

Syllabus

Examining Our Christian Heritage 1

Virginia District Training Center
Lynchburg First Church of the Nazarene
1737 Wards Ferry Rd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502
(in the Cafe')

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(Intensive Format)

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Module Vision Statement

The lessons are based on general goals that revolve around five basic themes in the history of Christianity: Scripture and tradition; church structures; church and society; the spread of Christianity; and Christian spirituality, including Christian life, worship, and ministry. Understanding these aspects of the history of Christianity provides perspectives essential for Christian ministry in the world today.

This module aims at developing historical understanding of the Christian faith and tells the story of how people responded to the call of the gospel in the early and medieval periods. It is suggested that this module serve as a prerequisite for the History of Christianity 2.

This module will concentrate on the history of Christianity from the apostolic era through the Middle Ages to the pre-Reformation era. Students will discover and gain a deeper appreciation for the church's redemptive purposes in people, events, movements, and cultures. Students will be enabled to build bridges from historical understanding to personal spiritual formation, the role of the church in society, and contemporary ministry.

Educational Assumptions

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to any process of Christian education at any level. We will consistently request and expect the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community (people being and working together). Community is the gift of the Spirit but may be enhanced or hindered by human effort. Communities have common values, stories, practices, and goals. Explicit effort will be invested to enhance community within the class. Group work will take place in every lesson.
3. Every adult student has knowledge and experiences to contribute to the class. We learn not only from the instructor and the reading assignments but also from each other. Each student is valued not only as a learner but also as a teacher. That is one reason that so many exercises in this course are cooperative and collaborative in nature.
4. Journaling is an ideal way to bring theory and practice together as students synthesize the principles and content of the lessons with their own experiences, preferences, and ideas.

Outcome Statements

This module contributes to the development of the following abilities as defined in the *U.S. Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*.

Intended learning outcomes all relate to what are essential for the Christian ministry in terms of content, character, context, and competency.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- CN 24 Ability to describe the general story line of church history and the development of the major doctrines and creeds
- CN 25 Ability to identify and describe the significance of the major figures, themes, and events of the Patristic, medieval, Reformation, Puritan, Pietist, Wesleyan, and Modern periods of church history
- CN 26 Ability to describe how the church implemented its mission in the various periods of church history
- CX 8 Ability to place the ministry context in light of the large schemes of world and national history
- CX 10 Ability to understand and articulate the biblical, historical, and theological bases for Christian mission

OUTCOME STATEMENTS

By fulfilling the **CONTENT** learning outcomes of this module, the student will be enabled to:

1. Understand the goals and purposes of the historical study of Christianity.
2. Describe the general story lines of church history and the development of the major doctrines and creeds.
3. Possess general knowledge of early and medieval church history.
4. Understand what it meant to be Christian in these centuries by examining doctrinal issues, heretical movements and Christian responses, creeds and councils.
5. Understand the contributions of significant early theologians, and their relationship to their social context and their influence upon the Christian tradition.
6. Understand early methods of interpreting the Bible.
7. Identify and understand the significance of the major figures, themes, and events in the Christian church from its early period to the eve of the sixteenth-century Reformation.
8. Identify significant events, religious movements, and leaders in the history of Christianity in this time period.
9. Describe how the church implemented its mission in the various early and medieval periods of church history.
10. Understand the processes in the evangelization geographically.
11. Demonstrate critical themes of the Christian faith in early and medieval church history as focal points for carrying forward the gospel.
12. Identify significant changes in political history, and how these changes affected Christianity.
13. Continue the study of church history throughout ministry.
14. Describe, compare, and contrast early and medieval practices of ministry and worship to contemporary trends.
15. Defend and explain denominational Articles of Faith with reference to historical issues and council decisions.
16. Gain an appreciation for primary source material and significant literature of the periods under study.

This module helps to develop the **CHARACTER** of the minister by enabling students to:

1. Find helpful resources for personal spiritual and character formation and development in the works of Christians in this era.
2. Identify with worthy historical figures and movements.
3. Learn from history.

CONTEXT objectives enable students to:

1. Place the ministry context in light of the large schemes of world and national histories.
2. Examine issues of contextualization by looking at Christian apologetics.

3. Possess a richer understanding of the relationship between the church and society.
4. Understand the difference between what is essential in Christian life and practice, and what is incidental—a result of culture.
5. Understand Christianity better in their own countries.
6. Examine other social and historical contexts.
7. Apply historians' methods of viewing early and medieval Christianity in order to analyze their local church and its surrounding context.

COMPETENCY objectives enable students to:

1. Draw from early and medieval church history lessons and illustrations that inform how the church may effectively fulfill God's mission given today's realities.
2. Explain to a cult member why their beliefs were considered by the Early Church to be heretical.
3. Apply historical analysis to the life of a local congregation in order to describe its historical and cultural context.
4. Respond wisely from a historical basis to issues—both theological and practical in nature—arising in ministry.

