



**Grace Communion Seminary**  
**CH501 Church History: The First Millennium**  
**Short Syllabus**  
**Instructor: Neil Earle**

**GCS Mission statement:**

*“Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.”* We are committed to equip the saints for quality pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

**Course Description: Church History 1: The First Millennium**

Church History 1: The First Millennium is a survey of the events, people, and ideas of Christianity from Jesus’ ascension to the “Great Schism” of 1054. The focus is on mastering the key events and cultural contexts of the period by introducing the student to the writings, leaders and theology of the church’s first millennium. Proctored exam at the end.

**Required Textbooks**

These texts will be necessary for in-depth reading in order to fulfill the requirements in the course:

Gonzalez, Justo. *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2010. ISBN 978-0-06-185588-7, approximately \$23 pb.

Bass, Diana Butler. *A People’s History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story*. New York: Harper Collins, 2009. ISBN 978-0-06-144871-3, approximately \$15 pb. A refreshing view by a younger scholar.

Basil the Great, *On The Holy Spirit*: Popular Patristic Series. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980. ISBN 978-0-913836-74-3. This text is available as a .pdf online, so there is no need to buy the book unless you want to.

**Book Report #1: 5-page Book Report submitted on this required text by Wednesday of the seventh week of class:**

**Jenkins, Philip. *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa and Asia and How It Died.* New York: HarperOne, 2008. ISBN 978-0-06-147281-7. 297 pages, about \$15. (If you have done this in CH502 we can negotiate a different book)**

**Book Report #2: One of the following texts is to be read by the student and a five-page book report submitted at the end of Week Twelve. Some are available as .pdf files online, so there is no need to buy them unless you want to. Prices mainly standard Barnes and Noble offerings.**

Augustine, *Confessions*. Varied publishers.

Ignatius of Antioch: *The Epistles of Ignatius*. Irenaeus of Lyon: *Against Heresies, Book 3*. Athanasius: *On the Incarnation*. **All three are required.** These texts are in the Popular Patristic Series but also available as a .pdf online in the course Bibliography in the Long Syllabus to come.

Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. London: Penguin Books, 1990  
Revision et alia, about \$14.

Boin, Douglas. *Coming Out Christian in the Roman World: How the Followers of Jesus Made a Place in Caesar's Empire*. New York: Bloomsbury Press. 2015. ISBN 978-1-62040-317-4. (Freewheeling but stimulating reappraisal of how Rome became Christian.) \$19.99 pb, \$28 hardcover.

Cahill, Thomas. *How The Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995. ISBN 978-0-385-41849-2. \$10.66 pb. An enjoyable if incomplete survey.

Crossan, John Dominic and Johnathan L. Reed. *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom*. San Francisco:

HarperSanFrancisco, 2004. ISBN 0-06-051457-4. \$13.65 pb. The very liberal Crossan is balanced by Reed's expertise on the archeology.

Evans, Craig. *From Jesus to the Church: the First Christian Generation*. Louisville, Westminster: John Knox Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-664-23905-3. About \$10 used. Good update by respected evangelical.

Hillgarth, J.N. (ed.) *The Conversion of Western Europe, 350-750*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1969. ISBN 13-1721634. (A short documentary study by a noted expert, dated but authoritative.) About \$7 Amazon used.

Leithart, Peter J. *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8308-2722-0. \$23.82 pb.

Menocal, Maria Rosa. *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002. ISBN 0-316-16871-8, \$10.66 pb. Idealistic but a valuable antidote to Christian-Islamic tensions.

Moss, Candida. *The Myth of Persecution: How early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: HarperOne, 2013. A revisionist, challenging account, needs critiquing. About \$26 hardcover, \$10.58 pb.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Through this course, students will...

1. Identify the key events and ideas of the first one thousand years of Church History and investigate the order in which the events took place.
2. Explain how issues of Christology and the Holy Spirit led key thinkers to defend and deepen the Church's belief in the Incarnate Christ.
3. Analyze how the Holy Spirit led prominent church leaders and writers to eloquently articulate their experience of Christ working with them.
4. Demonstrate that to one degree or another the Spirit was always working with the Church.

## Course Assignments:

1. Two short answer/multiple choice **quizzes**
2. Two **book reports** selected from the list of additional texts. One in Week Seven and one in Week Twelve.
3. Five **online discussions**
4. One proctored **exam** (quiz and reflection paper) in Week Eleven

## Weekly Topics, Assigned Readings and Course Assignments Chart

Lecture Topics	Assignment for Next Class
1. Why Church History? From Apostles to Patriarchs	Chronology to “A New Jewish Sect” (inclusive), Gonzalez, pp. 7-43; Basil: Intro-Chapters 6, 9-10, 15-17.
2. Victory and Controversy	“Persecution under Nero” to “Tertullian,” Gonzalez, pp. 44-90; Basil, Chapter 18-24
3. Nicea and Chalcedon <b>Quiz 1 opens Wed. 11:55 pm, PT</b>	“Tertullian” (Montanism) to “Constantine sole master,” Gonzalez, pp. 91-135; Bass, pages 1-40, “After Jesus” to “Honoring the Body,” inclusive.
4. The Church Between Two Worlds	“Constantine sole master” to “The Spread of the Monastic Ideal,” Gonzalez, pp. 136-172; Bass, pages 41-81, “Reading Scripture” to “The End of the Beginning,” inclusive.
5. The Spreading Faith	“The Schismatic Reaction,” Gonzalez, pp. 173-180; Bass 85-120, “Christianity as Spiritual Architecture” to “Dying Well,” incl.
6. Christendoms East and West	“The Arian Controversy” to Gregory Nazianzus,” Gonzalez, pp. 181-220; Bass, pages 121-136, “Who is my Neighbor?” to “Enemies as Neighbors.”
7. The Conversion of Europe (1) <b>Book Report #1 (Jenkins) due by Wednesday 11:55 pm, PT</b>	“Return to the Wilderness” to “The End of an Era.” Gonzalez, pp. 231-265

8. Spirituality and Controversy	
9. Decline, Renewal and the Conversion of Europe (2)	“The New Order” to “The Arab Conquests.” Gonzalez, pp. 266-291
10. Medieval Legacy	Gonzalez, relevant portions
Week 11	<b>Book Report #2</b> -- Friday 11:55 PT
Week 12	<b>Final Exam</b> —Quiz and Reflection Paper

### Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

Assignment	Hours	Percentage of grade
Reading the syllabus and lectures	12	0
Watching video and listening to audio	10	0
Reading discussions and making responses	15	10%
Taking quizzes	6	30%
Reading the textbooks	57	0
Studying for quizzes	1	0
Writing Book Reports	15	40%
Writing reaction or review papers	2	20%
Total – about 12 hours each week	136	100%