

Course Syllabus

RLST 3000 - Christian Traditions

Summer [B] 2019: July 9 - August 9

** This syllabus is provisional, course details may change at the discretion of the instructor.*

NOTE: This is an online course and will be offered via Canvas. Please familiarize yourself with the minimum technical requirements for the course (see the end of this syllabus), including how to get technical help. All communication with the Instructor and Teaching Assistant will be carried out via Canvas or your colorado.edu email; messages from other email accounts will not be answered as per university policy. It is your responsibility to check your messages and keep current with course information. It is **your responsibility** to check Canvas for messages every weekday. You can set up notifications/email alerts from Canvas, and you can access Canvas via their iOS and Android app. If you are having any trouble with the course (aside from technical issues) you should contact the grader immediately.

Course Duration: The course will run from July 9 to August 9, including the final exam.

Instructor

Professor Brian A. Catlos

Brian.Catlos@Colorado.edu (<mailto:Brian.Catlos@Colorado.edu>)

Prof. Catlos will be out of the country; please use email to contact him as necessary; a phone or skype call can be arranged if desired.

Brian A. Catlos is a historian and religious scholar who specialized on Christianity, Judaism and Islam in the pre-Modern Mediterranean, and particularly on ethno-religious identity and relations between religious communities. He has received many national and international awards and distinctions, and has published numerous academic articles and books. Some of his books include [*The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims in Catalonia and Aragon, 1050–1300*](#) (<https://www.colorado.edu/religiousstudies/briancatlos/reviews.html>) (Cambridge University Press: 2004; translated into Spanish in 2010), [*Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c. 1050–1614*](#) (<https://www.colorado.edu/religiousstudies/briancatlos/reviews2.html>) (Cambridge University Press: 2014) and [*Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors: Faith, Power, and Violence in the Age of Crusade and Jihad*](#) (<https://www.colorado.edu/religiousstudies/briancatlos/reviews3.html?ie=UTF8&qid=1384731539&sr=8->

[1&keywords=catlos+infidels](#)) (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2014) and *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain* (<https://www.colorado.edu/religiousstudies/briancatlos/reviews6.html>) (Basic Books: 2018). He has also worked in documentary film and writes travel guide books. For more, see www.briancatlos.com (<http://www.briancatlos.com>).

Prof. Catlos will be delivering lectures and grading the final exam, and will be available to answer questions.

Teaching Assistant

Cindy Bishop Jonas

cynthia.howard@colorado.edu (<mailto:cynthia.howard@colorado.edu>)

Contact hours: Monday - Thursday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. MST

Cindy is a third year graduate student completing her master's degree in the Religious Studies department this summer. Her thesis focuses on intersections of race and religion in contemporary American Evangelical media. Her graduate work has focused on interdisciplinary analysis of American Christian culture through critical race, decolonial/postcolonial theories. She will begin a PhD program in Media Studies in the fall.

As your primary contact in the course, Cindy will oversee Discussion Groups and moderate the Discussion Board, as well as field questions.

Communications Policies

Cindy will be directing discussions and will be your first contact for all course-related matters, except for technical support. For urgent matters only, you may also contact her by phone. For reasons of confidentiality and verification of identity, all emails must be sent from your colorado.edu address or via Canvas or they will not be responded to. All non-Canvas emails should have RLST3000 in the subject line. During business hours on weekdays responses to email will normally be within 4 hours; overnight and on weekends it may take up to 12 hours; if you do not receive a reply after 12 hours, please re-send and cc.: the Instructor. Note: if you are contacting Prof. Catlos messages sent after 3pm may be subject to slower responses due to time zone difference.

Technical Requirements & Support

Please read the Technical Requirements document carefully. It is your responsibility to have access to the minimum required equipment and internet access. Extensions to assignments will not be given for

technical reasons.

For technical assistance contact (5-HELP), see [Technical Support & Requirements](https://canvas.colorado.edu/courses/27001/modules/items/1141865) (<https://canvas.colorado.edu/courses/27001/modules/items/1141865>) page for more information.

Overview and Course Objectives

This course will serve as an introduction and historical overview to the Christian religion, beginning with its most remote origins and through to the beginning of the Reformation. Although emphasis will be placed on “Western” Christian traditions, every effort will be made (given the constraints of time) to survey the various traditions of global Christianity.

The aim is to familiarize students with the origins of Christianity and the forces and traditions that shaped it over its first millennium and a half. We will look at different interpretations of Christianity in an effort to understand how they arose, and consider the relationship between religious belief, religious institutions, and larger developments in politics, economics and society. The goal is not only to gain a better understanding of the history of Christianity, but of the dynamics by which most organized religions develop and diversify.

The textbooks will provide an overall narrative framework on which topical and thematic lectures are overlaid, and which will be complimented by the primary sources we will discuss.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for completing all the course assignments, tests, readings and viewing the lectures in a timely manner. You will be doing the equivalent of a full semester’s work in five weeks. Between lectures, readings and assignments, you can expect to spend **at least three hours per day** on the course. **You will need to log in several times per day** during the week, particularly during discussions. Students are also responsible for having adequate internet access and equipment. The course is carried out through Canvas; therefore, if you should have equipment problems you should use another computer to access Canvas and keep up with the course. This will be your responsibility.

