

COURSE OUTLINE FOR  
THEO 2221 / THEO 5321 Early and Medieval Church History  
(Church History I)

Teacher	Tobias Brandner Tel 3943 1368; e-mail <a href="mailto:tobias@cuhk.edu.hk">tobias@cuhk.edu.hk</a>
TA	To be confirmed
Venue	CKB UG05

***Course description and syllabus***

The purpose of the course is to introduce the students to the historical and theological developments in the early and medieval church from Jesus to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Topics to be discussed in the course include the following:

- The separation of Christianity and Judaism
- Early Christianity's controversy with Gnosticism and Marcionitism
- Persecution of Christianity in the Roman Empire
- The emergence of monasticism
- Christianity as religion of the empire
- Early Christian church councils
- The rise of the papacy
- The missionary spread of Christianity throughout Europe
- Revivalist, reform, and heretical movements in medieval Christianity
- Rome and Byzantine: a growing division
- Theological developments in the medieval period

***Expected Outcome***

- The students will gain a general knowledge of the theological and ecclesial development during the covered period.
- The students will get acquainted with different perspectives on church history and with issues that are still debated today.
- The students will develop sensitivity regarding the diversity of Christian faith expressions.

Further expectations for students of THEO 5321:

- The students will gain historical depth in their theological reflection.
- The students learn about historical forms of contextualization.
- The critical study of church history helps the students to recover the voices of those condemned as heresy.
- Students will learn about how the Christian belief and Christian institutions caused social, political, and cultural change.

### **Structure of the course**

All information and relevant material can be accessed through the electronic learning platform '**Blackboard**'.

The students will receive a homework assignment sheet for each week with reading assignments and a list of questions that may lead a student in his reading and that he / she would ideally be able to answer after studying the reading assignments.

The course consists of 3 hours (at 45 minutes) with usually 2 hours lecturing and 1 hour tutorial in groups with student-led discussions. Students are expected to have read their lecture notes and the reading assignments provided for tutorial.

### **Textbooks**

The course will closely follow the content and the structure of the Chinese or English study book (*Pilgrims and Popes / 分久必合，合久必分*), written by Tobias Brandner / 白德培. Note that the English publication is a slightly extended and revised version of the previously published Chinese version.

The book by Gonzalez is a helpful and highly readable alternative that has also been translated into Chinese.

Students are encouraged to buy one of the below books.

- Brandner. *Pilgrims and Popes. A Concise History of Pre-Reformation Christianity in the West*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019  
In Chinese:  
白德培: 分久必合，合久必分: 從耶穌時代到改革前夕的西方基督教批判史 (莫界文譯), 香港: 明風出版, 2016.
- Gonzalez, Justo L.: *The Story of Christianity. Volume 1. The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. Harper San Francisco, 1984 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2010) – recommended for purchase, available at University Bookstore  
In Chinese:  
胡斯托·L. 冈萨雷斯 / (Justo L. González) 著; 基督教史. 赵城芝译. 第 1 版. 上海市: 上海三联书店 2016
- Primary texts and other material on a special website  
<http://www4.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/~tobias/>

### **Study literature**

(\*applies to students of THEO 5321)

- \* Brockwell, Charles W., Jr., and Timothy J. Wengert (ed.), *Telling the Churches' Stories. Ecumenical Perspectives on Writing Christian History* (Grand Rapids, Mich. : William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1995)
- \*Burrus, Virginia (ed.): *Late Ancient Christianity. A People's History of Christianity. Volume 2*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010
- Butler Bass, Diana: *A People's History of Christianity. The Other Side of the Story*, New York: HarperOne, 2009

