



# History of Christianity 1- Syllabus



## Course Description:

This course is a study of Christian history from apostolic times through the era prior to the Reformation. Students discover how believers in previous generations lived out their Christian faith in a wide variety of situations and circumstances, and how God grew His faithful church through all these generations. This study reveals the character, attitudes and actions of God's faithful people, leaving the student an inspiring example and model to follow. In addition, the study of the mistakes and failures of the past serves to warn and protect the student from similar dangers in contemporary contexts. The study of key events and turning points in church history will also give students a greater understanding of their own church tradition, place, and role in God's Story, and prepare them with wisdom and proven principles to help them make a positive contribution to history in their own context.

## Course Objectives (Cognitive):

Upon successful completion of this course, each student should be able to:

- Describe & explain the essential context of the World of early Christianity
- Delineate the development of Christianity from Jesus to medieval Christianity
- Explain the effects of persecution and heresy on the development of Christianity
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of the key people in the History of Christianity
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the formulation of critical Christian dogmas and doctrines, e.g. Dogma of the Holy Trinity, etc.
- Describe Emperor Constantine's effect upon the History of Christianity
- Describe the character, theology, and challenges of the church during the medieval period.
- Demonstrate a survey understanding of the different expressions of Christianity outside of Europe during this time period, and the challenges they faced.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamic work of God through the story of Christian history

## Course Goals (Mindset):

Upon successful completion of this course, each student should have opportunity to:

- Use their knowledge of history as a means to grow in worship, devotion, and Christian character
- Use the foundation from this survey as the basis for continued fruitful study in Christian History
- Demonstrate a growing wisdom in using the lessons learned from the past to discern and appropriately respond to the current challenges and opportunities.
- Demonstrate a growing trust in God's providential activity to lead, protect, and grow His church in every era.

## Course Resources:

### Instruction Documents-

Each module contains documents which contain detailed instructions for all the module's activities. There are two different instruction documents in each module. One is for a person who chooses to work through this course on their own, with instructions for individual activities. The other instruction document is for people working through this course in a group or classroom setting. And it contains instructions for group activities.

### Primary Textbook-

Gonzalez, Justo L., The Story of Christianity Vol. 1 – The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation – Revised and Updated, New York, Harper One, 2010. ISBN: 9780061855887, (earlier editions of this textbook are not acceptable for this course because they lack assigned information)

### Secondary/Supplemental Texts-

Copp, Brad, "History Overview" <http://www.scriptureexegesis.com/HC1/HC1Overview.pdf>

Lewis, C. S., "On the Reading of Old Books" in God in the Dock, edited by Walter Hooper, Eerdmans, 1970, ISBN: 9780802871831, pp. 217-225 (page numbers are different in earlier editions).

OR Lewis, C. S., "On the Reading of Old Books," <https://reasonabletheology.org/cs-lewis-on-reading-old-books/>

Stonestreet, John and Glenn Sunshine, "Church and State" <https://breakpoint.org/church-and-state/>

Davis, Ben, "The Horrors of History..." <https://caldronpool.com/the-horrors-of-history-bear-witness-not-to-the-cruelty-of-christendom-but-the-cruelty-of-humanity-when-they-deviate-from-christianity/>

### Video Lectures-

Each module contains one or more lectures on video. The videos cover a portion of the course material. And they also include reviews at the end to summarize the teaching of each section. It is recommended that the students not just passively watch the videos, but actively interact with the course material. Blank lecture notes are included in each module for your benefit. These can all be watched from the course website or, if you prefer, there are links to each video in the Rumble or YouTube interface, in addition to an audio only version for download.

### Study Guide Documents-

Each module contains a study guide document for that module's reading from the Gonzalez textbook. The purpose for the Gonzalez study guides is to aid the student to read intelligently and to give a sense of which material is most relevant for this course from among the high volume of material in the textbook. There are study guides and blank lecture notes for all the course lectures. And there are also instructions and study guides for the midterm and final exams, intended to help the student review and retain the relevant information and work through the application of the course material for life and ministry, which will all be evaluated by the exams.

