

**RS2610 – Christian Thought, Culture, and Practice**  
HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
Western University  
M/W/F @ 12:30-1:30pm  
Classroom: W17



### **PROFESSOR**

Dr. Michael R. Wagenman (PhD, University of Bristol)  
Office: University Community Centre, room 38C  
Email: mwagenman@uwo.ca  
Phone: 519-661-2111 x82795

To set up a meeting, either approach the professor immediately before or after class or by email/phone.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A survey of Christian thought, culture, and practice, including approaches to the Bible, the formation of doctrine, the development of ethics, the use of philosophy, iconographic expression, and the sacraments. Attention will be given to a variety of historical and cultural contexts, as represented both in local and global settings.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES/GOALS**

- To gain an appreciation for the history of thought within the Christian church.
- The development of an introductory critical awareness of our contemporary time and place relative to Jesus and the Early Church to today.
- To be able to thoughtfully compare and contrast different historical, cultural, or theological contexts, periods, or thoughts.
- To appreciate the formation of the canon of Scripture and its various uses throughout the church past and present in both teaching the faith and responding to alternative interpretations/uses.
- To gain an awareness of how different historical and cultural periods and issues influenced the development of Christian doctrine.
- To formulate a working knowledge of how Christian ethics arises out of the interplay between Scripture and historical-cultural circumstances.
- To be able to give some specific examples of how Christian traditions incorporate philosophy and theology by various means.
- To appreciate how different Christian traditions embody their theology through aesthetic and sacramental/ritual practices.
- To appreciate the contemporary dialogue between local and global forms of Christianity and the mutual benefit possible from their engagement with each other.

### **ASSIGNED COURSE READINGS**

- Jonathan Hill, *The History of Christian Thought: The Fascinating Story of the Great Christian Thinkers and How They Helped Shape the World as We Know It Today* (IVP Academic, 2003).
- Any additional readings handed out in class, emailed to students, or posted to OWL.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Preparation, Presence, and Participation (10%):** Class attendance is mandatory. Students will come to class and come to class prepared. A doctor's note is required for excused absence from class. Students will have completed the assigned readings for the day and be fully engaged in the discussion and other activities during the class time.
2. **Three (3) Alien Anthropologist Worship Service Visits (50%):** Students will visit three London-area churches that are as far from their personal experience as possible. Having identified such churches from the three groups below, the student will attend one of their main worship services (note: three Friday class times have been cancelled to allow for this). While attending the worship service, the student will adopt the perspective of a alien anthropologist who is trying to determine the answers to the following questions:
  - a. What does the worship service say about who God is and what God does?
  - b. What does the worship service communicate about who human beings are, what they do, and what they are supposed to do. Do human beings have a problem? If so, what is it and how can it be addressed/resolved/healed?
  - c. What does the worship service say about what's ultimately important in life? How is this ultimacy to be encountered or incorporated into one's life?
  - d. What does the worship service say about the role of human beings in life outside of the worship service? What are people to do when they leave?

Having attended and observed the worship service with these questions in mind, the student will write a 1,000 word (max) summary (according to the general instructions below for handed-in work) of the visit and one's observations/discoveries around the four questions. The summary must address these four questions explicitly. The student will select a church from each of the following groups – with the following assignment dues dates for each group:

- a. Group A: Eastern/Greek/Russian Orthodox or Roman Catholic **(due January 26)**
- b. Group B: Historic Protestant – Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican **(due February 26)**
- c. Group C: Pentecostal, African, or Asian **(due March 30)**

Any questions about this assignment or what churches to attend should be directed to the professor far enough ahead of time to allow time for meeting the due date.

3. **Midterm Examination (20%):** A written midterm exam will take place during class time on **Wednesday, February 14**. The exam will cover all reading assignments and classroom discussions up to the midterm (Church Fathers, Byzantine Christianity, Middle Ages, and Reformation).
4. **Final Examination (20%):** A written comprehensive final examination will take place on material assigned, presented, and covered throughout the entire course. The exam will take place as scheduled by the registrar.

## COURSE GRADE CALCULATION

- 10% - Class Preparation, Presence, and Participation
- 20% - Midterm Examination (Wednesday, February 14)
- 50% - Three (3) Alien Anthropologist Assignments
- 20% - Comprehensive Final Exam (TBD)

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

The first line for each class period indicates the topics to be discussed. The second line, indicated by (HCT x), is the reading assignment to be completed *before* coming to that class period.