- \* Coakley, John W. and Andrea Sterk, *Reading in World Christian History. Volume I. Earliest Christianity to 1453*, Orbis Maryknoll, 2004  
(text book with useful collection of documents from the history of the church)
- \* Dunn, James: *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity*. London: SCM / Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991.
- Ellingsen, Mark: *Reclaiming our Roots: An Inclusive Introduction to Church History, Volume 1. The Late First Century to the Eve of the Reformation*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999 (275pp.; with a table in the appendix on the significant events; 15 chapters, mostly between 15 and 25 pages; good structure; end of chapters sometimes with questions for further reflection)
- Glenn, Hinson E.: *The Church Triumphant. A History of Christianity up to 1300*. Macon: Mercer U. P., 1995  
(470 pp.; can be used as general textbook; well structured; with a few maps)
- \* Horsley, Richard A. (ed.): *Christian Origins. A People's History of Christianity. Volume 1*, Fortress Press Minneapolis, 2005  
(280 pp.; collection of essays by different historians; a history from below, turning the usual historiography upside down and focusing on what Christianity meant for simple people, the poor, the slaves, and women; focusing on the earliest time)
- Jenkins, Philip: *The Lost History of Christianity. The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – And How It Died*, New York: Harper, 2008
- Jenkins, Philip: *Jesus Wars : How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided what Christians Would Believe for the next 1,500 Years*, New York: HarperOne, 2010
- \* Louth, Andrew: *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981
- \* Moffett, Samuel Hugh: *A History of Christianity in Asia. Vol. 1. Beginnings to 1500*, Harper Collins, 1992
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid: *Groundwork of Christian History*, Epworth Press, 1987
- \* MacCulloch, Diarmaid: *A History of Christianity. The First Three Thousand Years*, Allen Lane, 2009  
(overall over 1,000 pp., of which around 700 pp about early and medieval Christianity;
- Muir, Elizabeth Gillan. *A Women's History of the Christian Church: Two Thousand Years of Female Leadership*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019.
- \* Roukema, Riemer: *Gnosis and Faith in Early Christianity* (Harrisburg, Pa. : Trinity Press International, 1999) \*
- Stark, Rodney: *The Rise of Christianity. A Sociologist Reconsiders History*. Princeton University Press 1996

### In Chinese:

- Walker, Williston (and Richard A. Norris, David W. Lotz, Robert T. Handy): *A History of the Christian Church*, Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1986<sup>4</sup>  
(classical textbook; rewritten by Norris, Lotz and Handy; 405 pp on the pre-reformation part; translated into Chinese)
- Robert Fossier (ed.), *剑桥插图中世纪史*, 3 vols: vol. 1 350-950; vol. 2 950-1250; vol. 3 1250-1520 (Shandong hua bao chu ban she, 2006)  
(more focusing on secular history; with a lot of illustrations; vol. 2 around 500 pages)
- 基督教词典, 主编文庸, 乐峰, 王继武, 商务印书馆出版, 北京 2005

- Mark A. Noll: *Turning points. Decisive moments in the history of Christianity*, translated by Cecilia Yau (CCM, 2002)  
(360 pages, short and concise, covering the whole history of the church)
- Bihlmeyer, *Early Church History*, translated by L. Leeb (宗教文化出版社, 2009)  
(covering the church history until 5<sup>th</sup> century; around 350 pages; with Western-Chinese and Chinese Western indexes, useful)
- Mary Cunningham, *Faith in the Byzantine World*, translated by Li Zhi Yu (北京大学出版社, 2005)  
(small booklet, around 150 pages, with many illustrations)
- Judith M. Bennett, C. Warren Hollister, *Medieval Europe. A Short History* (上海社会科学院出版社, 2008)  
(430 pages; mainly starting from the 4th century on; with useful graphs, illustrations, and maps)
- \* 唐逸, 理性与信仰——西方中世纪哲学思想 (广西师范大学出版社, 2005)  
(430 pages; on medieval philosophy in all its aspects)
- \* 基督教二千年史。子第一世纪至当代, 主编陶理博士 (海天书楼, 2001)  
(translation of Oxford History of Christianity; around 670 pages, covering the whole history of the church until the present)
- John D. Hannah, *Charts of Ancient and Medieval Church History* (Taipei, Taiwan: China Evangelical Seminary Press, 2003)  
(158 pages of charts and maps; a bit simplistic, but quite useful)
- 吳國桀, 奠基立柱——初期教會縱橫談 [*Dian ji li zhu: Chu qi jiao hui zong heng tan*] (*The Foundation and Pillars of Christianity: Key Developments of the Early Church*), Hong Kong: Logos, 2006
- 吳國桀, 築樓蓋頂——中世紀教會縱橫談 [*Zhu lou gai ding: Zong shi ji jiao hui zong heng tan*] (*Constructing the Church: Key Developments of the Medieval Church*), Hong Kong: Logos, 2011.

