

# PMIN 206: CHURCH HISTORY

Winter, 2025

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## (TENTATIVE) COURSE SYLLABUS

*Note: this is a reliable draft of the syllabus for PMIN 206, Winter Quarter, 2025. There will be some changes and adjustments between the time you read this and the beginning of the course. What will not change are the basic requirements set out in the next two pages. Also, this version of the course represents a recent innovation at GPPM: a self-standing course in Church History comprised of early and emergent Christianity and the medieval church—up to 1500. The story of the church over the past 500 years will be the emphasis of Ecclesiology (PMIN 205).*

**Course description:** This fully online course at SCU is an historical survey of Catholic Christianity from its origins to the beginning of the Reformation. As such, its aim is to give learners a confident foundation in the history of the Church from its origins to 1500—a foundation that informs broadly but also relies on occasionally closer scrutiny of select topics. The course is studiously multi-disciplinary, approaching major developments in Catholicism from a variety of perspectives and historical sources.

**Learning Objectives:** This course has *two learning outcomes*:

**Course Texts:** the main text for the course is David Chidester's *Christianity: A Global History* (HarperOne, 2001, ISBN-10: 0062517708). This text is a broad survey of Christianity and while our emphasis will be on the emergence and development of Roman Catholicism, it's impossible

to understand the latter without considering the broader currents of the Christian tradition and the range of denominational, social, political and economic forces that gave it shape. All other sources including two online discussion forums will be uploaded to **Camino (Canvas)** at SCU.

**Course Requirements:** we accomplish the learning objectives above through various activities in the course. The first and most important is **student participation**. That, of course, requires presence; our meetings will take place on ten Thursday evenings through Winter Quarter from 6p to 9p. Participation continues with each student **introducing one of the original sources** (indicated by an asterisk) and leading the class in a discussion of that source.

The **writing** requirement centers on two activities: five short reflection papers or journals (2-3 pp and worth 6 points each) assigned at various points through the quarter. These reflection are meant to link some historical observation with personal thought processes. The second and larger written project is the Pastoral Application due at the end of the quarter. This study is based on the student's selection of some historical theme, even, personage, movement that has sparked interest and then to find a pastoral application for that bit of church history. Details will be given early in the course as to the nature and shape of this project. **One brief and ungraded test** occurs around midterm time to chart the student's retention of basic Church history from the first half of the course.

**Final Project:** this culminating assignment, in lieu of a final exam, gives the student an opportunity to 'teach' Church history, though likely not in a conventional way. This is the **pastoral application project**. Students choose some historical issue they've encountered (and are interested in) and match it to some pastoral setting. Guides are available for approaching this final exercise and located at our course page on Camino. **Alternatively**, students can choose to write an extended original **source study** on any relevant topic. Each of these options will be discussed in detail the first two weeks of the course.

**Apportionment of credit:**

Participation:	30%
Source Presentation/Discussion Leadership:	10%
Journals:	35%
Final Project:	25%

**Instructor feedback** reaches students through written comments on papers and course projects, including presentation of a source and the final project. I'm also happy to meet students during office hours (as indicated above). In anticipation of instructor feedback, students are encouraged to read carefully the 'scoring rubric' located at the end of the syllabus.



## SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

### PART I: THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

#### Week 1

Approaches to Church History; Christian beginnings: Jewish culture and politics; unity and diversity among the followers of Jesus.

Read: Chidester, Chs 1-3

*Galatians*, Ch 2

*Acts of the Apostles*, Chs 10, 11, 13, 15-17

#### Week 2

"*Mare Nostrum*": Christianity, Rome, and the Mediterranean World; Antioch and Alexandria; early churches

**Sign-up for discussion leadership**

Read: Chidester, Chs 4-7

\**Canons from I Nicaea* (325)

\**The Nicene Creed (in motion)*

### PART II: DOCTRINE AND INSTITUTION

#### Week 3

Perfection in the Desert; Augustine and Latin Theology; Christological controversies

Read: Chidester, Chs 8, 9

\**Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (excerpts)

#### Week 5

A World in Chaos: the Church in the 'Dark Ages'; monasteries as lights in the darkness; the rise of the papacy

Read: Chidester, Chs 11, 12

\**The Rule of St. Benedict* (excerpts)

\**The Rule of St. Columba*

### **PART III: CHURCH LIFE AND LEARNING**

#### **Week 6**

The 12<sup>th</sup> Century: expansion and change in the medieval church; the new schools; crusade, cathedrals, and pilgrim sites.

Read: Chidester, Chs 13, 14, 15

\**Abelard's Preface to the Sic et Non* (Yes and No)

\**Thomas Aquinas, 'On Prayer'*

#### **Week 7**

Religious devotion and practice; Pope Innocent III and the height of the medieval papacy; the role of Mary in the life of the medieval church

Read: Chidester, Ch 16, 17

\**Tales of the Virgin*

\**Decrees from the Fourth Lateran Council (1215)*

### **PART IV: THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AT THE THRESHOLD OF THE MODERN WORLD**

#### **Week 8**

The late medieval church; the 14<sup>th</sup> century as an age of adversity; the Avignon papacy and the Great Schism; war, famine, and plague; pastoral care and parish life; 15<sup>th</sup>-century revivals.

Read: Chidester, Ch 18

\**A York Priest's Notebook*

\**Parish Visitation Records from the late 14th century*

#### **Week 9**

15<sup>th</sup> century changes; the Renaissance papacy; a 'new world' and global missionary ventures

Read: Chidester, Ch 20

#### **Week 10**

The Ancient and Medieval Church in Retrospect; a discussion of pastoral application projects for PMIN 205.

**Final Projects Due**