Recommended Reading

A good, readable, first-level church history textbook is Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, second ed. Waco, TX: Word, 1995.

Other Resources

Many of the dates and basic information in these lessons are derived from *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, now in its third edition. For historical theology, the writer has relied much on Justo Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, and Paul Bassett and William Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness*, vol. 2: *The Historical Development*.

Helpful **CHARTS** include:

Hannah, John D. *Charts of Ancient and Medieval Church History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

Peterson, Susan L. *Timeline Charts of the Western Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.

Walton, Robert C. *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.

Helpful **WEBSITES** include:

Christian Classics Library	www.ccel.wheaton.edu/
Christian History	www.christianity.net/christianhistory
Christianity Today	www.christianity.net/ct
Church and State	http://encarta.msn.com/find/Concise.asp
Classical Age Resources	www.newgenevacenter.org/movers/classical
Converting the Empire	http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/57h/
Early Church History	The Ecole Initiative: Early Church History on the Web
Eastern Orthodoxy	http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/54h/
Empire and Papacy	http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook11.html
Encyclopedia of Early Church History	http://www2.evansville.edu/ecoleweb/
Heresy in the Early Church	http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/51h/
Historic Documents of the Church	www.gty.org/~phil/writings.htm/
HyperHistory Web Site	http://www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html
I BELIEVE Religious Information Source	http://mb-soft.com/believe/indexa.html
Internet Ancient History Sourcebook	http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.html
Islamic History Sourcebook	http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html
Medieval Age Resources	www.newgenevacenter.org/movers/middle-ages.htm
Medieval Sourcebook	Internet Medieval Sourcebook: Introduction
Orthodox Christian Thought	http://www.definingmoment.com/ric/refrigerium/ortho.html
People of Ideas	http://www.newgenevacenter.org/refernece/hellenistis.htm
St. Anthony and the Desert Fathers	http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/64h/
The Hall of Church History (Church Fathers)	http://www.gty.org/~phil/fathers.htm
Today in History Archive	http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/today/today.html
Wesley Center for Applied Theology	www.wesley.nnu.edu/

Course Requirements

1. **Class attendance, attention, and participation** are especially important. Students are responsible for all assignments and in-class work. Much of the work in this course is small-group work. Cooperative, small-group work cannot be made up. That makes attendance imperative. Even if one does extra reading or writing, the values of discussion, dialogue, and learning from each other are thwarted. If one lesson is missed, the instructor will require extra work before completion can be acknowledged. If two or more classes are missed, the student will be required to repeat the whole module.

Small-Group Work. Nothing is more important in this course than small-group work. The class members will be assigned to groups of two to four students each. The group members will serve as study partners for explorations and discussion.

2. Assignments

Journaling: The only ongoing assignment for this module is your journal. It is to be used regularly, if not daily. On at least one occasion during the term, the instructor will check the journals. In each lesson a journal assignment is included.

The journal should become the student's friend and treasury of insights, devotions, and ideas. Here the integration of theory and practice occurs. The spiritual life nature of the journal helps guard against the course of study being merely academic as you are repeatedly called upon to apply the principles studied to your own heart and your own ministry situation.

This journal is not a diary, not a catchall. It is, rather, a guided journal or a focused journal in which the educational experience and its implications are selected for reflection and writing.

The framers of this curriculum are concerned about the way that students fall into learning "about" the Bible, or "about" the spiritual life rather than learning—that is coming to know and internalize the Bible and spiritual principles. The journaling experience ensures that the "Be" component of "Be, Know, and Do" is present in the course of study. Be faithful with all journaling assignments.

Term Projects: In addition to daily work there are five assignments that are to be worked on throughout the course and will be due the last four lessons.

1. Similar to the Rule of Benedict for monastic life, construct a Rule of Life—at least five elements—for authentic spiritual life and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ for Christians today. *Due up to 30 days after class meeting time.*
2. Prepare an analysis of one significant individual from the Early Church—first 600 years. Include the context of where and when this person lived, contemporary impact, and long-term influence. Read a sampling of the person’s writings in order to have a better feel of his/her ideas. Also include the impact that this person has had on your life. This paper should be four to six pages long. The instructor may have specific requirements for format and structure. *Due up to 30 days after class meeting time*
3. To sharpen the students’ understanding of the other major Christian expressions—Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy—visit one service from each of these religious traditions. Prior to your visits read some of Justin Martyr’s 1st Apology chapters 61, 62, 65, and 67. These works pertain to early Christian worship. Write a three-page paper about the services and your impression of them. *Due up to 30 days after class meeting time*
4. A significant theme of this module is the development of ecclesiastical structures or the church institutionally. “Church Order” can also be related to denominational polity, leadership perspectives, church health, ministry models, Great Commission strategies, etc. In light of historical study, discuss two specific examples of current issues in the church as defined by the student and correlate them to how similar circumstances have been treated historically. The context of this discussion could be the Church of the Nazarene in particular or the church of Jesus Christ in general. This paper should be three to four pages. *Due up to 30 days after class meeting time*
5. Prepare—and maintain—a glossary of people, places, and events. It should include contributions and importance to the history of Christianity. This could be a file—hard copy or computer—or a card/index file. The following is a suggested list. You may want to include more. *Due up to 30 days after class meeting time*