### Supplemental and Reference Documents-

Some modules contain documents which supply supplemental information relevant to the module.

## **Reviews-**

As mentioned earlier, each video lecture contains summary reviews. The review material for each module is gathered into a slideshow, so that the student can view all the review material for each module in a convenient format.

## **Reflection and/or Discussion Questions-**

Each module contains a list of questions (one form simply lists the questions, and the other form gives detailed elaboration of each question). These questions are to be used either for individual reflection or for group discussion so that every student can think through the general principles they are learning from history and how these principles apply to their own life and ministry. It is recommended that the students work through these questions before working through the “guiding principles” portion of the course lecture, and then, if necessary, revisit these questions based on what they have learned from that portion of the lecture.

## **Primary Source Resources-**

Most modules contain a list of primary source material related to that module, with links to print and/or online copies of those primary sources.

## **Quizzes-**

### *Practice Quizzes on Gonzalez Textbook reading-*

Each module contains a practice quiz on the assigned textbook reading. This is designed as a learning aid to help the student learn and retain the most important material from the textbook readings.

### *Review Quizzes on all course material-*

Each module has a review quiz to review and evaluate the student’s understanding and retention of the course material. Most of the questions come from the video lectures, but the required textbook reading is also fair game for the review quizzes. The questions are objective type questions and are automatically graded. The quiz questions are randomly generated from a larger bank of questions, so that the quiz is different every time. Therefore, the student may profitably take the quiz more than once in order to see more questions.

## **Midterm & Final Exams-**

### *Midterm Exam-*

At the end of the eighth module, there is a midterm exam for review and testing of the student’s understanding and retention of the course material up to that point. The Midterm Exam contains two parts, an objective section and an essay section. The objective section will be automatically marked. The essay section may be marked by a group facilitator, or simply be used by an individual to challenge and solidify their own understanding.

The course website contains two documents to help the student prepare for the midterm exam: The [Midterm Study Guide](#), and the [Answer Sheet for the Midterm Exam Objective Section](#).

### *Final Exam-*

At the end of the sixteenth module, there is a final exam for review and testing of the student’s understanding and retention of the course material covered after the midterm exam. The Final Exam contains two parts, an objective section and an essay section. The objective section will be automatically marked. The essay section may be marked by a group facilitator, or simply be used by an individual to challenge and solidify their own understanding.

The course website contains two documents to help the student prepare for the final exam: The [Final Exam Study Guide](#), and the [Answer Sheet for the Final Exam Objective Section](#).

## Course Activities:

This course is divided into 16 separate modules, based on the natural divisions of the material. There are three basic groups of student activities for each module: *intake activities*, *interaction activities*, and *application activities*.

### 1. Intake of course information-

The intake activities are designed for the student to gain access to and receive relevant information about the course topics. Because of the objective nature of past history, it is important that the student start with a listening posture, to understand what actually happened on its own terms. There is certainly a time for the student to evaluate the past and to contribute their insights (in the next two types of activities), but it is important to start with accurately receiving and understanding the information.

### 2. Interaction with course information-

The interaction activities are designed for the student to thoughtfully process and mull over the information until they thoroughly understand it and have it sufficiently committed to memory. The student will rehearse and review the information in a variety of ways and assess how well they have understood and retained the course content.

### 3. Application of course information-

The application activities are designed for the student to solidify their understanding by working through the ways that the course information connects with their own life and ministry in current society. The process of learning is not complete until the information is understood and put into practice with wisdom attained at least partly by processing the course material.

### Detailed activity instructions-

Detailed instructions for all course activities are included in each module in slightly different forms for either individual or group study. See the “Student Guide” or “Group Guide” in each module for a description of each module’s activities.

## Course Evaluation

This possible breakdown of the relative weight of course assignments is included for those taking this course in a group setting for some sort of course credit. Each group and/or group leader may choose to modify these percentages based on the inclusion or exclusion of the various optional activities.

