Rel 344 Christianity   Fall 2023

9:30-10:45 Tues/Thurs.   238 CCC

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday1:00-2:00;

               Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:00

                And by appointment or drop-in. Zoom appointments are available also.

DESCRIPTION: Christianity is 2000 years old, has roughly two billion adherents, and is found most everywhere on the planet.   These facts indicate that Christianity is a vast topic. Given this reality, we will only be able to touch on a few selected important figures, movements and ideas. The course will survey the history of the Christian religion with attention to the tremendous diversity of forms of Christianity, past and present. Among the questions we will explore are the following: What (according to different Christians) is required by Christian faith? According to different Christians, what/where are evil and sin? In what ways has Christianity supported and sanctified the given social order with its structures of power? And throughout Christian history, how have the martyrs stood as witnesses to Christianity's teachings on love and non-violence?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES.

Knowledge:
- Gain knowledge of the history of Christianity, including ability to identify significant persons, movements and points of conflict and diversity.

Skills:
- Practice and improve skills in reading (including reading primary source materials), writing, critical thinking and information literacy.

Dispositions:
- Appreciate the diversity within Christianity and the consequent difficulty of making normative claims about what Christianity is or what Christian faith requires.
- Be able to empathetically understand and reflect upon forms of Christian belief and expression which are foreign to your own worldview.
- Cultivate and practice the intellectual virtues of humility, confidence and curiosity.

REQUIRED BOOK:

Brian Wilson, *Christianity* (text rental)

Additional readings posted on Canvas

REQUIREMENTS and CRITERIA OF EVALUATION

Midterm -- 15%

Final exam -- 15%

5 out of 7 Reflection essays (250-500 words each) – 20%

10 out of 13 discussion forum posts – 10%

Research project step 1 – 5%

Research project step 2 – 5%

Research project step 3 (power point presentation) – 15%

Research project step 4 (oral report) – 5%

Attendance (5%) and pop quizzes (5%) – 10%

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

A **midterm exam (15%),** and a **final exam (20%)** will test your knowledge of information and ideas covered in our readings, lectures and discussions. The exams will include true/false and multiple choice questions along with short answer questions. Many of the short answer questions will be in the form of quote I.D.

Reflection essays (20%) – 5 out of 7 required. Reflection essays give you an opportunity to explore more deeply and comment upon the material we are studying.   Requirements for specific homework assignments are provided in the assignment schedule. In addition to following the directions in the prompt, homework should meet the following expectations:

- Written in a manner that is *grammatically correct and coherent*.
- Submitted to Canvas in "doc" file format, typed and double-spaced
- About 250-500 words in length (one to two typed and double-spaced pages)
- Responds appropriately and fully to the prompt
- Shows good command of assigned materials and includes quotes as instructed
- Handed in on date indicated on syllabus.
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Reflection essays will be graded on a point system as follows:

20-19 points = Excellent; exceeds expectations
18-16 points = Good; meets expectations
15-14 points = falls short of expectations in one respect
13 points or less = falls short of expectations in multiple respects

Late reflection essays will lose *one point* for every day late.

Discussion forum posts (10%) will facilitate the exchange of ideas among students and allow for conversations that go beyond the class session. I will count your **best 10 out of 13** discussion forum posts.

Discussion posts should consist of meaningful and substantive content, *conforming to the following criteria:*
- Posts should be approximately 50 to 100 words in length.
- Posts should reflect accurate knowledge of material under discussion.
- Posts should consist of complete and grammatically accurate sentences.
- Posts that initiate threads should raise an issue or idea to which others can respond.
- Posts that respond to existing threads should reflect thoughtful engagement with other posts on the thread, and should advance the conversation.
- Posts should avoid profanity, rants, personal attacks, or disrespect towards any group or person on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.

The criteria for scoring discussion posts is as follows:
  10 pts = Thoughtful and clearly expressed post which reflects accurate knowledge of material under discussion and advances a conversation. Meets all criteria (see above) AND includes at least one additional and substantive response (at least 50 words) to another students' post.
  9 pts = Thoughtful and clearly expressed post, or response to another student's post, which reflects accurate knowledge of material under discussion and advances a conversation. Meets all criteria (see bullet points above)
  8 pts = Post is lacking in one of the required criteria (see above)
  7 pts = Post is lacking in two or more of the required criteria (see above)
  6 pts = Post is lacking in three or more of the required criteria (see above)

Late policy: Discussion forms will remain open for three days after the due date; late posts will *lose 1/2 point per day late* (including weekends and holidays).

Research project steps 1-4 (30% total). On a topic of your choice involving Christianity. Full guidelines will be provided and posted.

