



THE  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## 25120: Church History II Sample Syllabus

School of Theology, NRT 146

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will cover the history of Christianity and Christian thought from the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century to the present. We will survey the major movements, doctrines, persons, and institutions that arose within the church and affected its development during this time. Our emphasis will be the development of doctrinal understanding in the church as well as careful study of selected key individuals whose lives should inspire us to biblical faithfulness today.

### Textbooks

Justo Gonzalez. *The Story of Christianity*. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 2010.

John Hannah. *Our Legacy: The History of Christian Doctrine*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001.

Mark Noll. *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

George M. Marsden. *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Primary readings.

### Course Objectives

The student who completes this course should

- Have an understanding of the major theological developments in the history of the church from the early sixteenth century to the present
- Have a deepened understanding of major ecclesiastical traditions that exist today through being acquainted with the history of their doctrines and practices

- Be familiar with some of the more important theological terms and concepts and thus better equipped to understand and engage intelligently in theological discussion
- Be spiritually enriched through an encounter with the work of great Christians of the past
- Be able better to struggle with the difference between truth and error through an encounter with the thought of past generations of professing Christians. The goal is to become more faithful interpreters of God's word and better servants of the Lord

## Requirements

This course will require significant reading. Students are encouraged to do as much of the reading as possible before the course begins to ensure the best possible grasp of the lectures and the discussion.

### 1. Class Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions by interacting with the lectures. Given the short nature of the course, students are expected to attend all class sessions.

### 2. Discussion and Outline 1

Students will outline the Arminian Articles and the canons of the Synod of Dort. The outline should be detailed enough (3-5 single spaced pages) for them to trace the flow of the Arminians' and Dort's arguments and participate in the professor-led discussion. The student's grade will consist of the outline and his or her participation in the discussion. Submit outline on Canvas.

### 3. Discussion and Outline 2

Students will outline the selections from Adolf von Harnack's *What is Christianity?* and J. Gresham Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*. The outline should be detailed enough (3-5 single spaced pages) for them to trace the flow of thought in the readings and allow them to participate in the professor-led discussion. The student's grade will consist of the outline and his or her participation in the discussion. Submit outline on Canvas.

### 4. Final Examination

The final examination will cover the reading assignments and lectures for the entire course. The exam will require both a knowledge of the facts and an understanding of their significance. Students will sign a statement on the exam, pledging that they have not cheated.

### 5. Paper

Students will write a 2400-3000 word paper (excluding footnotes).

Having done the research, students will form a *thesis*, or an argument. Students should make one point, or argue one thesis, throughout the paper. The paper must have a clear and significant thesis and its argument, organization, and content must advance the thesis in a clear and cogent manner. For each option there is at least one primary selection in the primary reading in the syllabus; the other important primary sources should also be consulted. Students should read the selections carefully, trace the arguments of the authors, and attempt to understand why the author argued the way he did. Having tried to understand the author on his own terms, students will consult other sources to gain understanding of the issues. The paper will thus be based on both primary and secondary sources.

There are two options for paper topics.

- 1) Based on the readings by John Wesley and George Whitefield, students will answer the question, Was Wesley or Whitefield more convincing and more biblical in his explication and defense of his view of soteriology?

Students should also consult John Wesley, “Predestination Calmly Considered,” in *John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York: Oxford, 1964), 427-72.

- 2) Based on the readings by Jonathan Edwards and Charles Finney, students will answer the question, Did Edwards or Finney have a more biblical understanding of the causes of conversion and revival?

Students should also consult:

Jonathan Edwards, “A Divine and Supernatural Light”

Jonathan Edwards, “God Glorified in the Work of Redemption”

Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls, in Northampton and the Neighbouring Towns*

Charles Finney, “Sinners Bound to Change their Own Hearts”

### Course Schedule

Lecture Topics	Assignments
Zwingli & Bullinger Anabaptists Calvin Reformed Scholasticism Paper Writing <i>Opportunity to review Gonzalez</i>	
English Reformation & Puritanism Catholic Reformation & Later Catholic Developments The Enlightenment <i>Opportunity to review Hannah</i>	Discussion 1: Arminian Articles & Canons of Dort
Modern Theology American Puritanism First Great Awakening <i>Opportunity to review Noll &amp; Marsden</i>	Discussion 2: von Harnack & Machen
Second Great Awakening	

19 <sup>th</sup> Century Developments Fundamentalism & Evangelicalism <i>Opportunity to review primary readings</i>	
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### Grading

A 96-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 59 and below
A- 90-95	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

### Primary Sources

Students may be assessed on the contents of the below sources

#### *The Church in Europe*

- Martin Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518)
- *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, “On Justification” (1547)
- *Arminian Articles* (1610)
- Synod of Dort, *Canons* (1619) (selections)
- *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647)
- Thomas Watson, *How We May Read the Scriptures with Most Spiritual Profit* (1674)
- John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1648) (selections)
- John Wesley, *Free Grace* (1739)
- George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* (1741)
- David Hume, “Of Miracles” in *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748)
- Adolf Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (1900)

#### *The Church in the United States*

- 12. Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741)
- 13. Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835)
- 14. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Shall the Fundamentalists Win?* (1922)
- 15. J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923)