Discussion Participation	10%
Weekly quizzes	15%
Primary Reading Report	15%
Term Project	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	<u>20%</u>
	100%

## Course Schedule

Date	Topics Covered	Reading
Module 1	Course Introduction Why Study History? How to Study History Well	<a href="#">“Christian History Overview”</a> Gonzalez ch. 2 (pp. 10-23) <a href="#">“On the Reading of Old Books”</a>
Module 2	Early Church During and After the New Testament	Gonzalez chs. 3-4 (pp. 25-39)
Module 3	Persecution and Martyrs	Gonzalez chs. 5-6 (pp. 41-58)
Module 4	Early Apologists and Leaders	Gonzalez chs. 7-9 (pp. 59-96)
Module 5	Early Church Organization and Worship	Gonzalez chs. 10-12 (pp. 97-127)
Module 6	Constantine and the Victory of Christianity	Gonzalez chs. 13-14 (pp. 130-155) <a href="#">“Church and State”</a>
Module 7	Early Monasticism Medieval Monasticism	Gonzalez chs. 15-16 (pp. 157-179)
Module 8	Trinitarian and Christological Controversies	Gonzalez chs. 17-19 (pp. 181-207)
<b>Midterm Exam</b>		
Module 9	Great Later Early Leaders	Gonzalez chs. 20-23 (pp. 209-239)
Module 10	Augustine and His Legacy	Gonzalez chs. 24-26 (pp. 241-262)
Module 11	The Great Schism and Eastern Orthodoxy	Gonzalez chs. 27-28 (pp. 264-313)
Module 12	The Medieval Church and the Papacy	Gonzalez chs. 29-30 (pp. 315-344)
Module 13	Medieval Theology	Gonzalez ch. 32-33 (pp. 357-406)
Module 14	Islam and the Crusades	Gonzalez ch. 31 (pp. 345-356)
Module 15	Renaissance and Early Attempts to Reformation	Gonzalez chs. 34-35 (pp. 407-446)
Module 16	Exploration and Expansion Summary and Application	Gonzalez ch. 36-38 (pp. 448-491) <a href="#">“The Horrors of History”</a>
<b>Final Exam</b>		

# Course Bibliography

## Print Resources:

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- , Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions, Grand Rapids, CRC Publications, 1988.
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- , God’s Battalions – the Case for the Crusades, New York, Harper One, 2009.
- , The Triumph of Christianity – How the Jesus Movement Became the World’s Largest Religion, New York, Harper One, 2011.
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- Wells, Ronald A., History Through the Eyes of Faith, San Francisco, Harper San Francisco, 1989.

## Web Resources:

- <http://www.ccel.org/fathers> - Christian Classics Ethereal Library
- <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/christian-history.html> - Internet Christian Library
- <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/> - Early Christian Writings
- <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/> - New Advent – The Fathers of the Church
- <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org> – Christian History Institute
- <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/> - Christianity.com Church History page

(See also all the Titles listed in the [Primary Source Resource List](#))

## Helpful Information

- Your best resource for this course is the people around you. Your peers are an invaluable source of insight. And you will be wise to share with other wise Christians and help each other explore and develop, meditate upon and apply the concepts of this course.
- Please realize that, at best, this course can only be an introduction to the History of Christianity. It is hoped that this course will give you a foundation upon which to launch a lifetime of study, wisdom and application of the principles you learn from history. Be encouraged to continue your exploration even after the course.
- Finally, do not lose God in the process of education. Take time to interact with Christ and His Word about every part of your life. Specifically, invite the Lord to teach and lead you in the course material. In this class, you’ll learn of great lives of prayer, worship, devotion and experiencing the Mighty Acts of God. It would be a tragedy and violation of the things you learn if you treated this course as only an intellectual exercise. I also hope that you learn to rely on Him for the strength to learn and grow and fulfill all of the expectations placed on you at NHCC. “Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger people! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God.” Phillips Brooks.