CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RS 345: Christianity(ies)

Class Number 18643

Mon. 4-6:45 PM, Sierra Hall 314

Dr. James D. Findlay, Instructor

Office Hours, MW 9:45-10:45 AM, Mon. 2:45-3:45 PM or by appointment.

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**Required Texts and Readings**:

Woodhead, Linda. *An Introduction to Christianity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Other readings available via ERes from the CSUN Oviatt Library. The ERes Course Password for this course is **0902**. Directions for accessing ERes readings are available on our course Moodle page.

**Course Description**: This course examines Christianity as a multiple phenomenon, exploring the faith from historical, cultural, political, and thematic points of view. We endeavor to understand Christian traditions and practices in their many forms and expressions. We pay particular attention to how Christianity(ies) have arisen, evolved, and adapted in the face of economic and cultural changes throughout the millennia.

**SLO's for RS 345. Christianity**

1.  Students will demonstrate an understanding of the main Christian terms, rituals, beliefs,

     customs, symbols, and figures.

2.  Students will be able to trace the emergence and development of Orthodox, Catholic, and

     Protestant groups in their socio-economic and political contexts.

3.  Students will show an understanding of the Christian intellectual heritages as manifested in

     philosophy, theology, and law.

 4. Students will recognize the cultural and interpretational diversity within Christian

     communities.

**Course Requirements:**

Regular attendance at all class sessions noted on syllabus. Unexcused absences will be noted, and will affect each offendor’s final grade.

Respectful behavior towards all other participants in process of class discussions and activities. **This includes placing all cellphones in the OFF position, and removal of earpieces or headphones, before entry into the classroom space.**

Careful reading of all assigned materials BEFORE the date indicated on the syllabus, as well as productive participation in class discussions, group analysis, and other in-class activities.

Moodle Posts on Discussion Forums: BEFORE each class session, participants must post on the class Moodle page (accessible via moodle.csun.edu) in a Discussion Forum, responding to the readings assigned for that date. Each post must be a thoughtful discussion of the readings and issues they raise. In addition to posting their own reflections and insights, participants must also respond to AT LEAST ONE other person’s post.

Papers:

Two (2) short papers, 4-6 pages in length, double-spaced, written as reflections on reading materials assigned for class sessions, and issues raised by those readings. One will be due on a Monday evening session from Feb. 2 – Feb. 16; the other from Feb. 23- Mar. 16. Schedule of due dates arranged in class.

One (1) research paper, 12-20 pages in length, double-spaced, focusing on a figure, theme, or issue in the history of Christianity. Footnotes and bibliography MUST follow proper MLA or Chicago Style format in the production and presentation of this assignment. Due Mar. 16. Subject and method chosen in consultation with Instructor. Subject, focus, and method chosen in consultation with Instructor.

One (1) paper, 10-15 pages in length, double-spaced, examining an issue under discussion in the sessions from Mar. 23- April 27, to be submitted at appropriate class session. Persons submitting papers that afternoon will also present a condensed version of their own research, investigation, and creative work as part of that evening’s class session. Subject, focus, and method chosen in consultation with Instructor. Schedule of due dates arranged in class.

There will be a Mid-Term Exam in the second half of the class session on Monday Mar. 9, and a Final Exam during the week of May 9-15.

**Unless an agreement has been made with Instructor previous to the due date, NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED, and will always receive a grade of “F.”**

Grading:

Moodle Posts 10%

Short Essays 15%

Mid-Term Exam 10%

Research Paper 20%

Issue Paper and Presentation 20%

Final Exam 15%

Class Attendance and Participation 10%

92-100 = A 78-79 = C+

90-91 = A- 72-77 = C

88-89 = B+ 70-71 = C-

82-88 = B 60-69 = D

80-81 = B- Below 60 = F

Course Schedule and Plan

Mon. Jan. 26: Introductions and Syllabus

Jesus, Paul, and the Churches of the New Testament. READINGS: Woodhead 1-27; NT Readings: Matthew 5-7, 10; Mark 1, 4; Luke 10; John 1-2, 16; Acts 2, 6, 8-9, 11, 15; Romans 15; 1 Cor. 1-3; Gal. 1-2; Rev. 2-3.

Mon. Feb. 2: Early Christianities before and after Constantine: Church, Empire, Monasticism, “Heresies.” Readings: Woodhead, 27-60; ERes: “The Gospel of Mary.” “The Gospel of Thomas;” “Oration in Praise of the Emperor Constantine;” Origen, “De Principiis/On First Principles;” Selections from “The Rule of St. Benedict; “The Orthodox Corruptors of Scripture,” from *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, Bart Ehrman.

Mon. Feb. 9: Ideologies, Organization, Politics: Greek and Latin, 500-1000; Medieval Christianities and Crusades, 1000-1500. READINGS: Woodhead, 61-154. ERes: Pope Urban II, “Speech at Clermont, 1095.” Papal Encyclical, “Dum Diversas.” Canons of the First Lateran Council, 1123.

Mon. Feb. 16: Reformations and Responses. READINGS: Woodhead, 159-202, 268-285. ERes: Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian;” “95 Theses;” John Calvin, “Institutes of the Christian Religion.”

Mon. Feb. 23: Christianity Beyond Eurasia, 1500-1700; Protestant and Catholic Colonizations, European Developments. READINGS: Woodhead, 204-233, 285-302. ERes: Papal Encyclical Inter Caetera; “The Las Casas-Sepulveda Controversy,” Bonar Ludwig-Hernandez; Selections from “Pensees,” Blaise Pascal; “Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* and the Theological Origins of Secular International Politics,” Ludwig Mikael Gelot.

Mon. March 2: Christianity and Modernity, 1700-1899: Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox. READINGS: Woodhead, 302-325. “Fear and Trembling,” S. Kierkegaard; “Syllabus of Errors,” Pope Pius IX; Preface to “Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel,” Julius Wellhausen.

Mon. March 9: US Christianities, European Descended and Homegrown, 1612-1900. READINGS: Woodhead, 233-261.

MID-TERM EXAM

Mon. March 16: 20th Century Developments. READINGS; Woodhead, 325-404.

Research Paper DUE.

Mon. March 23: Gender and Sexuality. READING: ERes. “Gender and Religion: Gender and Christianity,” by Tina Beattie, from *The Encyclopedia of Religion*.

Mon. March 30: Spirituality and Mysticism. READINGS: ERes. *The Ascent to Truth*. “Prologue: Mysticism in Man’ Life;” Thomas Merton. “Revelations of Divine Love,” Julian of Norwich.

Mon April 6: NO CLASS, Spring Recess

Mon. April 13: Ecumenism, Interfaith Relations. READING: ERes.

Mon. April 20: Pentecostalism, Fundamentalisms. READING: ERes: Chicago Statement on Inerrancy.

Mon. April 27: Liberation Tendencies: Issues of Violence, Class, Race, Economics. READINGS: ERes.

Mon. May 4: 21st Century Prospects; Summary and Conclusions