This is a full-credit course offered in 5 weeks; expect a full semester’s workload. It may not be compatible with part-time work or other commitments. Canvas logs individual students’ log-ins, locations and activities; your Instructor will know when you have logged in, for how long and what you have viewed. Students who do not log in regularly and do not view all the material will not be eligible for a passing grade at the instructor’s discretion.

Course Components & Grading

The course consists of several components, detailed below. The workload will be heaviest in the two weeks of the course. Be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time on this, and do not fall behind. The various assignments are timed, and it is crucial that you complete your obligations in a timely manner.

Grading

Your grade will be assessed according to three components:

Discussion Groups and Bulletin Board	(40% + up to 10% bonus) 40%
Weekly Tests	30%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

Syllabus Quiz

The syllabus quiz must be completed by July 9 (late enrollees have up to July 12). A score of 100% is necessary to continue in the course. You will have access to course materials and you can take the syllabus quiz as many times as necessary. On the syllabus quiz you will also be required to indicate your planned location for the duration of the course (dates and city/town) to facilitate contact and to verify your time zone.

Tests

On the last day of instruction of each unit (usually) there will be a test consisting of twenty multiple-choice questions. Questions will be taken from the lectures and the two textbooks. You can take the tests any time (Mountain Time Zone) on the test day. Tests will be “open” for 30 minutes only once you start. Your test grade will consist of the average of your four best test scores, factored to 30% of the final. You must pass (50%) every test to get a passing grade on the course. If you receive less than 50% on a quiz, please contact Prof. Catlos without delay.

Test dates:

Weekly Test 1 - Friday July 12

Weekly Test 2 - Friday July 19

Weekly Test 3 - Friday July 26

Weekly Test 4 - Monday August 5

Weekly Test 5 - Thursday August 8

Final Exam

The final exam, an “open book” test, two hours in length, will consist of an interpretive essay of 750–1000 words (3-4 double-spaced pages). Accepted formats are Word (.doc and .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), Text (.txt) and PDF (.pdf). Other formats may not be readable and may result in a grade of zero being assigned. You can take the final exam any time between 1am (Mountain Time Zone) August 9 and 4pm (Mountain Time Zone) on August 9. You must score at least 65% on the final to pass the course.

Readings

There are two text books (see below) and the total reading for the course is about 1000 pages (plus supplementary readings) or about 40 pages per day of classes. Readings should be completed by the beginning of the day indicated on the schedule. The weekly tests will include questions taken from the readings. For Supplementary Readings, see below.

Required Texts

Gonzalez, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity . Volume 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. 2nd Edition. New York: HarperOne, 2010. JG

Meister, Chad & J. B. Stump, *Christian Thought: A Historical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2010. CM

Additional required readings for the online discussions will be posted online as the course is underway.

Lectures

There are approximately 22.5 hours of lecture, consisting of 25 topical lectures (usually one lecture of 40–60 minutes per day), broken into segments of between about 5 and 20 minutes. Lectures will be streamed via Canvas. The lectures for each unit will be made available at 9am on the day prior to the first day of that unit, and will remain on line for the duration of the course. You should watch the lectures attentively and take notes of major points and figures. These will appear on the weekly tests.

Schedule of Lectures

For a detailed course schedule see the [Class Schedule](https://canvas.colorado.edu/courses/27001/modules/items/1141860) (<https://canvas.colorado.edu/courses/27001/modules/items/1141860>) document and the calendar on Canvas.

Note: Lectures are made available to registered students for class purposes only; they may not be otherwise shared, distributed, transferred or copied. (R = Thursday)

