Statement of Purpose

Our received historical periodization – ancient, medieval, and modern – is a “modern” invention. Conceived in and born from the womb of “renaissance” humanism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, nurtured in the “enlightenment” rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteen centuries, and codified in the “scientific” historiographies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most theologians now speak unselfconsciously about the “Modern” Church (1500 to present).

Yet the word “modern” has transmuted in meaning over the centuries. In the 15th and 16th centuries, it referred simply to the recent and current, contrasted with the ancient (and sometimes the obsolete). During the 17th and 18th centuries, use of the term embraced a positive response to innovation and new ideas, grounded not in divine revelation, but human reason and rational investigations. As the 19th and 20th centuries “progressed,” the term “modern” evolved into the moniker for an ethos that strove to expel Christian “residues” from intellectual and public discourse, and became descriptive of a self-confident worldview that exalted human reason, excluded the concept of divine providence, and assumed the superiority of its metanarrative over the “pre-modern” Christian faith tradition.

Post-modern deconstruction has shattered the illusions of modernity’s totalizing universal metanarrative, which has at its core the modern periodization of history (ancient, medieval, modern). Yet Christian theologians, out of convenience or convention, continue to employ this historiographical model. Our course, entitled “Modern Church Survey,” embraces the paradox of its name. The semester will be devoted to answering the question: How did Christians respond to the challenge of modernity?

By the end of this course you should have experienced the following outcomes:

Cognitive development: *Increased knowledge of the history of Christianity from the 16th century to the present; extensive exposure to Christian writings from this period; a greater understanding of the relationship between Christianity and culture; and the ability to use certain technical theological terms and hermeneutical tools.*

Values formation: *Reflection on how diverse Christians embraced faith in the face of modernity’s challenge, consideration of the role of religious community in this process, and development of insight into the role inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue can play in faith formation.*

Skills development: *Improved ability to read and critically analyze texts of diverse Christian traditions.*
Structure of the Course

Sessions will be a mixture of interaction between students and the professor, student presentations, and brief lectures. Reading and written assignments form the foundation for each session, and student involvement is an essential part of classroom experience.

Evaluation

Your grade will be determined by the following:

Grade scale:  

- A = 100-94
- B = 93-88
- C = 87-80
- D = 79-70
- F = 69-0

The course grade will be based on:

- Class attendance and participation 10%
- Reading Plan 10%
- Abstracts of Readings 40%
- Group Presentations 20% (each)

Textbooks

Required:  


Recommended:  

Requirements

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance at all sessions is required. Three absences without explanation will result in the reduction of one grade (i.e., from “A” to “B”).

Abstract Reports (during ten week reading course):

One group will make individual presentations during the second session each week on one text from her/his reading plan of the reading course.

An abstract (no more than one typed page) will be prepared for each presentation and must be structured in the format below. Each person will email these to designated email addresses the night before class. Failure to provide the outline may result in the loss of 10 points of your attendance/participation grade.

Presentation outlines must contain the following:

1. Date assignment was due
2. Bibliographical information
3. Number of pages read
4. Historical period
5. Genre
6. Doctrine or theme of text
7. Ecclesial community of author(s)
8. Geographical location of composition
9. Description of essential points of argument or narrative

MUST BE NO MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES LONG!
Reading Plan:

Each student will design a ten-week reading plan. The parameters of this plan are provided in guidelines found at the end of this syllabus. Students must present proposals for the **first three weeks no later than Monday, noon, on 4 February, 2007.** Proposals for **weeks four through six will be due Monday, noon, on February 25, 2007.** Proposals for **weeks seven through ten will be due Friday, noon, on March 14, 2007.** Consultation with the professor and collaboration with your colleagues is strongly encouraged. Professor must approve the final design for each student. When the three proposals have been approved, full credit will be given for this requirement.

Readings:

Students are expected to study all readings assigned and those in their “reading plan.”

Abstracts:

READINGS: Students must submit, by email, abstracts of all primary source readings due for that week no later than Friday, 5 pm, after the assignment is due. Each abstract must contain the following:

1. Date assignment was due
2. Bibliographical information
3. Number of pages read
4. Historical period
5. Genre
6. Doctrine or theme of text
7. Ecclesial community of author(s)
8. Geographical location of composition
9. Description of essential points of argument or narrative

This is an essential part of your work in this course. These assignments are an opportunity for you to maintain a record of your reading for future use. They are also an opportunity for you to control the outcome of half your course grade.

