

## MTS, Theo 502: Historical Development of the Christian Tradition (Summer 2018)

**Location:** Santa Maria de la Vid Abby, Library Seminar Room

### **Time & Dates:**

Friday, June 22, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Sat., June 23, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
Friday, June 29, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Sat., June 30, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
Friday, July 6, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Saturday, July 7, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
Friday, July 20, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Saturday, July 21, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**Instructor:** Rev. Kenneth L. Cuthbertson, M.Div., PhD.

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**Objectives:** To gain an overview of the major themes in the history of Christian thought from its beginnings to the present, and also to understand how those themes reflect the modes and thought and concerns of the eras in which they emerged. The class will focus on major creedal and doctrinal developments which have shaped and continue to guide various major branches of Christianity.

**Texts:** Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, Blackwell Publishing, 2012 (2nd edition).

Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition*, Yale University Press, 1984

Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence*, BakerBooks, 2008

A variety of primary source materials will be forwarded via e-mail

Recommended, but **not** required:

Cuthbertson, Kenneth, *The Last Presbyterian?*, Resource Publications, 2013

Gaillardetz, Richard R., *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism*, Michael Glazier, 2015.

DVD series (viewed in class, students are **not** required to obtain this): Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*, BBC, 2010.

### **Requirements:**

1. **Readings** from the primary text (McGrath), and others as assigned. These readings will be the basis of class discussions, and your participation will constitute a significant portion of the grade. Students will be asked to prepare a **brief (2 page, slightly +/-) integrative summary** of one of the case studies presented by McGrath for each class session as assigned in the class schedule. *This constitutes 66% of the course grade (summaries count for 4% each, and are to be handed in).*
2. **A final paper** (8-10 pages) using Jaroslav Pelikan's *The Vindication of Tradition* (Yale University Press, 1984) together with Phyllis Tickle's *The Great Emergence* (BakerBooks 2008) to reflect upon the content of this course (McGrath, MacCulloch videos, etc.) in relation to the current state of Christianity. These two books address, in very different but complimentary ways, issues of discerning a living tradition in eras of profound change and transformation. From these two sources reflect on what you see as key elements of balancing continuity in Christian Tradition with the necessity to change and adapt to socio-cultural shifts over time. Cite one or

two instances from the course of foundational “living” traditions that can and should be carried forward, and one or two instances of Christian traditions that may need to be reconsidered, or even set aside, as part of the ongoing socio-cultural and religious transitioning of the current era. Although this is not a full-blown research paper, some additional sourcing is encouraged. There will be time for a brief, informal discussion on your papers during the last class session. **Paper due (via e-mail) on Monday, July 23, by the end of the day.** *This constitutes 33% of the course grade.*

**Written work must be of graduate level.** (Prepared papers must be typed and double spaced with pages numbered.) Basic mechanics, such as: grammar, spelling and punctuation are important. All written work must follow the general format outlined in the current edition of **The Chicago Manual of Style.**

**Grading: St. Norbert College System:**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Defintion</u>	<u>Points</u>
A	Excellent	4.00
AB		3.50
B	High Pass	3.00
BC		2.50
C	Pass	2.00
CD		1.50
D	Low Pass	1.00
F	Fail	0.00
W	Withdrew (also includes date last attended class)	
I	Incomplete	
Ct	Continuing course	
AU	Audit	

**Academic Honor Code Statement:**

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 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 Code.

**Academic Accommodations:**

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 enquiries and further details visit the website at [www.snc.edu/academicssupport/disabilities.html](http://www.snc.edu/academicssupport/disabilities.html).

### **Class Schedule:**

**Week 1** - Friday, June 22, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Sat., June 23, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Topic: "Introduction, Christian Beginnings, and Eastern Orthodoxy"

Assignments (done in advance) – 1. Readings: McGrath, pages 1-76; AND, from the New Testament, the Gospel of Mark, First Corinthians, the Letter of James, the Gospel of John.

2. Integrative essay (2 pages) - McGrath, case study #1.2 – "The Arian Controversy" pp. 41-46 (see also pp. 30-31). Briefly address the following:

1. What were the basic viewpoints of Ebionitism and Docetism?
2. Briefly summarize the viewpoints of Justin Martyr and Origen.
3. Summarize, compare, and contrast the views of Arius and Athanasius.
4. Look at the original Nicene Creed of 325 CE [see "comparison table" via Wikipedia link: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene\\_Creed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed)] and briefly state any new insights you have into the meaning of the creed in light of this case study.

In class presentations: (Friday evening) Diarmaid MacCulloch's *History of Christianity*: Episode 1, "The First Christianity"; (Saturday afternoon) Episode 3, "Orthodoxy: From Empire to Empire"

**Week 2** - Friday, June 29, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Sat., June 30, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Topic: "Latin Christianity, and The Middle Ages & Renaissance"

Assignments – 1. Readings: McGrath, pages 77-123, also review pertinent sections of week 1 readings.

2. Integrative essay – McGrath, case study #2.2 – "Understandings of the Atonement" p. 104 – 109 (see also pp. 122-123)

1. Briefly summarize the view known as "Christus Victor", as well as the views of Gregory the Great, Anselm of Canterbury, and Peter Abelard. (A brief excerpt of Abelard's key text is provided along with the syllabus.)
2. Also summarize the "voluntarist" position on the atonement of John Calvin (p. 122f.)
3. Reflect briefly on how the various theories reflect the times in which they arose (late Roman Empire, early Dark Ages, medieval feudalism, renaissance humanism).
4. Which theory (or theories) seems to most fully and adequately reflect the meaning of the death of Jesus expressed in scripture? (Suggested references for comparison: Isaiah 53, Gospel of John, Hebrews 6:13 – 10:18, 1 Corinthians 1: 18 – 2: 5, 2 Corinthians 5: 14-21, etc.)
5. Which theory (or theories) might best speak to people today... especially millennials, the unchurched, etc.?

