

RELIGION 230—The History of Christianity: a Global Perspective.

Course description:

How did we get the kind of Christianity we have today? Or do we have many Christianities?

To answer these questions requires a long view of things, the largest possible, 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 its relationship to the surrounding culture. At the same time, we will be keeping in sight the existential import 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 vocabulary, a knowledge of Christianity as it evolved historically, a critical yet appreciative understanding of Christian beliefs, and a better grasp of the multitudinous phenomenon which Christianity is today.

Required texts:

David Chidester, *Christianity: a Global History* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000).

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. A number of movies on religious themes will be screened on some evenings; should you miss any screenings, you are free to check the video out from the library and view it on your own.

Course Format:

We meet twice a week, Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 to 3:50 in Ladd 206, for lecture and discussion. The course is designed as a collaborative endeavor, with students contributing through class reports and discussion leadership.

Course requirements:

1. To complete the reading assignments.
2. To complete all quizzes.
3. To maintain a notebook containing class notes, handouts, quizzes, research data, reports, and papers.
4. To write two essays, approximately 4-5 pages in length, each based on reports presented in class.
5. 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 carefully. 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:

2 formal papers based on prior reports:	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.

EXTRA HELP is always available. See me during my office hours

Tues/Wed/Thurs. 9 – 11 a.m.

or by appointment.

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.

