HSTEU 402: The Reformations of Christendom (aka “The Reformation”)

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Course Meetings: MW 1:30—3:20 p.m.  
Guggenheim 218

Office Hours: TBD, or by appointment

This course, stretching the catalogue description somewhat from the singular Reformation to the plural Reformations, will examine the Reformations of Christianity between 1400 and 1700, initially in Western Europe but in time across the globe. It aims to provide comprehensive geographic, chronological, and thematic coverage. We will learn about the intricacies of theological issues, about the violence of politico-religious conflict, and about the influence (or not) of the Reformations on the day-to-day life of ordinary people.

This course will be synchronous and in-person. Class meetings will not be recorded.

Attendance is expected because class meetings will focus on discussing readings and integrating perspectives from those readings and from past courses. Readings will be a mix of primary sources/historical documents and secondary sources/scholars’ interpretations.

At its core, the course will answer questions like: Why did they care so much about religion? Why were some willing to kill or die for what seem to us like small religious differences? Do the Reformations of Christianity have any significance today?

Course readings will balance between primary sources, necessary to understand the intellectual stakes of discourse, and secondary sources, necessary to approach popular experience of Reformations.

The course is structured around four themes:

1. Between 1400 and 1700, Christianity shifted from being a “body of believers” to a “body of belief,” from being a religion of communities defined by shared practices to a religion of communities defined by individual assent to a set of doctrinal propositions, as John Bossy has proposed. This transition occurred along two gradients, with some types of Western Christianity moving farther along the continuum between the two poles than others and with higher status, more literate social groups moving farther along the continuum than lower status, less literate social groups.

2. Between 1400 and 1700, European Christianity spread across the globe, from Cabo Verde to Japan. This confronted European Christians with new questions about their faith, about what was local and contingent and what was universal and mandatory.
3. **The shattering of Christian unity polarized political life in a new way**, giving a broader swath of the populace a stake in political questions. This has unpredicted results ranging from the largest peasant rebellion in European history (Germany, 1525), to the transformation of elite squabbling into society-wide religious war (France, 1563-1629), and to expulsions of faith groups deemed deviant. In time, and at times, grudging if not peaceful coexistence was achieved. One consequence of this may be the shift in the “categories of existence” from those of religion to those of the state, as Michel de Certeau has proposed.

4. Killing and dying for faith are inexplicable without accounting for the implacable fidelity to conscience and the unbending confidence in doctrine characteristic of the period. The course will examine the institutional and cultural landscape for the formation of religious selves and intellectual debates around certitude, skepticism, and unbelief.

The course has four primary goals for you:

1. To learn to think like a historian by properly framing a historical question, identifying and evaluating sources, and gaining necessary context.
2. To approach those of the past with humility and without moralizing prejudice, seeking to understand their lives and their feelings in their words and with their concepts as much as in our words and with our concepts.
3. To gain an acquaintance with the outlines and debates concerning the European Reformations of Christianity.
4. To improve your ability to communicate what you have learned, in writing and in speech, and your capacity to respond positively to constructive criticism.

Materials will be organized into modules on Canvas. Assignments will focus on demonstrating attainment of course goals. Optional readings are provided, for those interested. I expect engagement – with me, with assignments, and with your peers. If possible, class sessions will be a nearly equal mixture of information delivery and discussion. Listen to the lectures, participate in discussion, and take notes rather than verbatim transcriptions of lecture or discussion. Read with pen or stylus in hand – for marginal annotations or reading notes. I will try to hint at areas of focus for the next week’s readings. Learn your classmates’ names. Listen to your peers, be prepared to articulate your views and your potential differences or agreement with them on the basis of clear evidence in a civil, cogent manner. Let’s have a quarter-long conversation!

As we emerge, exhausted and perhaps anxious, into the endemic phase of the novel coronavirus pandemic, we must all be patient with each other and flexible. If you require accommodation, please ask. Offer others the grace you seek. Communicate proactively.

Please check Canvas daily, Monday through Friday, for course announcements. I will respond to email and check in on Canvas’ chat and discussion functions each weekday.
BOOKS

Required

All required readings, principally primary sources, will be available online, either as pdfs or as library electronic resources, which you must use the UW’s VPN to access when off campus, sometimes toggled from “UW Campus Network Traffic Only” to “All Internet Traffic.”

