Administrative Unit: History and Social Services

Course Prefix and Number: HIST 381

Course Title: History of Christianity: The Early Church

Number of: Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Development of Christianity from its origins to the eve of the Reformation. Emphasis is on the evolution of theology within the context of Western civilization. Specific subjects include ancient Hebrew thought, Hellenism, Gnosticism, the historical Jesus, the trinity, Augustine, medieval theology, heresies, etc. Cross-listed as RELI 381.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): HIST 101

Text(s): Most current editions of the following:


Course Objectives:

- To study in depth the historical, intellectual, and archaeological origins of Christianity.
- To explore the various interpretations and clash of scholarly opinions over ancient Hebrew history, myth and religion, the quest for the historical Jesus, the various early Christianities, and the historical origins of Church doctrine and organization.
- To analyze and compare ancient documents with modern interpretations.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

- Describe the historical origins of ancient Judaism and the nature of Roman Palestine during the time of Jesus.
- Explain and differentiate the three basic quests for the historical Jesus, including an analysis of the source issue, the formation of the gospels, the Q source debate, and the archeological evidence.
- Analyze the role of heresy (such as the Gnostics) in the formation of Christian doctrine.
- Describe the events and ideas leading up to the great Church Councils.
- Analyze the doctrine of the Trinity.
Describe the organization of the early Church.
Describe the power and influence of the Church in early medieval Europe.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

- History and religion
- Ancient Palestine
- The Early Hebrews
- Hebrew Eschatology
- Hellenism
- The Historical Jesus
- Paul
- Gnosticism
- The Church Fathers
- St. Augustine
- Early Medieval Theology
- Heresy

Material from this course may be tested on the Major Field Test (MFT) administered during the Culminating Experience course for the degree.

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 35

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

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NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.