**MTS 502: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION**

St. Norbert College

Masters in Theological Studies Program

Summer 2017

Professor: Dr. Karen Park

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Office Hours Wednesdays 1:30-3:00 and by appointment

**Course objective:** This course examines the historical development of Christian theology over a period of 2,000 years. We will be paying particular attention to the issue of religious authority, and how it has been negotiated by various groups and individuals throughout history. The purpose of the course is to encourage the student to engage with the historical narrative of Christianity and to recognize it as an essential component of theological literacy. From the SNC course catalog – “This course studies the development of Christian theological tradition in its unity and diversity, through the contributions of major theological figures, critical movements within the Christian community and the social context in which theology is formed. It explores a variety of approaches to theological inquiry from classical tradition to modern revisions in interpretation, diversity and the research skills necessary for studying theology today.”

**Course dates:** The course will meet from 10:00 am-2:00 pm on the following Saturdays: Feb 2, 16; March 2, 9, 30, April 13, 27.

**Textbooks:** The required texts for the course are:

*The Christianity Reader,* edited by Gerhart and Udoh, Chicago, 2007.

*Holy Bones, Holy Dust* by Charles Freeman, Yale, 2011

*Educated* by Tara Westover, Random House, 2018

*A People’s History of Christianity* by Diana Butler Bass, Harper Collins, 2009

**Requirements:** There are three requirements that will determine the final grade in this course.

1. Each student must engage in close, critical reading of all texts, and reflective discussion and participation in all classes (40%)
2. There will be two tests, worth 10 percent of your grade (each). These will be take home exams and turned in via email
3. Each student will write a graduate level paper –which makes use of secondary sources, argues an original thesis, and is characterized by a sophisticated analysis of the subject matter. You will use your Gerhart and Udoh book as a starting point for this paper, by researching a reading found in this book which was not assigned for class and analyzing it in terms of its historical context and relationship to contemporary Christian/pastoral concerns.(40%)

Your preparation for each class will include bringing at least five questions for discussion, provocative quotations, or summary statements, basically discussion starting points—you should have at least one for each reading. For each class period bring copies of these questions etc. for yourself and for the instructor. We will use these to facilitate our discussions of the readings for that class.

**Paper:** Graduate work is characterized by the ability to advance a particular thesis that demonstrates 1) a grasp of scholarship on the topic 2) the major scholarly questions and issues surrounding this topic 3) a contribution to scholarly discourse on this topic, taking the form of an original thesis supported by evidence.

You should begin the process of identifying a topic for research as soon as possible. Please arrange to meet with me during the month of February in order to discuss this. You will then begin developing a sufficiently narrow thesis and begin outlining the general arguments and evidence you will use to support it. You will submit a draft paper which I will comment on and suggest improvements. The final paper will be due on May 4th.

Paper will be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman, standard margins and be 12-15 pages in length. It will conform to the MLA style.

Academic Support Services: In keeping with the St. Norbert College mission to help students develop their full potential, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the College provides supportive services to students with disabilities. For inquiries and further details, please visit the Academic Support Services Office located in Todd Wehr 211 or contact the Director of Academic Support Services (403-1326), or visit www.snc.edu/academicsupport/disabilities.html. Please also let me know about what support or accommodations I might provide.

Academic Integrity: The learning process succeeds only when students perform honestly on assignments and examinations. All students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Code. It defines academic dishonesty and sets forth the responsibilities of faculty and students in the event of alleged dishonesty. Possible penalties for dishonesty include reduction of a grade, failure in the course, failure and suspension, or failure and dismissal. Please refer to the current *St. Norbert College Student Handbook* for the text of the Academic Honor Code.All students are expected to adhere to the College's academic policies regarding academic integrity (please refer to the “St. Norbert College Academic Honor Code” listed in *The Citizen,* or see the Honor Code website for the text of the Honor Code process, procedures and penalties). For further details or if you have any questions, see the link for *The Citizen* on the judicial affairs website: www.snc.edu/judicialaffairs or contact the Honor Code Facilitator at x3047 or the Associate Academic Dean’s Office at x4044. Especially important for our class is the policy on plagiarism and proper citation. We will discuss this in class, but if you have questions or are uncertain about whether something constitutes plagiarism, **you should contact me before submitting the paper**.