In class presentation: (Friday evening) Diarmaid MacCulloch's *History of Christianity*: Episode 2, "Catholicism: The Unpredictable Rise of Rome".

**Week 3** - Friday, July 6, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Saturday, July 7, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Topic: "The Protestant & Catholic Reformations, and the Worldwide Spread of Christianity"

Assignments – 1. Readings: McGrath, pages 124-181

2. Integrative essay – McGrath, case study #3.2 – "Justification by Faith" p. 154 - 163, (see also: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_3110\\_1999\\_cath-luth-joint-declaration\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_3110_1999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html) )

1. Summarize Martin Luther's understanding of justification by faith.
2. How do the views of Philip Melanchthon and John Calvin differ from Luther?
3. Summarize the response of the Council of Trent to Luther. (Note McGrath's observation on p. 160 that the council seemed unaware of Calvin, etc.)
4. What insight does the Catholic-Lutheran Joint Declaration (see link) provide on the issue of justification.

In class presentations: (Friday evening) Diarmaid MacCulloch's *History of Christianity*: Episode 4, "Reformation: The Individual Before God"; (Saturday afternoon) Episode 5, "Protestantism: The Evangelical Explosion".

**(NO Class on July 13-14)**

**Week 4** - Friday, July 20, 2018: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM / Saturday, July 21, 2018: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Topic: "Enlightenment, the Modern Era, and the Post-Modern Future"

Assignments – 1. Readings: McGrath, pages 182-268

2. Integrative essay – McGrath, case study #4.1 – "The Quests of the Historical Jesus" p. 210 -220.

1. Briefly state the Enlightenment-era "presuppositions" that led to the original quest for the historical Jesus.
2. Summarize the understanding of Reimarus, and Albert Schweitzer's later "apocalyptic critique".
3. The so-called "new quest" begun by Kasemann focused on understanding the presentation of Jesus Christ in the "kerygma" of the early church. Briefly state what Jeremias, Kasemann, Ebeling, and Bornkamm saw as the essential focus of the "proclamation".
4. McGrath is fairly dismissive of the "third quest" for the historical Jesus. He nonetheless quotes Bishop N.T. Wright's statement (p. 220) on the importance of "rigorous" historical and

theological investigation. Briefly comment on how you view the role of historicity in relation to faith.

In class presentation: (Friday evening) to be determined... probably excerpts of Diarmaid MacCulloch's *History of Christianity*: Episode 6, "God in the Dock" and/or portions of the Vatican Television Center's documentary, *The II Vatican Council*.

**FINAL PAPER DUE** – please submit paper in class (hard copy) or via e-mail before midnight, July 23. Brief informal reflections on final papers will take place on Saturday, July 21, after lunch.

Abelard Excerpt for Week 2 Integrative Essay:

**Peter Abailard (Abelard): Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans (an excerpt from the Second Book) – translation by Gerald E. Moffatt, included in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, edited by Eugene R. Fairweather, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956. (KLC Note: this book is currently out of print, and I believe the brevity of the excerpts fall within the parameters of “fair use” of copyrighted materials.)**

On Romans 3:19-26

...By the faith which we hold concerning Christ love is increased in us, by virtue of the conviction that God in Christ has united our human nature to himself and, by suffering in that same nature, has demonstrated to us that perfection of love of which he himself says: “Greater love than this no man hath,” etc. So we, through his grace, are joined to him as closely as to our neighbor by an indissoluble bond of affection. For this reason it is written further on: “Who then shall separate us from the love of God?” (p.278)

*Following his exposition of the text, Abelard poses the question as to what the redemption in Christ may be, and how sinful humans may be justified by his blood. The issues Abelard confronts are: (1) why it was necessary for God to take human nature on him to redeem us by dying in the flesh; (2) from whom we have been redeemed; and (3) by what standard of justice we have been liberated? After briefly expanding upon the questions, Abelard offers his solution:*

Now it seems to us that we have been justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God in this way: through this unique act of grace manifested to us – in that his Son has taken upon himself our nature and preserved therein in teaching us by word and example even unto death – he has more fully bound us to himself by love; with the result that our hearts should be enkindled by such a gift of divine grace, and true charity should not now shrink from enduring anything for him.

And we do not doubt that the ancient Fathers, waiting in faith for this same gift, were aroused to very great love of God in the same way as men of this dispensation of grace, since it is written: “And they that went before and they that followed cried, saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’” etc. Yet everyone becomes more righteous – by which we mean a greater lover of the Lord – after the Passion of Christ than before, since a realized gift inspires greater love than one which is only hoped for. Wherefore, our redemption through Christ’s suffering is that deeper affection in us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also wins for us the true liberty of sons of God, so that we do all things out of love rather than fear – love to him who has shown us such grace that no greater can be found, as he himself asserts saying, “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Of this love the Lord says elsewhere, “I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it blaze forth?” So does he bear witness that he came for the express purpose of spreading this true liberty of love amongst men....