### **Monday, January 8**

*First day of class*  
Introduction (HCT 9-12)

### **Wednesday, January 10**

Greek Philosophy and Christian Faith  
(HCT 13-59 - The Church Fathers: Greek Philosophy, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen)

### **Friday, January 12**

The Original Worship Wars  
(HCT 60-77 - The Church Fathers: Arianism, Athanasius, Cappadocians, Desert Fathers)

### **Monday, January 15**

Culture Clash: Britain vs. Africa  
(HCT 78-99 - The Church Fathers: Pelagianism, Augustine, Cyril)

### **Wednesday, January 17**

The Place and Role of Mystery in Christian Spirituality  
(HCT 100-113 - Byzantine Christianity: Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus, Symeon)

### **Friday, January 19**

The First Big (East/West) Split  
(HCT 114-123 - Byzantine Christianity: Great Schism, Gregory, Third Rome)

### **Monday, January 22**

Where Does Faith Reside?  
(HCT 124-148 - Middle Ages: Erigenia, Anselm, Peter Abelard, the Mendicant Orders)

### **Wednesday, January 24**

What is God Like – and How Should God Be Worshipped?  
(HCT 149-177 - Middle Ages: Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, Mysticism, and Pre-Reformation Wyclif and Hus)

### **Friday, January 26**

***No Class – Alien Anthropologist Assignment (Group A) due***

### **Monday, January 29**

The Day the Whole World Turned Upside Down  
(HCT 178-181 - Reformation: Martin Luther)

### **Wednesday, January 31**

Revisiting Original Sin and It's Consequences  
(HCT 182-193 - Reformation: Martin Luther)

**Friday, February 2**

The German and then the Frenchman  
(HCT 194-195 - Reformation: John Calvin)

**Monday, February 5**

TULIP and Predestination: Single, Double, Other?  
(HCT 196-204 - Reformation: John Calvin)

**Wednesday, February 7**

Rome Reacts to the Reformers  
(HCT 205-208 - Reformation: Later Reformation and Counter Reformation)

**Friday, February 9**

The Reformation of the Christian Life  
(HCT 209-211 - Reformation: Puritanism and Pietism)

**Monday, February 12**

The British Reformation and Enlightenment  
(HCT 212-216 - Reformation: John Wesley)

**Wednesday, February 14**

*Midterm examination during class time*

**Friday, February 16**

*No Class*

**Monday, February 19**

*No Class – Reading Week*

**Wednesday, February 21**

*No Class – Reading Week*

**Friday, February 23**

*No Class – Reading Week*

**Monday, February 26**

The Dawn of the Modern Era with the Enlightenment  
(HCT 217-219)

***Alien Anthropologist Assignment (Group B) due***

**Wednesday, February 28**

Defending Religion Against Cultured Despisers  
(HCT 220-239 - Modern Era: Lessing, Kant, Schleiermacher)

**Friday, March 2**

The Truth of Faith In Spite of the Crowd  
(HCT 240-242 - Modern Era: Kierkegaard)

**Monday, March 5**

The Fundamentals of Conservative Protestantism  
(HCT 243-249 - Modern Era: Geology and Biology, Fundamentalism/Evangelicalism)

**Wednesday, March 7**

Modern Era: Navigating Turbulent Christian Waters  
(HCT 250-257 - Ritschl and Newman)

**Friday, March 9**

The Problem of Peace  
(HCT 258-262 - Modern Era: Schweitzer)

**Monday, March 12**

The "NO!" To Natural Theology  
(HCT 263-273 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Barth)

**Wednesday, March 14**

Making Christianity Comprehensible to Modern Minds  
(HCT 274-282 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Bultmann)

**Friday, March 16**

20<sup>th</sup> Century: Bonhoeffer (Film A)  
*No reading assignment for today.*

**Monday, March 19**

20<sup>th</sup> Century: Bonhoeffer (Film B)  
(HCT 283-289)

**Wednesday, March 21**

The Love of Power vs the Power of Love  
(HCT 290-301 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Neibuhr and Tillich)

**Friday, March 23**

Protestants and Roman Catholics 450 Years After the Reformation  
(HCT 302-308 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Rahner and Second Vatican Council )

**Monday, March 26**

Smashing the Modern Theological Machine  
(HCT 309-311 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Process and Liberation theologies)

**Wednesday, March 28**

Worship in the Power of the Spirit  
(HCT 312 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Pentecostalism)

**Friday, March 30**

*No class – Good Friday – Alien Anthropologist Assignment (Group C) Due*

**Monday, April 2**

*No class – Easter Monday*

**Wednesday, April 4**

Rethinking Theology After the War After the “War to End All Wars”  
(HCT 312-316, 320-323 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Moltmann and Pannenburg)

**Friday, April 6**

New Voices 1  
(HCT 317-319 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Feminist and Postmodern theology)

**Monday, April 9**

New Voices 2  
(HCT 324-325 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: African Christianity)

**Wednesday, April 11**

*Last day of class*  
*Course Evaluations*  
New Voices 3  
(HCT 326-328 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Asian Christianity)

## GENERAL ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

All handed-in written work must conform to these **paper-less** instructions:

- Black, 12 point, Times New Roman font.
- Double spacing.
- Standard margins (1 inch or 2.5 cm).
- PDF format.
- Due no later than class start time on due date.
- Must be emailed as attachment to [mwagenman@uwo.ca](mailto:mwagenman@uwo.ca). (Your “Sent” folder will be your confirmation of submission.)
- Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day (or any part of a day). After 5 days late, assignment will receive zero marks.
- Any modification of these instructions must be discussed with the professor and agreed to prior to the due date.