Writing Center: You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the Writing Center (www.snc.edu/writingcenter) to seek their assistance.

Moodle: Resources for this class will be posted on Moodle so please check our Moodle page regularly for updates. I will also email the class through your assigned SNC emails, so please check those regularly, too.

**Course Schedule—readings and assignments--may be updated at discretion of professor:**

Saturday, February 2nd Introduction to the Course

The first part of our meeting will be devoted to personal introductions, discussion of syllabus and requirements as well as an overall orientation to the course. Be prepared to introduce yourself and speak briefly about your reasons for pursuing the MTS, your experience with and interest in Church history, and your hopes for the course.

In addition, prior to the first day of class, students must read Diana Butler Bass's *A People's History of Christianity* (Harper, 2009). **But, before reading a word or doing research of any kind, (no googling!!) please take an hour or so (no more!) to write a history of Christianity.** Just off the top of your head: what happened in church history? When does it begin? What major events are there? Who are the important figures? Bring that document to our first class (and please don't edit in light of what you will then read in Butler Bass!) *This document is ungraded and meant to reflect our beginning points, not a “correct” or “accurate” history of the church--it will be a springboard for discussion and something to look back on when the course is complete.*

During the second part of the class, we will read and discuss two documents of the earliest Church—*The Didache* (Udoh p 457-458), and *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians.*Please have both of these documents read, and bring 5 questions or points of discussion to share with the class. You may bring your own Bible to discuss Paul. Please use the New American Standard version.

Saturday February 16th Martyrdom

Freeman *Holy Bones, Holy Dust*

*The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp,* G and U, pp 237-240

*The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*, G and U, pp 240-245

*Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger: Letters on the Treatment of Christians* (supplemental material in class)

Saturday March 2--Christological/Trinitarian Debates--Heresy and Orthodoxy

Christological debates—letters of Arius, Alexander and Athanasius, G and U, pp 298-305

Excerpt from *When Jesus Became God* (supplemental)

Pelagianism and Augustine pp 306-322

Quiz distributed--due March 15th

Saturday March 9th Monasticism, Marian Devotion

*Letter of Anthony the Great,* G and U, p 248-250

*Selections from the Rule of St. Augustine,* G and U, p 466-468

*Selection from the Rule of St. Benedict* (supplemental)

*Protoevangelium of James* (supplemental)

*Medieval miracle stories of Mary* (supplemental)

Saturday March 30th Medieval Spirituality/Papacy

*Hildegard of Bingen, Marie d’Oignes and Gertrude the Great* (supplemental)

“The Ceremonies of Holy Week” p 365-368

*Abbot Suger* “On What Was Done Under His Administration” G & U p 444-446

*Selection from Thomas Aquinas’ Summa Theoologica* G & Upp 622-628

*Unam Sanctam,* p. 494

Saturday April 13th Reformation(s)

*First-Person Account of the Bubonic Plague* (supplemental)

*Luther, Selections from On the Freedom of a Christian*,G & U p 631

*John Calvin, Selections from the Institutes* G & U p. 641

*Decrees of the Council of Trent* G & U p. 369-371

*Poem by William Prynne* (supplemental)

Quiz distributed--due April 19th

Saturday April 27th--American Christianities

*Educated* by Tara Westover

*John Winthrop, A Modell of Christian Charity*  (supplemental)

*Jonathan Edwards from Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (supplemental)

*Selection from Charles Grandison Finney* (supplemental)

*Selection from Samuel Busey* (supplemental)

*Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (supplemental)

Paper Due Saturday May 4th