Abelard, Peter (1079-1142)

Alexandria

Ambrose (339-397)

Anselm (1033-1109)

Antioch

Arianism

Aristotle (384-322 BC)

Ascetics

Athanasius (296-373)	Augustine (354-430)
Augustine of Canterbury (d. 605)	Avignon
Bede (673-735)	Benedict (480-550)
Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)	Boniface (680-754)
Carthage	Cistercians
Clement of Alexandria (150-215)	Clement of Rome (first century)
Constantine (280-337)	Constantinople
Decium Persecution	Dominic (1170-1221)
Dominicans	Donatists
Eusebius (260-340)	Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)
Franciscans	Gnostics
Pope Gregory I (540-604)	Pope Gregory VII (1021-85)
Hus, John (1372-1415)	Ignatius (d.? 108)
Pope Innocent III (1160-1216)	Inquisition
Irenaeus (130-200)	Jerome (342-420)
Joachim of Fiore (1132-1202)	Justin Martyr (100-165)
Pope Leo (d. 461)	Lull, Ramon (1233-1315)
Martin of Tours (316-397)	Monarchianism
Monasticism	Mongols
Montanus	Nestorius (d. 451)
Origen (185-254)	Pelagius (fourth-fifth century)
Plato (427-347 BC)	Polycarp (69-155)
Rome	Sabelliansim
Tertullian (160-225)	Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471)
Thomas Aquinas (1225-74)	Wycliffe, John (1330-84)

Course Outline and Schedule

Intensive module. Participants must complete any reading assignments before arriving at the module site, and written assignments can be submitted up to 30 days following the class meeting. Total meeting time: 4 days.

Session Date	Session Time	
9/6/2019	5:30pm - 7:00pm	1. Introduction to the History of Christianity
	7:00pm - 8:30pm	2. The Spread of Christianity
9/7/2019	8:00am - 9:30am	3. Early Church Doctrine and Persecution
	9:30am - 11:00am	4. Development of the Canon and Creeds
	12:30pm - 2:00pm	5. Ministry and Expansion of the Early Church
	2:00pm - 3:30pm	6. Formation of the Papacy and Eastern Christianity
	BREAK	BREAK
	4:00pm - 5:30pm	7. Early Middle Ages
9/8/2019	2:30pm - 4:00pm	8. Interaction of Church and Culture
	4:00pm - 5:30pm	9. Tensions Within the Church
	7:00pm - 8:30pm	10. The Rise of Scholarship
9/9/2019	5:30pm - 7:00pm	11. The Gospel and Culture Interact—East and West
	7:00pm - 8:30pm	12. The Late Middle Ages

Course Evaluation

The instructor, the course itself, and the students' progress will be evaluated. These evaluations will be made in several ways.

The progress of students will be evaluated with an eye for enhancing the learning experience by:

1. Carefully observing the small-group work, noting the competence of reports, the balance of discussion, the quality of the relationships, the cooperation level, and the achievement of assigned tasks
2. Careful reading of homework assignments
3. Journal checks

The evaluation of the course materials and the teacher will be evaluated by frequently asking and discussing the effectiveness and relevance of a certain method, experience, story, lecture, or other activity.

Some evaluation cannot be made during the class itself. Some objectives will not be measurable for years to come. If students encounter the transforming power of God at deeper levels than ever before, learn devotional skills and practice them with discipline, and incorporate the best of this course into their own ministries, the fruit of this educational endeavor could go on for a long time. In truth, that is what we expect.

Additional Information

A reasonable effort to assist every student will be made. Any student who has handicaps, learning disabilities, or other conditions that make the achievement of the class requirements exceedingly difficult should make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to see what special arrangements can be made. Any student who is having trouble understanding the assignments, lectures, or other learning activities should talk to the instructor to see what can be done to help.

Instructor's Availability

Good faith efforts to serve the students both in and beyond the classroom will be made.

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

Participating in the course of study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each course you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, write papers, and take exams. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The course work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritually formative work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head to your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work to faithfully spend time daily in your journal. Many people confess that this is a practice they tend to push aside when

pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling as time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, an ah-ha that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet, family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with course material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems that we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated

value of the Word, your course work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration, weaving together faith development with learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: “Why do I do what I do when I do it?”

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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