

Church History Survey Course Overview 2014-2015

I. Goal of the Course

The goal of the church history class is to gain a more intelligent faith in Christ. The author of Hebrews speaks about the “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1) that lived out their faith in difficult circumstances (Heb. 11). This cloud of witnesses continues even to the present day. They have lived the Christian life in a variety of circumstances—often heroically, often failingly. Studying this cloud of witnesses helps us to see our own day more accurately, and it helps us to understand our faith more deeply. We will even find that we understand the Bible more fully as we study the saints who have gone before us.

II. What the Class Will Discuss

- A. Any study of history will involve the who, what, when, where, and why of a specific event. These are details you simply have to study.
- B. But along the way we want to keep one hand on our Bible to get God's view of what happened, and we also want to keep one hand on our own heart so that we can grow in wisdom by studying history. History is a powerful teacher if we have ears to listen.

III. Course Assignments

- A. Full-Credit (about 120+ hours of work total)
 - 1. Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 4th edition (500 pages)
 - a. Shelley is smart, funny, clearly Christian, and insightful.
 - b. It's an easy 500 pages to read (!!!), but also covers the main events and people of the history from the apostles to the present.
 - 2. For each reading assignment in Shelley, the student will turn in a 125-word summary of **one person or event they read about** (one solid paragraph). You can go outside of Shelley if you want to—but remember it's only 125 words, so you don't have to.

3. Roland Bainton's *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York, NY: Meridian, 1995) (just about 300 pages of reading). Writing assignment here is to identify 20 interesting events or details about Luther's life (10 per semester).
 4. 12 lectures
- B. Half-Credit (about 60 hours of work total):
1. Shelley (500 pages)
 2. For each reading assignment in Shelley, the student will turn in a 125-word summary of **one person or event they read about** (one solid paragraph). You can go outside of Shelley if you want to—but remember it's only 125 words, so you don't have to.
 3. 12 lectures
- C. Audit:
1. 12 lectures and any reading of Shelley you would like

IV. Grading

- A. Full-Credit
1. 50% - Reading Shelley + 125-word response papers
 2. 20% - *Here I Stand*
 3. 30% - Course Exams
- B. Half-Credit
1. 70% - Reading Shelley + 125-word response papers
 2. 30% - Class Attendance/Participation

V. Grading the 125-word writing assignments

- A. An A = You fulfilled the assignment with noticeable care and creativity; B = You simply fulfilled the assignment; C = You didn't fulfill the assignment (or your writing is really bad).
- B. I'll look at the content, your sentences, and your paragraph.
1. You need real content in your sentences, making it clear you read the chapter you are summarizing.
 2. Sentences need to have good complete sentences, punctuation, and capitalization.
 3. Paragraphs should have a clear topic sentence and other sentences that connect to that. End the paragraph with a fitting concluding statement.

4. Topic sentence: "In chapter four Shelley discussed the Roman Empire."
 5. Sentences flow out of this: "The Roman Empire brought a stable government that enabled the church to grow. It also established a common language, Greek, that enabled the church to spread quickly. Another innovation that assisted the spread of Christianity was the network of roads."
 6. Fitting last sentence: "Thus, Roman Empire shows God's providence even in the governments of men."
- C. Remember, learn to write clearly, and then you can write creatively.

VI. The Website

I added a website for class information. It has links for things like a blank timeline (Word and PDF), class lectures (in case you miss—I know you never will!), and other information. Go here to find it:

<http://sgcapexclasses.wordpress.com/church-history-2014-2015/>

VII. Schedule – See Additional Spreadsheet

VIII. Sources cited in the outlines

- C Cairns, Earle E., *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996).
- G, GII Gonzalez, Justo L, *The Story of Christianity: Vols. 1-2* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1984).
- G1-3 Gonzalez, Justo L, *A History of Christian Thought: Vols. 1-3, 2nd edition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987).
- N Noll, Mark A, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997).
- S Shelley, Bruce L., *Church History in Plain Language*, 3rd edition (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995).