Introduction - Introductory Video

Unit I ORIGINS

Day 1: J9 T 1 - Religion & Christianity, Scripture & History

Day 2: J10 W 2 - The Old Testament /3 - The Emergence of Judaism

Day 3: J11 R 4 - Judaism in the Time of Jesus

Day 4: J12 F 5 - Religious Revolution

Unit II THE EARLY CHURCH

Day 5: J15 M 6 - The Early Churches

Day 6: J16 T 7 - Church & Empire

Day 7: J17 W 8 - Unity & Division

Day 8: J18 R 9 - (Un)orthodoxies

Day 9: J19 F 10 - Order and Disorder

Unit III THE CHURCH IN THE WEST

Day 10: J22 M 11 - The Church in the West

Day 11: J23 T 12 - Christian Europe

Day 12: J24 W 13 - The New Church

Day 13: J25 R 14 - The Age of the Papacy

Day 14: J26 F 15 - East and West

Unit IV CHRISTIANITY ON THE MARCH

Day 15: J29 M 16 - The Road to the Holy Land

Day 16: J30 T 17 - Christians in the Holy Land

Day 17: J31 W 18 - The End of the Crusades

Day 18: A1 R 19 - Heretics and Infidels

UNIT V DISSENT AND DIFFERENCE

Day 19: A2 F 20 - Christianity, Jews and Muslims, A

Day 20: A5 M 21 - Christianity, Jews and Muslims, B

Day 21: A6 T 22 - Crisis and Change

Day 22: A7 W 23 - The Reformation

Day 23: A8 R 24 - The New Age

Day 24: A9 F - Final Exam

On-line Discussions

Formal online discussions will begin on 15 July. The class will be broken into discussion groups of six to ten people. Prior to this; no later than 11 July, each student should post, write a short introduction to the to the Bulletin Board, including name, major, year of study, career goals (if any), why you are taking the course, what you hope to learn/achieve, and what your expectations are for workload (indicate also if you have taken an online course in the past). On or before 13 July you should review these messages and submit a short paragraph via the Assignment tool as a part of the Introductory Assignment, summarizing the make-up of the class, and student's goals and expectations. You should also note, where you will be

physically (e.g Boulder, Dallas, Paris...) during the course. **This is mandatory.**

Beginning 15 July each round of discussion will be based on a set of primary source readings (historical documents) relating to a specific theme. The teaching assistant will provide a brief introduction and a set of prompts the day before the first post is due.

Within 24 hours (the day of the "1st Post" as per below), each you will be required to write a substantive response (150 words minimum) relating to one of the prompts, and referring directly and specifically to the documents. Before writing, you should review the previous responses and engage with/respond to at least one of the previous responses (unless yours is the first for response to the prompt in question). In the next 48 hours (the day of the "2nd Post") students will write a second substantive response to either of the prompts, referring to and engaging with **at least two** previous posts. Aside from the two mandatory posts, students are welcome to post subsequent responses/rebuttals of any length. Consistently posting extra, well-informed messages will make you eligible for up to 10 percentage points of bonus marks applied to your final grade. Note - the 2nd post for the last discussion group is due after 24 hours.

On-line discussion is 40% of your grade; you will be assessed on the quality and quantity of your posts, comments that are superficial and do not engage with the material or the conversation thus far will not be satisfactory. Students who do not participate satisfactorily in the discussions will not be eligible to pass this course.

All source readings will be available on Canvas throughout the course. Consult the roster to see when you will be serving as discussion leader and review the prompts. You are encouraged to prepare your interpretative statement ahead of time (although you cannot post it ahead of the due date).

Online Discussion Topics

# Topic	1st post	2nd post
1 Jesus	M July 15	W July 17
2 Early Christian Women	W July 17	F July 19
3 Early Heresies	M July 22	W July 24
4 Barbarian Conversions	W July 24	F July 26
5 Investiture Controversy	M July 29	W July 31
6 Holy War	W July 31	F August 2
7 The Cathars	M August 5	W August 7

8 The Reformation	W August 7	R August 8
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Bulletin Board

A bulletin board has been set up for students to respond to lectures, or post queries and questions regarding any of the course content and material. The board will be moderated by Cindy, who will respond to questions as necessary, but student responses are welcome and encouraged. Regular (2 per week), thoughtful, and substantial contributions by students is not mandatory but may boost your final grade up to 10%.

Due Dates

Due dates and times are calculated according on Mountain Daylight Time (MDT); adjust accordingly if you are in a different time zone. Assignments can be submitted at any hour on the due date, unless noted.

Academic Integrity

All work in this course must be your own, including Discussion Group contributions. Any violations of the Honor Code or acceptable academic conduct will be pursued to the maximum effect. See "Honor Code" on the last page of this syllabus.

"Netiquette"

Remember, email and discussion boards are "two dimensional" modes of communication; with no gestures, no tone of voice, and no face to see, it is easy to misinterpret statements. Irony and sarcasm are very difficult to convey; avoid them. Write clearly and with courtesy. Emoticons can help, as can abbreviations as such as "IMO" ("in my opinion"). Avoid exclamation points and all caps (WHICH LOOKS LIKE SHOUTING). Before you press "send" reread your email. Is there any way it could be misconstrued? Even if you think a response is right and reasonable, if someone else could take it wrong (no matter how wrong they are), reconsider and rewrite. If you feel someone has "flamed" you or said something improper, consider you may have misunderstood. State this and invite them to clarify. Otherwise, contact the Grader, rather than responding with a potentially offensive, defensive, hostile, or condescending response.

We will all endeavor to maintain an atmosphere of professionalism, respect and collegial collaboration. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding personal attacks, comments that are racist, sexist or

otherwise discriminatory language, or “flaming”. Violation of this may result in suspension from the course. You should address emails to students, “Dear [preferred first name]”; unless advised otherwise address your TA as “Cindy” and your Instructor as “Prof. Catlos.”

University Policies

See the [University Policies \(https://canvas.colorado.edu/courses/27001/pages/university-policies\)](https://canvas.colorado.edu/courses/27001/pages/university-policies) page for more details.