If these entries are submitted in the nine part format mandated above, are clearly your original work, and adequately summarize the argument/narrative of the text, you will receive 100 points. The numerical grades on the abstracts will be totaled and averaged at the end of the semester.
Penalties are the following: bears the signs of plagiarism* (minus 100 points for one instance); does not correctly/adequately follow the format mandated (minus 1 point for each instance in the assignment); does not, in the professor’s judgment, adequately summarize text (minus 5 to 50 points for each abstract).

*Plagiarism is defined as using the work (exact words or close paraphrases) of another person without clear acknowledgement of this fact. Proven cases will result in a “0” for the abstract and possibly referral of the infraction to the dean’s office.

**Group Presentations:**

Each student will take part in a team planning process, and make two 50 minute presentations on two periods assigned to the group. **The presentations will be timed.** The emphasis of these presentations will be on the development/change/diversity of Christian thought within that period. There should also be a critique of the received metanarrative(s) of these periods and the group’s assessment of the validity of these assumptions. These presentations will be evaluated on the following: structure of the presentation and evidence of research of literature on the period and the analysis of this scholarship. Use of multimedia resources will be a plus, emphasizing the diversity of “texts” which inform our understanding of Christianity in that period (written texts, images/icons, music, architecture, liturgy, devotions, literature, etc.).
Modern Church Survey
CALENDAR: SPRING 2006

23 January – Introduction to Course

  Session I: General orientation to class, reading of syllabus, and explanation of requirements.

  Session II: Bibliographical Instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments (due 4 February, noon): Reading List proposals for weeks 1-3. See Guidelines for Reading Lists for full description of the assignment.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(due 30 January): Read carefully Justo González’s <em>The Story of Christianity</em>, volume 2. Analyze the foci of author’s interests: what does he include; what does he exclude or neglect; what period is “more important” based on detail and pages devoted to that era; what geographical regions and ecclesial communities are given priority, and which are neglected; what sources are assumed (by inclusion) to be most important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.B. Those who have not read Justo González’s <em>Changing Shape of Church History</em> must read and come prepared to discuss this book in conjunction with <em>The Story of Christianity</em>, volume 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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30 January – History of the Modern Church: One Vision of the Subject

  Session I: The Modern Church: The historiography of Justo González

  Session II: Discussion of the Reading Lists and other housekeeping

| Assignments (due 6 February): Read carefully Thomas Bokenkotter’s *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* (3rd ed., 2005), pp. 173-532. Analyze the foci of author’s interests: what does he include; what does he exclude or neglect; what period is “more important” based on detail and pages devoted to that era; what geographical regions and ecclesial communities are given priority, and which are neglected; what sources are assumed (by inclusion) to be most important? |
6 February (Ash Wednesday) – History of the Modern Church: Another Vision of the Subject

Session I: History of the Modern Church: Another Vision of the Subject

Session II: Discussion of historiographies of Christianity in the Modern Era.

Assignment (due 13 February): Finish readings for Week 1 (1500-1545), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.

13 February – Week 1 of Reading Course: 1500-1545

Session I: Overview of the Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings

Assignments (due 20 February): Finish readings for Week 2 (1546-1599), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.

20 February – Week 2 of Reading Course: 1546-1599

Session I: Overview of Historical Context (Group A)

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group D)

Proposals for weeks four through six will be due Monday, noon, on February 25.

Assignments (due 27 February): Finish readings for Week 3 (1600-1648), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.

27 February – Week 3 of Reading Course: 1600-1648

Session I: Overview of Historical Context (Group B)

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group C)

Assignments (due 5 March): Finish readings for Week 4 (1649-1692), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.
5 March – Week 4 of Reading Course: 1649-1692 (Group C)

Session I: Overview of Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group A)

Assignments (due 12 March): Finish readings for Week 5 (1693-1750), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.

12 March – Week 5 of Reading Course: 1693-1750 (Group D)

Session I: Overview of Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group B)

Proposals for weeks seven through ten will be due Friday, noon, on 14 March.

Assignments (due 26 March): Finish readings for Week 6 (1751-1789), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.

19 March – Spring Break

26 March – Week 6 of Reading Course: 1751-1789 (Group A)

Session I: Overview of Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group D)

Assignment (due 9 April): Finish readings for Week 7 (1790-1849), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.