## COURSE GRADING SCALE AND LEVEL OF WORK

A+	90-100%	Exceptional
A	85-89%	
A-	80-84%	
B+	77-79%	Good
B	73-76%	
B-	70-72%	
C+	67-69%	Satisfactory
C	63-66%	
C-	60-62%	
D+	57-59%	Unsatisfactory
D	53-56%	
D-	50-52%	
F	0-49%	Failure

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar</b>	No errors	Occasional error	Minor errors	Repeated errors	Consistent errors throughout
<b>Organization and Logic of Argument</b>	Organization supports argument, excellent use of headings, perfect transitions	Organization of argument shows minor gaps or jumps in logic or transitions. Headings tends to be unhelpful	Organization jumps without good transitions, evidence of gaps in argument, headings disconnected from logical progression.	Little evidence of argument's organization, repeated jumps or gaps in logic, logical fallacies, unhelpful headings	No obvious overall organization, overall logic flawed
<b>Style</b>	Style is consistent and perfectly followed	Occasional stylistic inconsistencies or errors	Repeated stylistic inconsistencies or errors	Significant deviation from style	No obvious adherence to style guide
<b>Originality or Creativity of Thought</b>	Highly original and creative, sources support argument	Some original or creative thought evident, thought tends to follow sources	Little original or creative reflection beyond sources, thought clearly follows sources	Minimal personal engagement or reflection, sources clearly drive the thought	No evidence of reflection beyond reporting of source material
<b>Level of Research/Use of Sources</b>	Thoughtful, strategic, and representative choice and use of sources	Good, generally representative choice and use of sources	Assigned type/number of sources achieved but not selected thoughtfully, representatively, or strategically. Some important or relevant sources missing	Sources selected are not relevant, representative, thoughtful, or strategic for assignment. Type and number of sources consulted near assignment	Minimal evidence of thoughtful exploration of topic, assigned type/number of sources not achieved
<b>Thesis Focus and Development</b>	Thesis is clear and specific, argument supports thesis, and argument development is persuasive	Thesis could be a bit more specific or clear, argument generally supports thesis but development has gaps	Thesis is acceptable but is not clear or specific, argument shows little development and isn't very persuasive	Thesis is unclear and vague (unfocussed), argument shows little development or persuasiveness	Thesis is unclear and vague (unfocussed), argument doesn't develop and isn't persuasive

### Additional Statements:

1. **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices during Tests and Exams:** It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.
2. **Statement on Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:  
<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html>.
3. **Plagiarism-detecting Software/Computer Marking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).
4. **Support Services:**
  - UWO Registrar's Office: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
  - Huron's Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean:  
[http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\\_of\\_theology/info\\_for\\_current\\_students](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_of_theology/info_for_current_students)
  - Faculty of Theology office: [srice@uwo.ca](mailto:srice@uwo.ca), 519-438-7224, ext. 289
  - Bachelor's Academic Advising at Huron:  
<http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/AcademicAdvisorsandServices>
  - Huron's Writing Skills Centre: [http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student\\_life/writing\\_services](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services)
  - UWO's Mental Health website: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to this website for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
  - UWO Student Support and Development Services:  
[http://communications.uwo.ca/current\\_students/student\\_services.htm](http://communications.uwo.ca/current_students/student_services.htm)
  - Services provided by Western University Student Council: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>
5. **Accommodation for absences:** If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the Faculty's Dean's office (or academic counselor), and not to the instructor. For the Faculty of Theology, all such documentation must be submitted to room A227. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.
  - a. **Non-medical absences:** Assignments which are submitted late without prior permission of the instructor are subject to a 10% deduction per day; assignments submitted more than 5 days late without prior permission will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Should a non-medical reason make it impossible for you to write the final course exam, appropriate documentation and a request for relief must be submitted to the Dean's Office well in advance of the exam date.
  - b. **Medical absences:** See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness — Undergraduate Students, at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

- c. For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course, a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean's office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean's office in consultation with the instructor(s). Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.
- d. The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) and Request for Relief are available at the Student Centre website (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>), Huron University College Academic Counselling website ([www.huronuc.on.ca](http://www.huronuc.on.ca)) or from the Dean's Office or Academic Services Centre at Huron.