

**RELIGION 330—The History of Christianity through the Arts:
a Global Perspective.**

Course description:

How did we get the kind of Christianity we have today? Don't we have many Christianities? What is the essential spirit of Christianity, if it can be named?

To answer these questions requires a long view of things, and so this course will take us back to Christian origins 20 centuries ago and follow its development through many permutations over time and through many countries. This will mean running deftly along the various strands of Christianity's institutional history while also stopping to explore the artistic expressions to which it gave rise. At the same time, we will keep in sight the existential importance which the man Jesus had, and has, for individual seekers, devotees, skeptics, critics, evangelists, advocates, apologists and enemies of "the Christian faith."

Course objectives:

Students will leave this course with an expanded religious and theological vocabulary, a knowledge of historical Christianity as it evolved over time, a critical yet appreciative understanding of Christian beliefs, and a knowledge of major artistic manifestations of the Christian life.

Required text:

John McManners, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Books are available for purchase at the Skidmore Bookstore. Other readings of primary sources will be available on-line and as handouts distributed in class; they are also placed on a 3-hour reserve at the library. Please note that it is your responsibility to obtain and keep the copies of all handouts throughout the semester.

Course Format:

We meet twice a week, Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 to 3:50 in Ladd 106. On Mondays, the focus will be on the chapters from the Oxford Illustrated History, to give us a baseline for discussion. On Wednesdays, we will explore the various artistic genres in as close historical conjunction with the period we are studying as possible. The course is designed as a collaborative endeavor in seminar style, with students contributing through class reports and discussion leadership.

EXTRA HELP is always available. See me during my office hours
Tues/Wed/Thurs. 9 – 11 a.m.
or by appointment.

Course requirements:

1. Complete the reading assignments.
2. Complete all quizzes.
3. Maintain a notebook containing class notes, handouts, quizzes, research data, reports, and papers.
4. View outside of class one film, as assigned.
5. Visit outside of class time one religious site in the vicinity.
6. Present one report in class on an artistic genre of your choosing, to be developed into the final paper.
7. Final paper 12-15 pages in length.
8. Take-home final exam.

Attendance and participation:

Regular class attendance and active class participation are required. If you are late, absent, or unprepared, the work of the group as a whole suffers. Please be in class on time with assignments completed. Consistent effort will result in a better grade. Shut down and stow away all electronic devices upon arrival. Occasional absences because of illness are unavoidable, and you should not attend class if you are ill out of consideration of others. If you must miss class, please let me know by e-mail. Missed quizzes must be made up outside of class.

Grading:

1 Final Paper, 12-15 pages based on a prior in-class report:	50%
Notebook, quizzes, classroom performance, attendance:	25%
Final exam	25%

Late papers will receive an **F**, to be averaged with the actual grade whenever the paper is finally submitted. Extensions are granted only for emergencies. Hard copy of papers is due at the beginning of class time. You may revise any paper for a better grade; the original grade and the revision will be averaged together.

Paper format:

12-point font. Double space. 1" margins.

No title page; title goes on first page with Name, Date, and Paper#.

It is a good idea to save all papers to disk.

Academic integrity:

It is understood all Skidmore students will abide by the Skidmore Honor Code. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty (such as plagiarism) will be referred to the Dean of Studies and may incur such penalties as a failing grade on a part or the whole of course requirements or removal from the course, at instructor's discretion.

RE 330--Christianity through the Arts		
Wed. Sept. 5	Introduction	Tools for understanding Christianity
1Mon. Sept. 10	Ch. 16 --What Christians believe.	
2Wed. Sept. 12		Religion and Art
3Mon. Sept. 17	Ch. 1 --The early church.	
4Wed. Sept. 19		Painting I Catacombs, sarcophagi, mosaic portraits (Prof. Courts).
5Mon. Sept. 24	Worship, liturgy, Bible.	
6Wed. Sept. 26	NO CLASS	
7Mon. Oct. 1	Ch. 4 --Eastern Christendom.	
8Wed. Oct. 3		Painting II Iconoclasm to Renaissance painting, Goya (Prof. Courts).
9Mon. Oct. 8	Chs. 6-7. Medieval church and Reformation.	
10Wed. Oct. 10		Music (Gregorian Chant to oratorio and Pr hymndy)
11Mon. Oct. 15	Chs. 6-7. Medieval church and Reformation.	
12Wed. Oct. 17		Drama --M/M/M to Passion Play (Prof. E. Ferreira).
13Mon. Oct. 22	Ch. 10. GB & Europe 1800 to present.	
14Wed. Oct. 24		Poetry --Dante, Donne, T.S. Eliot.
15Mon. Oct. 29	Ch. 11. North America.	
16Wed. Oct. 30		Painting III Shakers and Native Americans.
17Mon. Nov. 5	Ch. 12. Latin America.	
18Wed. Nov. 7		Fiction --Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Pasternak.
19Mon. Nov. 12	Ch. 13. Africa.	
20Wed. Nov. 14		Dance (Prof. Debra Fernandez).
21Mon. Nov. 19	Painting IV --Wm. Blake, Roualt, Dali, Ensor, Chagall.	
22Wed. Nov. 21	Study day.	
23Mon. Nov. 26	Ch. 5. Christianity and Islam.	
24Wed. Nov. 28		Architecture --Gothic; medieval El-andaluz; Assy.

RE330—Arts curriculum (Wednesdays)

1. Sept. 12. **Religion and art**—distinctions and convergences.
2. Sept. 19. **Painting I**—Catacombs, sarcophagi, mosaic portraits (Prof. Jennifer Courts).
3. Sept. 26. **No class.**
4. Oct. 3. **Painting II**—Iconoclasm to Renaissance painting and Goya (with Prof. Courts).
5. Oct. 10. **Music**—Gregorian chant to oratorio to Protestant hymnody (with James Lumsden and Carlton Maia).
6. Oct. 17. **Drama**—Mystery plays to Passion Play (with Prof. Eunice Ferreira).
7. Oct. 24. **Poetry**—Dante, Donne, T.S. Eliot, Ferlinghetti.
8. Oct. 30. **Painting III**—Shakers and Native Americans (Jason Blue Lake Hawk Martinez).
9. Nov. 7. **Fiction**—Russian authors: Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Pasternak.
10. Nov. 14. **Dance**—where is it in the history of the churches? (Debra Fernandez).
11. Nov. 19. **Study day.**
12. Nov. 28. **Architecture**—the gothic cathedral, medieval El-Andaluz, Assy (France).
13. Dec. 5. **Film** (Caleb LaRue).
14. Dec. 12. **Musical theater**—Godspell, Jesus Christ Superstar, Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat.