

****DRAFT SYLLABUS, SUBJECT TO CHANGE****

HSTY 5210: Christian History I:

The Early Church to the Early Reformation

North Park Theological Seminary

Fall 2023, 3 credit hours

Thurs 7:30–9:00pm CT

INSTRUCTOR

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Virtual office hours Wednesdays 4-5pm CT; individual appointments, in-person or Zoom, through [bookings page](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a survey of Christian history and theology from the apostolic times through the early Reformation. Course material pays balanced attention to Christianity's intellectual and social history, with sustained consideration of the church's evolving relationship to political and social structures and the question of unity in diversity. (from Catalog)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. **Factual knowledge.** Students will identify and explain key figures, events, and ideas from Christian history, from the first century through the early Reformation.
2. **Historical interpretation.** Students will interpret primary source evidence with integrity and formulate strong historical arguments using original source evidence.
3. **Appropriation in the church.** Students will apply historical content and interpretation within Christian ministry.
4. **Virtue formation.** Students will demonstrate charity toward Christians of diverse times and places.

This course contributes toward the following MDiv learning outcomes: (1) Interpret the Christian historical and theological tradition for appropriation in the life and mission of the church; (2) engage diversity and exhibit growth towards inter-cultural competence for ministry reflective of God's global redemptive work.

COURSE STRUCTURE

As a hybrid, hyflex class, this course is structured with both asynchronous and synchronous learning components:

1. Asynchronous learning (Friday through Wednesday): Preparation for each Thursday evening session includes completing assigned reading, watching course lectures, and contributing to class discussion in a written forum.
2. Synchronous learning (Thursday pm): Our 1.5-hour live sessions will be devoted to interactive engagement with the week's content and themes, building on written discussion.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. [Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*](#) (vol. 1), 2nd ed. (HarperOne: 2010)
2. [Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day*](#) (vol 2), rev. and updated (HarperOne: 2010)

3. [John W. Coakley and Andrea Sterk, eds. *Readings in World Christian History; Vol I: Earliest Christianity to 1453*](#) (Orbis Books, 2004).
4. Optional: Helen Rhee, [Wealth and Poverty in Early Christianity](#) (Fortress, 2017). This book is required for your essay on early Christian ethics. You can purchase a copy or access electronically through Brandel Library (available [here](#), or search in catalog).
5. Additional readings will be accessible through Canvas.

ASSESSMENTS

See below for more detailed guidelines and grading criteria for each assessment.

1. **Course checklist (pre-req).** Simple checklist to ensure you are equipped for success in the course, with clarity on course expectations, policies, and deadlines, as well as access to relevant instructional tools.
2. **Participation (20% of final grade).** Active participation is required both in live sessions and in written discussion preparatory to those sessions. Specific prompts are posted within each week's discussion forum in Canvas. Two discussion posts can be skipped weeks 2–15 without penalty to your grade.
3. **Reading (2x10% of final grade).** Logs indicating completion of assigned course reading are due at midterm and end of the semester and will be graded based on percentage of reading completed. Page numbers for each source are noted within the logs. Note that reading from González, *Story of Christianity*, is assigned as a broad overview. It is a very accessible text, so do not be intimidated by page numbers.
4. **Listening exercise (10% of final grade).** Each student will write a detailed summary of the point of view of a person with whom they disagree on a controversial topic.
5. **Essays (2x15% of final grade).** Through two focused (~2000-word) essays, students will engage in close reading of primary sources, practice charitable and critical historical thinking, and bring course content into conversation with contemporary questions.
6. **Exams (2x10% of final grade).** Objective exams at midterm and end of semester test your knowledge of course material. All possible terms are available below.

GRADING

Participation	20%
Listening exercise	10%
Reading logs	20%
Essays	30%
Exams	20%

Letter grades will be assigned according to scale printed in the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), p. 21.

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

1. **Attendance & participation.** Only two absences are permitted without penalty to your final grade. More than two absences will result in a lowered grade; more than three absences will result in failure. Three late arrivals will be considered an absence.
2. **Assessment submission**
 - Submit all work through Canvas *as Word files*, including your last name in the document title. All submission links are located under the week in which they are due.
 - All assessments are due 11:59pm on the date indicated. Work submitted late without prior arrangement will receive a 1/3 grade reduction each day (e.g., an A grade would receive A- after one day late, B+ after two, etc.). Work submitted over two weeks late will not receive credit.
3. **Communication.** I encourage you to email me with any questions and concerns, and I will respond within 24 hours M–F. Before emailing a question, be sure the answer isn't contained in the course syllabus.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

For a fuller discussion of academic dishonesty, review the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 25–27.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the program's office as soon as possible to ensure accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. For further information, see [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 19–20 and "[Disability Resources](#)" provided through North Park's Office of Student Enrichment Services and Support.

TITLE IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Dean of Students (773-244-5565) or Director of Human Resources (773-244-5599) for information about campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services. As a member of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. Please refer to [North Park's Safe Community site](#) for contact information and further details.

INSTRUCTOR COMMITMENTS & STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

I will...

- Return graded assessments within one week (provided they are submitted on time);
- Post all grades to Canvas gradebook in a timely manner so you can monitor your progress;
- Gladly be available for one-on-one conversation by phone or video chat. Please do not hesitate to reach out for clarification on course content, expectations, etc.
- Respond to all email inquiries within 24 hours M–F, for items not already covered in the course syllabus or weekly announcement. (Do please check these first.)

You are responsible for...

- All information provided in the course syllabus and class emails sent to your northpark.edu email address. This includes all assessment deadlines and course policies (grading, assessment submission, late penalties, etc.).
- Remaining up to date regarding your course progress, tracking grades in the Canvas gradebook and being apprised of seminary drop deadlines. NPTS policy extends incompletes in exceptional circumstances only and require requisite paperwork on file prior to the final day of the semester.
- Weekly and week-to-week time management. The rule of thumb for graduate education is that each hour of classroom time entails an average of 2–3 hours of weekly work outside the classroom. This means that you should expect to devote a minimum of six to nine hours to course work each week on average outside of class sessions. It also means you should not regularly be spending *more* than nine hours each week on this course. Please communicate with instructor if you find yourself doing so. Metrics for weekly reading (page numbers) and lectures (minutes) are provided in syllabus to assist your planning. Note that some weeks are heavier and others lighter in terms of reading, lecture, and written submissions.
- Communicating with instructor in a timely manner as questions and/or difficulties arise. Be sure to take initiative to email questions or schedule a conversation, recognizing that it may be 24–48 hours before a mutually feasible meeting time is available.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Included in full, final course syllabus, posted in course Canvas shell.