

**REL3403.01 Christianity**  
**MWF 1:30-2:20am**

**Room: ENG1-427**

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### I. Description:

A study of Christian thought and culture as it developed in art and literature from the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the present, concentrating on the topics of human nature, social justice, the state, just war, science and attitudes toward women.

### II. Objectives

1. To know 6 major areas of Christian thought listed above, including the related issues of each
2. To explore the **evolution of ideas** within these areas from the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the modern through the period art and literature
3. To **critique the arguments** or positions held by groups within each topic
4. To **evaluate the impact** & influence of past views in the above areas on modern western society through two analysis papers.

### III. Texts

#### **Reader Pack:**

Haughey, John. Gen ed. The Faith That Does Justice. New York: Paulist Press, 1977.

Johnson, James and John Kelsay, eds. Cross, Crescent, and Sword. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.

Wilhelmsen, Frederick. Christianity and Political Philosophy. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1978.

Koontz, "Christian Nonviolence" in The Ethics of War and Peace. Princeton University Press, 1996.

#### **Books:**

Pelikan, Jaroslav. Jesus Through the Centuries. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999

\_\_\_\_\_. Mary Through the Centuries. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996.

Van Voorst, Robert. Readings in Christianity. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Wadsworth, 2001

#### IV. Grading Scale

3 essay tests:	60%
2 Analysis Papers	35%
Discussion/Attendance:	05%
90's: A, 80's: B, 70's: C, 60 or below: F (+/- scale: 0-2=minus, 7-9=plus)	

#### V. WITHDRAWAL POLICY

It is the responsibility of each student to notify registration if personal or schedule complication result in the need to withdraw from this course. The withdrawal deadline for the Spring term is **March 22**. If you discontinue attendance and assignments but fail to drop after this date, you will receive an F for the course.

#### VI. Course Expectations

1. Sources not cited and ideas not credited will be considered **plagiarism** and will result in zero credit for assignment.
2. Read all scheduled material before date listed and bring related text books and material to class.
3. Be on time and turn off cell phones and any electronic noises.
4. Conflict with testing and assignment dates must be addressed before scheduled times verbally or by email. In case of emergencies, please notify of reason on missed day.
5. Presentation of analysis and ideas in discussion will be encouraged without attempts to prescribe what positions to hold.

#### VII. Analysis Papers

1. Each paper must be at least 4 pages long, 1200 words
2. Each paper will analyze a topic of Christian thought as it developed over at least two historical periods
3. Select texts from the Bible and at least two other Christian sources (art or literature) for analysis. [Bible reference example: Genesis 6:1-4]
4. Use the literature and/or art to discuss what changed and why it changed. Explore what groups held each view and why it changed at a later time.
5. Finally, evaluate what impact, if any, these Christian ideas have had on western culture and society (ex: the treatment of slaves and women)

## Course Outline and Dates

### Text Abbreviations:

1. **P/J:** Pelikan, Jesus Through the Centuries
2. **P/M:** Pelikan: Mary Through the Centuries
3. **Haughey:** (reader pack) Haughey, The Faith That Does Justice
4. **CCS:** (reader pack) Cross, Crescent and Sword
5. **Koontz:** (reader pack) Koontz, The Ethics of War and Peace
6. **Wilhelm:** (reader pack) Wilhelmsen, Christianity and Political Philosophy
7. **Voorst:** Van Voorst, Readings in Christianity

### **Weeks 1-3: Jan 9-27**

#### Part 1: Christian Anthropology: Human Nature as viewed in beliefs about Jesus

1. Human nature as fallen and in need of Redemption  
**Bible:** Genesis 1:26-2:9, 4:1-12, 6:5-8; Matthew 16:24, 19:21-22; Luke 14:26-27; John 12:25; Romans 6:6; Galatians 5:24  
**P/J:** Chap 8, "Christ Crucified" and Chap 6, "Son of Man"  
**Voorst:** Pelagius and Augustine on Free Will (p94); Popular Christian Beliefs on Death and Eternal Life (p96); Theories of Atonement (p139); Hymns: Calvin, "I Greet Thee, Who my Sure Redeemer Art" (p180)
2. Human nature as corrupted by the World and the social implications  
**P/J:** Chap 9, "The Monk Who Rules the World"  
**Voorst:** Conflict over Justification (p188); Calvin on Predestination (p195)  
**Handout:** Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*
3. Human nature as completed by imitation of Jesus  
**P/J:** Chap 11, "The Divine and Human Model"  
**Voorst:** Organization of Monastic Communities (p126); The Discipline of Inner Life (p148);
4. Human Nature as Perfectible by Reason  
**P/J:** Chp 12, "The Universal Man" & Chp 15, "Teacher of Common Sense"  
**Voorst:** The High Point of Renaissance Humanism (p143); Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (p234)