## Assessment

- For THEO 2221: 20% Tutorial and Class Participation; 30% two tests through the term; 50% reading report and reflection paper
- For THEO 5321: 20% Tutorial and Class Participation, 30% two tests through the term; 50% reflection paper on one early or medieval theologian

### 1. Tutorial / class participation

- Reading assignments to be read in preparation for each session
- Goals of the tutorial:
  - to clarify what has been learnt in the past lesson
  - to reflect and critically discuss the past
  - to apply and to relate the past to the present
- Assessment of tutorial and class participation:
  - Regularity of attendance
  - Balanced communicative behavior
  - Quality of oral contributions
  - Originality of thought
  - Knowledge and understanding

### 2. Tests

The tests provide an opportunity to revise the historical events learned.

- Provisional time: Tue, 2 Nov 2021 and 30 Nov 2021
- The small tests consist of short questions and multiple-choice questions and possibly some other questions.

### 3. Essay

THEO 2221:

- Write a reading report and reflection paper about **both** the following two texts:
  - a) Bosch, David J.: *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis Books Maryknoll 1991, pp. 181-238 (chapters 5 to 7)
  - b) Philip Jenkins: *The Lost History of Christianity. The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – And How It Died*, New York: Harper, 2008
- 
- Note that the assignment combines two aspects:
  - a. Your paper reflects a thorough reading and a good understanding of the two books (or parts thereof) and summarizes the content in a concise form.
  - b. You reflect on one or several issue(s) raised in the book in a way that relates to the present context (in whatever way this present context is defined).
- Language: English or Chinese is accepted
- Assessment Criteria:
  - Content: does the paper reflect a good understanding of the texts?
  - Thought: Does the student critically engage with the thoughts expressed?
  - Form: does the form of the presentation enhance the understanding of the written essay? (Neatness of the paper, good structuring, concise writing, mastering of language and proper use of source material)
  - Creativity: Does the form of the presentation show creative dialogue with the theologian? (Additional resource material, creative presentation)
- **Formal guidelines:**
  - **Length:** English 4,000 to 5,000 words, Chinese 6,000 to 7,000 characters. Note the limitation of length.
  - **Due date:** 12 Dec 2021
  - **Language:** English or Chinese is accepted

THEO 5321

- Write an essay about any one Christian theologian of the early or medieval period – e.g., Augustine, Thomas, Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa, Catherine of Siena, Hildegard of Bingen, Meister Eckhart, Duns Scotus, Occam, Abaelard, etc.
- Try to answer the following questions (guideline for your help and inspiration – please be creative and feel free not to stick to this format):
  - What is his / her life and life context? (Social, political, ecclesial context of the theologian; the challenge that he wants to respond to)
  - What is his / her main thought? What philosophic traditions have influenced him / her? (philosophical and religious sources does he draw from)

- What is his / her achievement? (effect on later church history and history of philosophy)
- What does he / she tell me? What is his / her relevance today?
- The assignment combines mainly two aspects:
  - a. ability to **understand** a theologian's thought and the ability to describe it concisely;
  - b. ability to **reflect** on a theological problem of your own context in exchange with the thought of a specific theologian.
- **Formal guidelines:**
  - **Length:** English 4,000 to 5,000 words, Chinese 6,000 to 7,000 characters. Note the limitation of length.
  - **Due date:** 12 Dec 2021
  - **Language:** English or Chinese is accepted
- **Assessment Criteria:**
  - Content: does the paper reflect a good understanding of the theologian?
  - Thought: Does the student critically engage with the thought of the theologian?
  - Form: does the form of the presentation enhance the understanding of the written essay? (Neatness of the paper, good structuring, concise writing, mastering of language and proper use of source material)
  - Creativity: Does the form of the presentation show creative dialogue with the theologian? (Additional resource material, creative presentation)

