

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I
HT5100 – Summer 2026, 3 Credit Hours

MEETINGS: June 8-12, 9AM-5PM

INSTRUCTOR: Peter James Yoder, Ph.D.
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COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This general introduction to Christianity in the early and medieval periods focuses on key Christian doctrines and great leaders from Justin Martyr to Martin Luther who made contributions of lasting significance to the Christian Church.

REQUIRED SECONDARY TEXTS:

- Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years* (Yale, 2012)
- Kevin Madigan, *Medieval Christianity* (Yale, 2015) [Chps. 8-21]

REQUIRED PRIMARY TEXTS (provided on Canvas):

- Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (online or SVS Press edition)
- Benedict, *Rule*
- Anselm, *Why God Became Man*
- Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God*
- Aquinas, selections from *Compendium Theologiae*

During the course, the professor may provide additional readings online.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

The purpose of this course is to offer a general introduction to the various historical-theological developments in early and medieval Christianity. Special emphasis will be placed on key figures, movements, councils, creeds, rules, and the relationship between Christianity and the various political and social cultures it encountered.

EVALUATION COMPONENTS AND GRADING SCALE:

Attendance/Readings Completion: 10%
Exams (2): 60% (30% each)
Writing Assignment: 30%

Attend. Participation: This grade is comprised of class attendance, participation, and completion of assigned readings.

Exams: This grade is comprised of two exams. Further expectations will be discussed in class.

Paper: Research papers will be 12-15 pages. Requirements for formatting and expectations for the research paper will be available on canvas.

Schedule of Assignments:

**Proctored Exam 1: due by Friday June 26th / Exam 2: July 31st
Papers due Friday, Aug 7th emailed to professor]**

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Instruction will occur in the form of both lectures and discussions.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is RTS policy that students be present for all class sessions. The professor must be notified if a situation is encountered that requires a student to be absent from class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

No laptops, cell phones, or electronic devices (outside of those appropriate for health issues/learning disabilities) are allowed. In no case will academic dishonesty be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to the following: plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, multiple submissions, and aiding and abetting. Plagiarism is the type of academic dishonesty most relevant to this course. It involves submitting material that in part or in whole is not the student's own work, without properly attributing the source(s) of its content. This definition includes generative AI. **AI IS COMPLETELY FORBIDDEN IN MY COURSES.** This includes AI used for generating information and AI used for proofreading (like "Grammarly"). AI is also not allowed to summarize required readings or research. Academic dishonesty as listed above will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

RTS GRADING SCALE:

A (97-100) 4 .0
 A- (94-96) 3 .66
 B+ (91-93) 3 .33
 B (88-90) 3 .00
 B- (86-87) 2 .66
 C+ (83-85) 2 .33
 C (80-82) 2 .00
 C- (78-79) 1 .66
 D+ (75-77) 1 .33
 D (72-74) 1 .00
 D- (70-71) 0 .66
 F (BELOW 70) 0 .00

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, TOPICS, AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Topics, readings, and themes may be altered in light of the progress of the course.

1. Introduction to Church History and Historical Theology in light of the redeeming work of Christ
2. The Church in the first three centuries: apologists and the Fathers, persecutions and challenges to the faith
3. Christological controversies, Constantine, and the progress of ecumenical councils
4. The Church in the East and the Cappadocian Fathers
5. Augustine and his world
6. Monasticism and Gregory the Great
7. Charlemagne and “global” Christianity
8. Debate, schisms, reforms, and religious orders
9. Scholasticism and the medieval world
10. Aquinas and his world
11. Mysticism and devotion in the medieval world
12. Late-medieval developments and controversies


REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
 SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: HT5100 History of Christianity I
 Professor: Dr. Peter James Yoder
 Campus: Dallas
 Date: Summer 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	1. Development of doctrine 2. Recognition of important periods of history 3. Biographical studies
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Minimal	1. Application of Scripture to historical context 2. Interest in Church's interpretation of Scripture
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Minimal	1. Interest in development of key Reformed doctrines in pre-Reformation church
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	1. Monastic Spirituality 2. Medieval mysticism 3. Piety and Practices of the Church Fathers
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	1. Recognition of broad development of systems of thought and practice
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	1. Emphasis on catholic Christianity 2. Care for Church history that belongs to all Christians 3. Ecumenical Creeds
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	1. Insight into perennial ecclesiastical concerns 2. Church liturgy 3. Missions 4. Cultural engagement