Research project Step 1 (5%) - Identify a topic involving Christianity.   This topic could concern anything in the history of Christianity (a person, a text, a movement, a dispute) or a contemporary issue. This topic should be very specific and appropriate to a short research project.
1. Pose a question about that topic and explain why you find it important and/or interesting.
2. Cite at least one primary source that would be a basis for or relevant to this research project.   Briefly clarify why you believe this source is relevant.
3. Cite one source from the reference room of the library that provides you with important information about this topic. Citation of an article from the online version of the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (accessed via UWSearch) is also acceptable. Briefly clarify why you believe this source is relevant.
4. Cite one academic peer reviewed article relevant to your topic and question. Briefly clarify why you believe this article is relevant.
Graded on a 20 point scale. Late submissions lose 1 point per day late.

Research project step 2 (5%) – topic, sources and annotations
1. Clearly and concisely explain your proposed research topic, the question you are bringing to this topic, and why you think that this topic and question are interesting or important.   (50-100 words)
2. Cite one primary source which you will use to explore your topic. (If you are using multiple primary sources, cite two or three.)
3. Provide a brief annotation for one of your primary sources. This annotation should include information about content, authorship, historical context, geographical location and any other important information.
4. Cite two secondary sources which are relevant to your research and provide a brief annotation of each source.   Your annotation should include the following information: the type of source this is (e.g., a peer reviewed article, an encyclopedia article, a newspaper article, a book, a video, etc.), a brief summary of its contents, and its potential relevance to your research project.
Graded on a 20 point scale. Late submissions lose 1 point per day late.

Research project step 3 (15%)- Using Power point, create a short slide show that summarizes your research question, key discoveries, and conclusions.   This slide show should be informative, concise and visually appealing, with the goal of facilitating audience understanding and engagement. Further guidelines and requirements will be provided. Graded on a 40 point scale. Submission due on Friday Dec. 15. Late submissions lose two points per day late (out of 40)

Research project step 4: Oral presentation (5%) - Prepare and deliver an oral presentation to accompany your slide show and present to class. Graded on a 20 point scale.

Attendance and pop quizzes (10%)

In-class pop quizzes (5%) will encourage you to come to class prepared by having read or watched assigned materials. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class and cannot be taken outside of class or made up if you missed class or came in late. I will drop your two lowest quiz scores.

Regular class attendance (5%) You are expected to come to class consistently, having read the assigned material and thus able to participate fully. I will take attendance in each class period, and expect you to be present unless you have contacted me about an excused absence.   Your attendance grade will be based on the percentage of classes

attended (or for which there is an excused absence) out of the total class periods we met. You can see your score on Canvas.

Excused absence: An absence may be excused for reasons of <u>illness, Covid quarantine, family emergency, military service obligations, a school or team related event, or important religious observance</u>. (This rule follows official university policy.) **If you wish for an absence to be excused, you must send an email to Prof. Keefe stating the reason for your absence <u>in advance of the absence</u>**.

Whether the absence is excused or unexcused, if you miss class, take these steps:
Step 1: Complete all assigned readings or videos for the class you missed
Step 2: Carefully study the posted power point notes for the class you missed
Step 3: Ask another student to share their notes from the class you missed (not every point is included in the notes)
If you still have questions, visit with Prof. Keefe to ask. *It is not the professor's responsibility to fill you in on what you missed if you were absent, but I am happy to answer questions if you have completed steps 1, 2 and 3*.

Classroom Etiquette:

- Cell phones must be muted and put away. Please ask for special permission to have your phone on your desk in cases where it is urgent that you be available for a call. It is however OK to pull out your phone (or laptop) briefly to check on a point of information being discussed in class.
- Laptop use in class is acceptable, though not recommended. (Studies show most students learn more effectively by taking handwritten notes.) If you are using a laptop for taking notes, you must close all social media sites and other sources of distraction.
- Do your best to get to class on time.   However, sometimes circumstances intervene, and it is OK to enter the classroom late.   Please come up after class to get credit for attendance.
- When speaking in class about matters involving religion, politics or morality, be aware of the diversity within the class, and strive to ensure that your comments are respectful of difference and contribute to an atmosphere of civil discourse.

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Grading Criteria

A	94-100%	C+	77-79%
A-	90-93%	C	74-76%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-73%
B	83-86%	D+	67-69%
B-	80-82%	D	60-66%
		F	0-59%

Plagiarism Policy: I adhere to a strict policy on academic integrity. Any questions that you may have regarding academic integrity should be resolved before you turn your assignments in. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university.

On ChatGPT: Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments must prepared by the student.   NOTE: all papers for this course undergo electronic plagiarism reviews. ***This process checks for AI generated papers as well as traditional plagiarism, all of which violate academic integrity standards.***

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:
http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf
If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me. I am happy to help in any way I can.