### A note on language

While you are welcome to write your assignment paper in Chinese, I would like to encourage you to make a step and try English. In order to make progress in English, make sure to either ask someone for proofreading (and learn from the mistakes that the proofreader uncovers!) or use one of the web-based tools to help you identify and correct linguistic mistakes. A workshop by CUHK's *English Across the Curriculum* unit will be organized in one of the tutorial sessions to introduce students to some of the resources and ways how to improve your English writing.

### A note on Plagiarism

- The University places great emphasis on students' academic honesty. A short video clip (in three different versions – Cantonese, Mandarin, and English) introduces you to the notions of plagiarism and academic honesty:
- [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/tnl/acad\\_honesty.html](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/tnl/acad_honesty.html)
- Read also the following academic honesty website:  
<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

### Grading

The grading follows the general grading policy of the CUHK outlined below (in short form):

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.  
Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal

expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on all or almost all learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B / Good: Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C / Fair: Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade D / Pass: Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>
Thesis	A clear statement of what is being proposed or argued in the paper.	The thesis is easily detectable after reading the paper, but it is not presented in a single and clear statement.	The thesis is present, but a reader must work hard to reconstruct from the entire paper.	There is no thesis or central argument/proposal to tie the paper together, or the thesis is unclear.
Arguments	Each reason, support, or argument to follow the thesis is made clear, thorough, relevant and convincing. Proper references are consistently made to the text in question (biblical and/or a textbook) to show why the proposed thesis is valid.	Arguments made to support the thesis are clear, but less thorough, relevant, and/or convincing. References are often made to the text in question (biblical and/or a textbook) to show why the proposed thesis is valid, but this is done not as consistently.	Arguments made to support the thesis are acceptable but sketchy or their relevance unclear. Some references are made to the text in question (biblical and/or a textbook) to show why the proposed thesis is valid.	Arguments to support the thesis are missing, irrelevant, or not convincing. The paper makes lots of claims or assertions that are not substantiated. There are few or no references to the text in question (biblical and/or a textbook) to show why the proposed thesis is valid.
Counter-Arguments	The paper acknowledges, anticipates, and accounts for conflicting evidence, counter-examples, counter-arguments, and/or opposing positions, even ones that are not obvious or not yet been made in writings of others.	The paper acknowledges and accounts for obvious conflicting evidence, counter-examples, counter-arguments, and/or opposing positions.	The paper acknowledges and accounts for a few obvious conflicting evidence, counter-examples, and counter-arguments, but miss other obvious opposing positions. Or the paper acknowledges counter-arguments without accounting for them.	No awareness or acknowledgment of conflicting evidence, counter-examples, counter-arguments, or opposing positions.

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>
Organization	The paper's flow, from one paragraph to another, is consistently sensible, logical, and always with clear transitions. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is easy to follow and coherent.	The paper's flow, from one paragraph to another, is largely sensible and logical. Transitions are mostly appropriate. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is distinguishable if not easy to follow.	There are signs of sensible and logical organization, but these are mixed with abrupt or illogical shifts and ineffective flow of ideas. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is not clearly distinguishable.	The paper does not flow well in terms of organization or for the argument of the thesis. Transitions from paragraph to paragraph or from one idea to the next are missing. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is non-existent.
Style	The paper is written in complete and grammatically correct sentences. Word choice is precise; definitions are provided if and when needed. Paper has been spell-checked, proofread, and contains no errors.	The paper is written in complete sentence and grammatically correct sentences. Word choice is understandable, definitions are generally (though not always) provided if and when needed. Paper has been spell-checked, proofread, and contains only a few errors.	The paper contains some incomplete or grammatically incorrect sentences. Word choice is imprecise, at times not understandable, and/or not defined when needed. Not clear if the paper has been spell-checked and proofread because of the number of errors present.	The paper is written with many incomplete or grammatically incorrect sentences. Word choice is not understandable and definition of particular terms or words is not given even when needed. The paper has clearly not been spell-checked or proofread, and hence contains an excessive number of errors.
Documentation	Notes to indicate sources of information are given whenever they are needed. Both notes and bibliography use consistent and academically acceptable format.	Notes to indicate sources of information are generally given when they are needed. Notes and bibliography are generally but not always consistent or conform to required academic standard.	Sources of information are not consistently documented. If they are, format is inconsistent or does not conform to required academic standard.	Source materials are used without documentation.

