in preparing the document
- Argument and strategy she or he uses to achieve those goals
- Presuppositions and values (in the text, and our own)
- Epistemology (evaluating knowledge and understanding)
- Relate to other texts (compare and contrast)

Purpose

Who is the author and what is her or his place in society? What in the text makes you think so?

Why did the author prepare the document? What was the occasion for its creation?

What is at stake for the author in this text? Why do you think she or he wrote it? What evidence in the text tells you this?

Does the author have an argument? In one sentence, what is that argument?

Argument

What is the text trying to do? How does the text make its case? What is its strategy for accomplishing its goal? How does it carry out this strategy?

What is the intended audience of the text? How might this influence its rhetorical strategy? Identify specific examples.

Are there points at which the author responding to arguments or concerns that are not clearly stated in the text?

Do you think the author is credible and reliable? Why?

Presuppositions

How do the ideas and values in the source differ from the ideas and values of our age and place?

What presumptions and preconceptions do we as readers bring to bear on this text? What do we find objectionable that contemporaries might have found acceptable?

How might the difference between our values and the values of the author influence the way we view the text?

Epistemology

How might this text support one of the arguments found in secondary sources we have read?

What kinds of information does this text reveal that it does not seem concerned with revealing? In other words, what does it tell us without knowing it's telling us?

Identify claims in the text that are the author's interpretation.

Identify examples of historical "facts" (something that is absolutely indisputable) we can learn from this text.

What patterns or ideas are repeated throughout the readings?

What major differences appear in them?

Which do you find more reliable and credible?

Relate

Now choose another of the readings, and compare the two, answering these questions:

What patterns or ideas are repeated throughout the readings?

What major differences appear in them?

Which do you find more reliable and credible?

* * *

Reading Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are books and articles written by scholars and help provide the historical narrative, context, and analysis (note, many UU produced materials are not very good at analysis).^{*} Reading secondary historical sources is a skill that may be acquired and must be practiced. Reading academic material well is an active process that can be far removed from the kind of pleasure reading most of us are used to. The key here is taking the time and energy to engage the material—to think through it and to connect it to other material you have covered.

A technique for reading a book which complements the steps above is to answer a series of questions about your reading is to **STAMP** it:

Structure
Thesis
Argument
Motives
Primary sources

Structure

How has the author structured her work? How would you briefly outline it? Why might she have employed this structure? What historical argument does the structure employ? After identifying the thesis, ask yourself in what ways the structure of the work enhances or detracts from the thesis. How does the author set about to make her or his case? What about the structure of the work makes it convincing?

Thesis

A thesis is the controlling argument of a work of history. Alexis de Tocqueville argued, for instance, that American society in the first half of the nineteenth century believed itself to be radically oriented towards liberty and freedom while in fact its innate conservatism hid under a homogeneous culture and ideology. Often, the most difficult task when reading a secondary is to identify the author's thesis. In a well-written essay, the thesis is usually clearly stated near the beginning of the piece. In a long article or book, the thesis is usually diffuse. There may in fact be more than one. As you read, constantly ask yourself, "How could I sum up what this author is saying in one or two sentences?" This is a difficult task; even if you never feel you have succeeded, simply constantly trying to answer this question will advance your understanding of the work.

Argument

A thesis is not just a statement of opinion, or a belief, or a thought. It is an argument. Because it is an argument, it is subject to evaluation and analysis. Is it a good argument? How is the big argument (the thesis) structured into little arguments? Are these little arguments constructed well? Is the reasoning valid? Does the evidence support the conclusions? Has the author used invalid or incorrect logic? Is she relying on incorrect premises? What broad, unexamined assumptions seem to underlay the author's argument? Are these correct? Note here that none of these questions ask if you like the argument or its conclusion. This part of the evaluation process asks you not for your opinion, but to evaluate the logic of the argument. There are two kinds of logic you must consider: Internal logic is the way authors make their cases, given the initial assumptions, concerns, and definitions set forth in the essay or book. In other words, assuming that their concern is a sound one, does the argument make sense? Holistic logic regards the piece as a whole. Are the initial assumptions correct? Is the author asking the proper questions? Has the author framed the problem correctly?

Motives

Why might the author have written this work? This is a difficult question, and often requires outside information, such as information on how other historians were writing about the topic. Don't let the absence of that information keep you from using your historical imagination. Even if you don't have the information you wish you had, you can still ask yourself, "Why would the author argue this?" Many times, arguments in older works of history seem ludicrous or silly to us today. When we learn more about the context in which those arguments were made, however, they start to make more sense. Things like political events and movements, an author's ideological bents or biases, or an author's relationship to existing political and cultural institutions often have an impact on the way history is written. On the other hand, the struggle to achieve complete objectivity also affects the ways people have written history. It is only appropriate, then, that such considerations should inform your reading.

Footnotes in Secondary Readings

Students of history often do not read footnotes. Granted, footnotes are not exactly entertaining, but they are the nuts and bolts of history writing. Glance occasionally at footnotes, especially when you come across a particularly interesting or controversial passage. What primary sources has the historian used to support her argument? Has she used them well? What pitfalls may befall the historian who uses these sources? How does her use of these kinds of sources influence the kinds of arguments she can make? What other sources might she have employed?