Optional


This has been ordered as an optional course text to the University Bookstore.

GRADING

Please contact the instructor at the outset if you wish to take the course for writing (W) credit. Students seeking this option must submit revised versions of their essays one week after they are returned by the instructor.

5%  **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance is required because this is already a flipped classroom. Rather than watching recorded lectures, you will prepare by completing designated reading assignments, looking up puzzling words, names, or concepts in the Oxford English Dictionary or Wikipedia, prior to class and coming with questions. I will deliver some additional content in class, mainly contextual, but the bulk of class time will be addressed to discussing the readings, to understanding them, debating them, and synthesizing content.

Absences are permitted with prior notice to the instructor.

15%  **Reading Responses**

These will be submitted by the beginning of each course meeting, when noted, and should be approximately two paragraphs long. Reflect on what you’ve read in the context of the course, using parenthetical references to specific pages: e.g. (Power, 43).

These responses help me keep a pulse on your understanding of assigned texts and prepare for each course meeting.

60%  **Three Essays (20% each)**

Prompts for these thousand-word essays will be available in Canvas on Monday of the prior week. They will require no additional reading and are designed to improve your writing ability within the discipline of history and at attaining course goals. They must be submitted in Canvas by the beginning of class on the dates noted.
These responses help you synthesize what you’ve learned and help me shape the course.
Late submissions are permitted with prior notice to the instructor.

20% **Final Examination**

Format will be discussed during the last week of class.

**Academic Honesty**

Honor yourselves, your classmates, and me by refraining from plagiarism or cheating. Cite sources and do your own work. Ask questions when in doubt about collaboration or citation.

**SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND READINGS**

All readings, other than those from the course texts, will be posted on the course Canvas website as pdfs (marked with an asterisk) or linked as below (login with the UW VPN, mostly with the “UW Campus Network Traffic Only” setting but sometimes “All Internet Traffic”).

**WEEK 1:** Course Introduction

**Sept. 28:** Reformation or Reformations of Christendom? *(Eire, vii-xviii)*

**WEEK 2:** Understanding the Late Medieval Context

**Oct. 3:** Politics; Universities; Society


*Biblia Sacra cum glossis*, etc. via Glossa Ordinaria Project and Ryan McDermott’s translation of the book of Jonah with its glosses: [https://sites.google.com/site/glossaordinariaproject/home/jonah](https://sites.google.com/site/glossaordinariaproject/home/jonah)


**Oct. 5:** Understanding the Late Medieval Church *(Eire, 1-18)*

Read: John XXII, *Ad conditorem canonum* (1322):
http://individual.utoronto.ca/jwrobinson/translations/john22_acc-compared.pdf

Laurent Mayali, “‘Duo erunt in carne una’ and the Medieval Canonists,” in Juris historia: liber amicorum Gero Dolezalek (Berkeley: Robbins Collection, 2008), 161-176*

Emanuele Conte, “Framing the feudal bond: a chapter in the history of the ius commune in Medieval Europe,” Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis 80:3-4 (2012), 481-495*


(Give this a try with Google translate)


WEEK 3: Understanding the Late Medieval Context II

Oct. 10: Late Medieval Popular Piety (Eire, 19-42)

Watch: Jesus Mass (either cathedral or parish church) from the Experience of Worship Project (2011), while reading the appropriate service book(s):
http://www.experienceofworship.org.uk/enactments/introduction/

Read: Bidding Prayers from the Lay Folks’ Mass Book (1879 edition), 68-80: https://archive.org/details/layfolksmassbook00simmuoft/page/68/mode/2up

English Prayers from Prime rs in Ethan Shagan and Debora Shuger, Religion in Tudor England: An Anthology of Primary Sources (Baylor University Press, 2016), 423-438:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm716


Discuss First Essay
Oct. 12: **Late Medieval Reform**  
(Eire, 43-129)  
Read: Desiderius Erasmus, Preface to *Novum Instrumentum omne* in English (1516)*  
or  
https://books.google.com/books?id=XfVMAAAAMAAJ&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&dq=erasmus%20manual%20of%20a%20christian%20knight%20methuen&pg=PP9#v=onepage&q&f=false