For submission of assignments, please follow the following rule:

1. Upload your assignment on the Blackboard website. **Only word-format is allowed. PDF is regarded as non-submission.**
2. At the same time also upload a soft copy of the completed assignment to the plagiarism detection engine VeriGuide, at the URL: <https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/>
3. The system will issue a receipt which also contains a declaration of honesty, which is the same as that in <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p10.htm>. The declaration should be uploaded in pdf to the blackboard system.

## Overview

### **PART I THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH: FROM JESUS TO THE END OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE 5TH CENTURY**

- 7 Sept 2021 Session 1:  
Introduction to the course  
The church in the first two centuries
- What is the Relation of Jesus to the Church?
  - Steps in the Development of the Early Church and the spread of Christianity
  - The Separation between the Church and the Jewish Community
- 14 Sept 2021 Session 2: Christianity and politics  
Conflicts with the State  
The extension of Christianity in the first three centuries
- 21 Sept 2021 Session 3: Challenges to the faith in the second century and the development of early Catholic theology  
The pre-catholic church  
Gnostic crisis, Marcionism and the Montanist crisis  
Response to the challenges to the faith: Development of catholic theology
- 28 Sept 2021 Session 4: Christianity and culture: The encounter with Hellenist philosophy  
Hellenistic philosophies  
Patristic theology  
The early Trinitarian debates
- Tutorial: Workshop by English Across the Curriculum on English writing
- 5 Oct 2021 Session 5: Christianity becoming the religion of the empire  
The so-called Constantinian conversion  
Religious policy after Constantine  
Constantine's impact on the religious life of the catholic church  
Impact on the theology of the catholic church  
Counter-movements to the imperial church: Ascetism and monasticism
- Tutorial: Discussion on the written assignments and on plagiarism
- 12 Oct 2021 Session 6: Theological and ecclesial controversies of the 4<sup>th</sup> century  
Donatism  
The Arian controversy until the Council of Nicea  
The continuation of the controversy until Constantinople

19 Oct 2021 Session 7: Theology and christological debates in the 5<sup>th</sup> century  
The Council of Chalcedon  
Augustine

**PART II THE HISTORY OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH**

26 Oct 2021 Session 8: Mission history: the extension of Christianity and its inculturation in new contexts  
The Encounter of the catholic church with non-Roman kingdoms  
Shifts in world Christianity and the confrontation with Islam

2 Nov 2021 Session 9: Church and state: The growth of papal and ecclesial power  
The history of the papal claim of primacy  
The development of the secular power of the popes  
The conflict between the papacy and the Empire  
Medieval papacy, church and state

Tutorial: Quiz 1

9 Nov 2021 Session 10: The history of a growing division: The churches in East and West on separate ways  
Christological debates of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century  
The iconoclastic debate

Tutorial: Drafts of final paper

16 Nov 2021 Session 11: The history of the other church: Revivalism, reform, and alternative Christian faith expression in medieval times  
Christian mysticism  
Monastic reform movements  
Mendicant orders  
Radical and heretical movements  
The Catholic Church and the 'other church'

23 Nov 2021 Session 12: Outward militancy and inward divisions in high and late medieval times  
The crusades  
The inquisition  
The Babylonian captivity of the church and the divided papacy  
The conciliar church reform movement

30 Nov 2021 Session 13: Theological Developments during the Medieval Time  
Representatives, forms and historical development of medieval theology

The controversy about the universals  
The controversy between rationalism and voluntarism

Tutorial: Quiz 2