### **Jan 16: Martin Luther King Day**

## **Weeks 4-5: Jan 30-Feb 10**

### Part 2: Christian Views on Social Justice

1. What does the Bible say about social justice?  
**Bible:** Genesis 9:20-27; Deuteronomy 28; Psalm 111- 113; Job 2:1-8, 3:3, 20, 9:21-24, 10:7-8, 31:16-35, 42; Tobit 1, 12:1-10; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 4:16-21, 6:20-25, 10:29-37; Acts 2:44-47; James 2:14-24  
**Haughey:** Chap 3, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice"  
**Voorst:** Calvin on the Calling of All Christians (p203). Attitudes to Greek Philosophy (p101)  
**Handout:** Machiavelli, The Prince , "On Liberality and Parsimony"
2. What Greek and Roman ideas influenced Christianity on social justice?  
**Haughey:** Chap 5, "What Jerusalem says to Athens"  
**Voorst:** William Penn and Liberty of Conscience (p248)
3. What is the relation of Eschatological Faith to social Justice?  
**Haughey:** Chap 1, "The Meaning of Faith in Relation to Justice"  
**P/J:** Chap 17, "Jesus The Liberator"  
**Voorst:** Charles Wesley, "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast" & John Newton, "Amazing Grace" (p230); The Struggle over slavery (p241); Roman Catholicism on Social Change (p248); Roman Catholic Church Confronts Secular Thought (p255); Christians Struggle for Civil Rights (p270); The Theology of Liberation (p294); The Social Gospel (p296)

## **Feb 13: Test 1: Human Nature & Social Justice**

## **Weeks 6-8: Feb 15-March 3**

### **Feb 27: Paper 1, analysis of a topic on Christian Thought (see syllabus)**

### Part 3: Christian Views of Women as Reflected in the art and literature about Mary

1. Mary as the image of Denial & Abstinence  
**P/M:** Chap 8, "The Paragon of Chastity and the Blessed Mother"
2. Mary as the image of Servitude and Obedience  
**Bible:** Genesis 2:18-3: 16, Proverbs 31:10-31, Luke 1:26-38 & 10:38-42, 1Corinthians 11:2-16, Galatians 3:27-28, 1 Timothy 2:8-15  
**P/M:** Chap 6, "The Handmaid of the Lord and the Woman of Valor" & Chap 11, "The Model of Faith in the Word of God"  
**Voorst:** Luther and Calvin on the Role of Women in the Church (p201); Birth of the Feminist Movement (p245). Question of Women Priests (p278)
3. Mary as the source/image of Renewal and Regeneration  
**P/M:** Chap 12, "The Mater Gloriosa and the Eternal Feminine"  
**Voorst:** The Beginnings of Women's Liberation in Christianity (p273)

**Week 9&11: March 6-24**

**Week 10: SPRING BREAK**

**March 22: Withdrawal Deadline**

Part 4: Christian Views on Science and Technology

1. Should Christians play with science? (Art: God as Architect of the Cosmos)  
**Handout:** Early Attitudes toward science by Augustine, *Confessions*  
**Voorst:** Scholastic Argument on Proving the Existence of (p138); Jesuit Rules for Thinking with the Church (p183)
2. What should Christians think of Nature?  
**Voorst:** Francis of Assisi, "The Song of Brother Sun" (p146); Joseph Addison, "The Spacious Firmament on High" (p230); Christianity and the Natural Environment (p301)
3. Is it science or superstition? (Art: Portraits of Anatomy & Surgery)  
**Handout:** Scientific Criticism of Miracles by "*Against Miracles*"  
**Voorst:** Women and Witchcraft (p124); Popular Religious Responses to the Great Plague(p123);
4. How much science is good for the soul?  
**Voorst:** The Rise of Biblical Criticism (p282); The Debate over Evolution (p257); Catholic Controversy over Artificial Contraception (p298); Some Ethical Issues Surrounding Genetic Engineering (p309)

**March 27: Test 2, Women & Science**

**Week 12-13: March 29-April 12**

Part 5: Christian Views on Politics and the State

1. What did the Greeks and Romans say about politics and the state?  
**Bible:** Romans 13:1-10, Revelation 18  
**Wilhelm:** Chap 2, "Cicero and the Politics of Public Orthodoxy"  
**Voorst:** Papal Primacy Derived from Petrine Primacy (p74)
2. What does Christian Monarchy & Empire look like?  
**Wilhelm:** Chap 3, "The Problem of Political Power & the Forces of Darkness"  
**P/J:** Chap 4, "King of Kings"  
**Voorst:** Christianity and the Fall of Rome (p106); Byzantine Views of Church and Empire (p149)
3. What is Christian Democracy?  
**Wilhelm:** Chap 6, "Natural Law Tradition and the American Political Experiment"

**April 10: Paper 2, analysis of topic on Christian Thought**

**Week 14-15: April 14-24**

Part 6: Christian Views on War

1. Should Christians go to war?  
**Koontz:** Chap 9, "Christian Non-Violence"  
**Voorst:** Two Views of War by Tertullian & Augustine (p99)
2. When is war justified?  
**CCS:** Chap 1, "Justice and Resort to War: a Sampling of Christian Ethical Thinking" When is war justified?  
**Voorst:** The Peasants' Revolt (p168); Martin Luther, "A Mighty Fortress is our God" (p180)
3. What does Christian warfare look like?  
**CCS:** Chap 3, "Approaches to Limits on War in Western Just War Discourse"  
**Voorst:** The Peace of God and the Truce of God (p152); Establishment and Rules of the Jesuit Order (p182)

**May 1:            Test 3, Monday, 1:00-3:50am, Politics and War**