WEEK 4: **Luther**

Oct. 17: **Salvation**  
(Eire, 131-157)  
Optional (if you really love theology): _____. *The Harvest of Late Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963):  
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.02248

Oct. 19: **From Breakthrough to Reformation**  
(Eire, 159-184)  
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43325  
Optional: _____, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520,” in Paul W. Robinson, *The Annotated Luther, Volume 3: Church and Sacraments* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2016), 9-130:  
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/48441

**FIRST ESSAY DUE**
**WEEK 5:**  
**Whose Reformation?**  
*(Eire, 185-285)*

**Oct. 24:**  
**Reformation of the Cities**  
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0014524614560493

https://muse.jhu.edu/book/55754

**Optional:** ______, “The German Mass and Order of the Liturgy, 1526,” “That These Words of Christ, ‘This is My Body,’ Etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics, 1527,” and “Concerning Rebaptism, 1528,” in *The Annotated Luther, Volume 3*, 131-12, 163-274, and 275-316:  
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/48441

**Oct. 26:**  
**German Peasants War and Radical Reform**  
Read: Martin Luther, “Admonition to Peace: A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia,” in *The Annotated Luther, Volume 5*: 281-334:  
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/55754


**WEEK 6:**  
**Whose Reformation II?**

**Oct. 31:**  
**Reformation of the Princes**  
*(Eire, 318-365)*


**Discuss Second Essay**

**Nov. 2:**  
**Calvin**  
*(Eire, 287-317)*

https://books.google.com/books?id=_0tnAAAAcAAJ&newbks=1

&newbks_redir=0&dq=John%20Calvin%20institution%20of%20the%20christian%20religion&pg=PP3#v=onepage&q=false
WEEK 7:  Counter-Reformation, Catholic Reform, Council of Trent

Nov. 7:  Popular Piety in the Reformations

http://www.jstor.org/stable/650648

https://www.jstor.org/stable/650379


Nov. 9:  Council of Trent
(Eire, 367-465)
http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm

SECOND ESSAY DUE

WEEK 8:  Global Christianity

Nov. 14:  Columbus the Christ-Bearer
(Eire, 466-524)
Read:  Pauline Moffitt Watts, “Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus’s ‘Enterprise of the Indies,’” American Historical Review 90:1 (1985), 73-102:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/1860749

https://muse.jhu.edu/book/76915

Nov. 16: **Global Christianity**  
https://archive.org/details/MontaigneCompleteFrame/page/n171/mode/2up and  
https://archive.org/details/MontaigneCompleteFrame/page/n705/mode/2up  
Luke Clossey, “The Early Modern Jesuit Missions as a Global Movement” (2005): http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0h45m0jw

WEEK 9: **Social Discipline, Confessionalization**

Nov. 21: **Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism** *(Eire, 525-585, 618-659)*  
**Discuss Third Essay**

Nov. 23: **No class** (Day before Thanksgiving)

WEEK 10: **Early Modern Christianities**

Nov. 28: **Social Discipline, Confessionalization** *(Eire, 586-617)*  
Read: Geoffrey Parker, “Success and Failure during the First Century of the Reformation,” *Past & Present* 136 (1992), 43-82:  
https://www.jstor.org/stable/650901  
https://www.jstor.org/stable/3600839  
https://www.jstor.org/stable/2657295
Nov. 30: **Thirty Years War**  
*(Eire, 691-740)*  
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015008781984

THIRD ESSAY DUE

WEEK 11: **Does the Reformation Matter Today?**

Dec. 5: **The End of Early Modern Christianity: 1700?**  
*(Eire, 660-690)*  
Read: Montaigne, “Of cripples,” 784-792:  
https://archive.org/details/MontaigneCompleteFrame/page/n805/mode/2up  

Dec. 7: **Does the Reformation Matter Today? Course Recapitulation**  
*(Eire, 741-757)*  
Read: Pope Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections,” Lecture, September 12, 2006:  
https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/09/24/marilynne-robinson-fear*  
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/62418

FINAL EXAMINATION: December 12, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Online, open-book, untimed, and in Canvas during examination week.