Adapted from Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History*, Bowdoin College (2004).
<http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

*And from *A Pocket Guide for Writing History* by Mary Anne Rampolla



Schomburg General Research and Reference Division, The New York Public Library. (1923). Attending daily services, Saint Athanasius' School; [Brunswick, Georgia.] Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47df-b7d0-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Weekly Topics & Reading

Week 1

February 12: In the Beginning was the Early Church & Authority

- Read entire course syllabus and certify that you have read it in Populi under the corresponding assignment. DUE February 19, 2018.
- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 3-74
- Coakley & Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History*
 - 1. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians*
 - 2. *Gospel of Thomas*
 - 3. *Didache*, chs. VII-X
 - 4. Hippolytus of Rome, *Apostolic Traditions*
- Populi
 - *Gospel of Mary* (Populi)
 - *Justin Martyr's First Apology Selections* (Populi)
- *What is the context for the emergence of Christianity?*
- *How do you become a Christian?*
- *What do Christians do?*
- *What are some of the competing voices/teachers in early Christianity?*
- *Who shapes early Christians understanding of Jesus?*
- *What are the rituals and activities of the early church according to Hippolytus and Justin Martyr? How is it similar or different from today's Christian congregations?*
- *Why is authority a concern? Why does it matter?*
- *What is the role of women?*

Week 2

February 19: Why are the Christians Dangerous?

- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 75-90
- Coakley & Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History*
 - 5. *Correspondence of Pliny and Trajan*
 - 6. *Martyrs of Lyons*
 - 7. *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*
 - 8. *Justin Martyr's Second Apology*
 - 9. *Certificate of Sacrifice*
- *What makes Christians dangerous for the Romans?*
- *How is Christianity changing/challenging society?*
- *Why must people make a sacrifice? Why does it matter?*
- *Does early Christianity encourage martyrdom?*
- *What makes a martyr so special?*
- *What are women's roles in the early church?*

Week 3

February 26 Sex, Flesh Eating Seals, Devotion, & the Empire

- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 91-156
- Coakley & Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History*
 - 11. *Acts of Paul and Thecla*
 - 15. *Origen, On First Principles*
 - 18. *Eusebius of Caesara, Life of Constantine*
 - 19. *Letters of Arius and Alexander of Alexandria*
 - 20. *The Nicene Creed and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*
 - 29. *Athanasius of Alexandria, Life of Anthony of Egypt*
 - 30. *Basil of Caesarea, Longer Rule*
- Populi
 - Thomas Merton, *Wisdom of the Desert* (Populi)
- *What makes a person holy? How are their bodies treated differently?*
- *Why do we have the story of Thecla? What about sex and the early church?*
- *What does Athanasius want to emphasize about Anthony?*
- *What are the major concerns of Basil's Rule?*
- *What does the 20th century Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, think of the desert fathers and mothers? What does he lift-up as the most important parts of monasticism?*

Week

4

March 5: East, West, & Islam: Jerusalem and the Medieval Church

- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 159-292
- Coakley & Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History*
 - 61. *Ibn al-Athīr on the Fall of Jerusalem, 1099*
 - 63. *James I of Aragon on the Fall of Valencia, 1238*
- WATCH: *When the Moors (Muslims) Ruled Europe* (Populi)
- *What roles do relics and sacred objects play in Christianity?*
- *What is appealing about mysticism and humanism?*
- *What are the connections between Christianity and Islam?*
- *Why did Christians feel so threatened by Muslims?*
- *What are some of the innovations of the medieval church?*
- *What are some of the major theological changes during this period and what do these changes attempt to address?*

Week

5

March 12: Renaissances and Reformations

- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 293-370
- Coakley & Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History*
 - 53. *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, Dulcitius*
 - 75. *The Council of Constance*
- Jan Hus' Letters from *Jan Hus at the Council of Constance*, translation Matthew Spinka (1965), selections (Populi)
- *Heloise* (Populi)
- *Hildegard of Bingen* (Populi)
- *Who was Jan Hus? What were some of his changes to Christian worship? Why were these changes seen as dangerous? How did he influence the reformation(s)?*
- *Why do Unitarian Universalists try to claim Hus as one of our martyrs?*
- *What impulses or needs drove the Renaissance and Reformations?*
- *Was it religion alone that made the changes?*
- *What technology helped drive change? Were the ideas entirely new?*

Chicago Intensive Weeks

March 19-23 and 26-30

Monday through Friday

Check ML School Schedule for Details and Times

Week
6

April 2: Old Russia and Ancient Africa

- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 371-388 and 412-433
- Coakley & Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History*
 - 55. *John of Damascus, On the Divine Images*
 - 56. *Letters of Patriarch Photius of Constantinople and Pope Nicolas I*
 - 58. *The Christianization of Russia*
 - 71. *Kebra Nagast*

Week
7

April 9: American Christianity

- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 389-411
- Weisenfeld, *African American Religion* (Populi)
- Primary Selections (Populi)
- *How has Christianity spread?*
- *What are, if any, common aspects of Christianity across cultures?*
- *What are the major differences?*

Week
8

April 16: Asian Rebellions and Revivals

- Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History*, 434-490
- Coakley & Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History*
 - 45. *Apology of Patriarch Timothy of Baghdad before the Caliph Mahdi*
 - 47. *Chinese Christian Sutras*
 - 51. *Rudolf of Fulda, Life of Leoba*
 - 52. *The Heiland*

*******FIRST PAPER DUE – Monday, April 16, 2018*******

Week
9

April 23: Colonialism

- Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (entire book @ 100 pages)
- Colonialism Handout (Populi)
- *What does Césaire say about Africa and colonialism?*
- *How does he characterize colonialism?*
- *What is Césaire's answer to colonialism?*

Week
10

April 30: The Modern World?

- Chidester, Christianity: A Global History, 491-558
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters from Prison* (Populi)
- *How do Christians confront the Nazi regime? What motivates Bonhoeffer to act? What reasons does he provide for the actions he and other took?*

*******SECOND PAPER DUE – Friday, May 1, 2018*******



Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library. (1460). John Hus is burnt at the stake July 6, 1415, and his ashes are cast into the Rhine Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-ebaa-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>