2 April – Professor will be in York, England at the Reformation History Colloquium

9 April – Week 7 of Reading Course: 1790-1849 (Group B)

Session I: Overview of Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group C)

Assignment (due 16 April): Finish readings for Week 8 (1850-1893), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements.
16 April – Week 8 of Reading Course: 1850-1893 (Group C)

Session I: Overview of Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group A)

| Session I Assignment (due 23 April): Finish readings for Week 9 (1894-1948), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements. |

23 April – Week 9 of Reading Course: 1894-1948 (Group D)

Session I: Overview of Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings (Abstract Reports from Group B)

| Assignment (due 30 April): Finish readings for Week 10 (1949-present), submit abstracts to designated email addresses, by deadlines outlined in course requirements. |

30 April – Week 10 of Reading Course: 1949-present

Session I: Overview of Historical Context

Session II: Discussion of Readings

7 May – General Discussion/Assessment of Course
Group Assignments
Spring 2008

Group A - Alamilla, Noelito
         Cancino, Victor
         Wilson, Samuel
         Knickrehm, Michael

Group B - Moser, Erick
         Faithful, George
         Brewer, Russ
         Bangert, Andrew

Group C - Tersigni, John
         Cormier, Kevin
         Murphy, Robert
         Bocher, Benjamin

Group D - Chen, Annie
         Jendraszak, Andrew
         Overby, Aaron
         Wickman, Eric
Reading Plan Guidelines

Each student will design a Reading Plan of primary sources that helps achieve personal scholarly/professional goals, and contributes to the corporate project of the class. The Reading Plan will have the following characteristics:

1. Divided into periods that span 1500 to the present, as prescribed by professor
2. Reflect gender and ethnic diversity prescribed
3. Reflect all the varieties of genres prescribed by professor
4. A unifying doctrinal/dogmatic theme for the semester (negotiated with the professor)
5. Reflect all of the varieties of ecclesial communities prescribed by professor
6. Originate from all the varieties of geographical regions prescribed by professor

The proposal for each period must contain the following:

1. At least 400 pages of reading for each week (when reading non-English texts, the quantity can be negotiated down)
2. Draw from at least two different genres
3. Reflect the experience of at least two different ecclesial communities
4. A least one text that does not originate in Western Europe/North America.
5. A least one conforms to the doctrinal/dogmatic theme negotiated with the professor
6. One work of art (fine and performing) or architecture (broadly defined … surprise me)
7. One musical composition that reflects a Christian theme

Periods:

1. 1500-1545 (Trent starts)
2. 1546-1599 (Syro-Malabar Uniates formed)
3. 1600-1648 (Westphalia)
4. 1649-1692 (Decree of Kangxi, granting toleration of Christianity in China)
5. 1693-1750 (Treaty of Madrid: Jesuit Missions in Paraguay)
6. 1751-1789 (French Revolution)
7. 1790-1849 (Dostoyevsky exiled to Siberia)
8. 1850-1893 (1st World Parliament of Religions)
9. 1894-1948 (World Council of Churches founded)
10. 1949-present

Diversity: At least five readings during the semester must be authored by women and another five readings by men who are not of Western European descent.
Genres:

- Dogmatic/ Systematic Treatises
- Papal/Curial Documents
- Counciliar/Ecclesial Pronouncements
- Spiritual/Devotional Works
- Religious Legislation of Governments
- Memoir/Correspondence
- Ecumenical Documents
- Biblical Commentary
- Catechesis
- Creeds/Statements of Faith
- Literature (fiction) [no more than one]

Doctrinal/Dogmatic Themes

- Negotiated with professor

Ecclesial Communities

- Roman Catholic
- Uniate
- Lutheran
- Anglican
- Reformed/Calvinist
- "Radical" Reformation Traditions
- Arminian/Methodist/Holiness/Pentecostal
- Orthodoxy - Eastern Europe
- Orthodoxy - Greece/Asia Minor
- Orthodoxy – Russia
- Eastern and African Churches

Geographical Regions

- Western Europe
- Eastern Europe
- Africa
- Latin/South America
- Near East/Central
- Asia
- Australia and Oceania

NB: At the end of each Reading Plan Proposal summarize, up to that point in the semester, the total number of women and non-Western European men read, types of genres read, the total number of ecclesial communities examined, and the total number of geographical regions from which your readings originated.