RELIGION 1330*: HONORS INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY
Fall 2001 (MWF)

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Office: Old Main 317
Office Hours: M/W 9:20-9:50; T/TR 1:30-2:30; F 9:45-10:45, and by appointment and by appointment.
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INTRODUCTION

This course introduces students to Christianity, including its Scriptures, theological traditions, historical development, and contemporary practices. The course seeks to help students enhance their knowledge of the Christian tradition. Grades are assigned on academic merit alone, not on theological orthodoxy.

This honors class is an endeavor in Christian liberal arts education which requires a high level of dedication on the part of the students. In particular, I expect students to attend class regularly, to study diligently, to complete reading assignments before the class session for which they are assigned, to listen attentively to lectures and to the comments of other students, to participate actively in discussions and ask questions whenever something is not clear, and to take tests and turn in assignments on time. I will do everything within my power to help students achieve excellence in the study of Christianity this semester, but each student bears the final responsibility for how much he or she learns in this class. I reserve the right to alter the course requirements presented in this syllabus at any time.

I will take roll at the beginning of every class session. I expect students to arrive in class on time and not to leave before the end of class. No one will be admitted to class after the beginning of a class session. Men will not wear hats during class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND LATE SUBMISSIONS

Attendance at all class meetings is required. Any student who has six unexcused absences will fail the course. Absences will be considered excused only when due to official University business or to extraordinary circumstances such as the death of immediate family members or the hospitalization of the student. I will be the judge of when such circumstances exist.

Students may take examinations and submit assignments late only when such rescheduling is made necessary by official University business or extraordinary personal circumstances. All requests to take examinations or submit assignments late must be made before the examination is given or the assignment is due; requests made after the fact will be denied and the student will receive a zero on the assignment.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students will conduct themselves in a way that maintains a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. I will not tolerate behavior that is disruptive of the class or disrespectful to me or to other students. I reserve the right to drop from the course immediately those who in my judgment are guilty of such behavior, and to begin disciplinary proceedings with the Dean of Students that may result in their permanent expulsion from the University.

All work submitted in this class must be the student's own work. Any student who presents another's work as his or her own, who acquires or attempts to acquire the answers to an assignment from anyone else, or who provides such answers to other students will be considered guilty of cheating. Any student guilty of cheating will automatically receive the grade of F for the course. His or her case will immediately be forwarded to the Dean of Students, who will begin proceedings that may result in the student's permanent expulsion from the University.
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Final grades will be assigned according to the scale presented on page 47 of the current University catalog. Students will complete two in-class examinations and a take-home final. They will also submit two reflection papers on assigned topics and write an essay in conjunction with an independent reading project. Assignments will count toward the final grade as follows: in-class examinations (20% each); take-home final (20%); reflection papers (5% each); independent reading project essay (20%). The remaining 10% of the final grade is based on my evaluation of the student’s class participation.

As a condition for passing the course, students are also required to attend one service at Temple Mizpah on one of the following dates: Sept. 17, 18, 26, 27, Oct. 12, Nov. 16. [The Sept. 27 service is at 6:30 pm; all other services are at 7:45 pm.] Students must submit a two-page typed reflection on the Jewish service of worship. Students will also participate in a field trip to San Antonio on Nov. 29-30. Students who cannot participate in these events due to extraordinary circumstances will be given an alternative assignment. I will be the judge of when such circumstances exist.

CLASS PARTICIPATION POLICY

I expect every student to be prepared to participate in informed discussion of the assigned reading in every class session. Each student should come to each class session with several questions or observations about the reading which he or she is prepared to share with the class. Students should also be prepared to answer my questions about the reading during each class session. Students who do not come prepared for class will suffer a substantial reduction in their final grade for the course.

THE REFLECTION PAPERS

The reflection papers are due on September 18 and October 30. They will be at least three full pages in length, typed double-spaced with standard margins, on a topic assigned by the professor. Students whose papers contain an unacceptable number of errors in grammar, spelling, and usage will have the option of accepting a grade no higher than F/50% on the assignment or of improving the paper by working with a writing tutor in the Academic Enrichment Center. A paper that is substantially improved through this process may merit a grade as high as C/70% on the assignment.

THE INDEPENDENT READING PROJECT

Each student will complete an independent reading project in the Christian tradition, and submit on November 27 a five-page paper which analyzes the main themes of that reading. I will provide a list of suggested texts early in the semester. Each student must get my approval of his or her project no later than November 12. As with the reflection papers, this assignment requires correct grammar, spelling, and usage.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Bible [It is best to use a recent translation, such as New Revised Standard, New English, New International, or Jerusalem.]
Athanasius, The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus
C. S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters
Mark Noll, Turning Points
"Decree on Ecumenism" from Vatican II is the assigned reading for December 3. Details will be forthcoming on how to find this document on the Internet.
A course pack of other required readings will be available early in the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE
8-27: Introduction

8-29: Genesis 1:1-4:26


9-10: Jeremiah 31:1-33; Isaiah 42:1-17, 53: 1-12

9-12: Mark 1:1-9:1

9-14: Matthew 1:1-7:29


9-18: First reflection paper due in Old Main 317 by 4 pm.


9-26: James 1:1-5:20

9-28: First Examination

10-1: Noll, 23-46

10-3: course pack: The Didache; The Martyrdom of Polycarp

10-5: Noll, 47-82

10-8: Athanasius, 29-64

10-10: Athanasius, 65-99

10-12: Athanasius, 101-129

10-15: course pack: Augustine, pt. 1

10-17: course pack: Augustine, pt. 2

10-19: Noll, 107-126

10-22/24: Students should use these class sessions to work on their reflection papers and to do library research on their independent reading projects.
10-29: Course pack: John of Damascus
10-30: Second reflection paper due in Old Main 317 by 4 pm.
10-31: Noll, 129-149
11-2: Course pack: Thomas a Kempis
11-5: Course pack: Thomas Aquinas
11-7: Second Examination
11-9: Noll, 151-174
11-12: Course pack: Martin Luther
11-14: Noll, 175-196
11-16: Noll, 221-244
11-19: Course pack: John Wesley
11-26: Noll, 245-268
11-27: Independent Reading Project essays due in Old Main 317 by 4 pm.
11-28: Course pack: Dietrich Bonhoeffer
11-29/30: Field trip to San Antonio
12-3: Decree on Ecumenism (available on the Internet)
12-5: Lewis, 5-39
12-7: Lewis, 40-75
12-10: Lewis, 76-111
12-14: Take-home final examination due in Old Main 317 by 12:30 pm