



**REL 3403: Christianity**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**University of Central Florida**  
**Fall 2018**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

Instructor: Dr. Christy Flanagan-Feddon

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If you have questions, please email me rather than posting in Webcourses.

(I will usually respond immediately, but please allow up to 24 hours for a response.)

**Course Overview:**

In this course we explore the Christian tradition from an academic perspective. We will look at the origins of early Christianity and the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, the role of the Bible, the development of church orthodoxy, major movements in Christian history, differences between denominations, and the interplay of rituals, culture, and self-identity. Ultimately we will consider the breadth of Christianity both in term of its official tenets and its reality as a living, evolving tradition. This course assumes no prior knowledge of or participation in Christianity as a religious tradition.

**Course Objectives:**

- i. Students will discover and identify major components of the Christian tradition.
- ii. Students will actively engage in dialogue by critically discussing and evaluating important components of Christianity.
- iii. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and critical thinking about philosophical and religious concepts.
- iv. Students will be able to identify theoretical and critical principles in philosophical and religious thinking from historical and cultural contexts.
- v. Students will have a greater awareness of issues of religious and philosophical importance that are displayed in popular cinema and culture.

**Required Texts and Materials:** *Christianity: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, ed. Alister McGrath. ISBN: 9781118465653. This book is available in the UCF bookstore and several other options for rent or purchase online through Amazon or other outlets. Additional readings will be posted online in Canvas.

**\*Please obtain your book ASAP. Students choose the method to obtain their books at their own discretion and are still responsible for completing the first assignment by the due date listed below.**

**Basis for Final Grade:** After the introduction, most weeks we will have reading assignments and an assigned discussion post in the forum. There will be three tests throughout the semester that can be completed on Canvas. On selected weeks throughout the semester we will view films and have a paper assignment. We will not have discussions during the weeks with paper assignments.

**Discussion Posts (20 points each, 11 posts):** You will respond to the discussion topic assigned each week in the Course Module section in Webcourses. Discussion posts should be at least 350 words, interacting with the assigned texts and properly cited using APA format. After you make your initial post (**15 points and due on Thursdays of that week**), you should respond to the posts of at least two of your classmates, raising substantive questions or challenging their assertions (**5 points and due by Sunday of that week of discussion**). Your responses must go beyond “nice post” or “good work.” Ask probing questions of your classmate to help further the discussion. **Please see the rubric in the Week 1 Module for additional guidelines regarding these posts.**

In the Modules section you will find information for each week’s assignments and the specific questions you are to answer for the discussion posts. **You must make your initial post answering these questions by the end of day on Thursdays** on the weeks we have discussions. The **discussion forums close at the end of the day on Sundays** and *no additional posts will be accepted.*

**Paper Assignments (30 points each, 2 papers):** We will watch two movies that will have paper assignments following.

**Tests (15 points each, 3 tests):** There will be three tests based on our reading throughout the semester and are accessible through Canvas. These quizzes will be timed (30 minutes), so you should prepare for them ahead of time as if we were in a traditional classroom setting.

**Syllabus Quiz (5 points):** The Registrar’s office needs to document student activity the first week of class in order for financial aid to be disbursed on time. Please review the syllabus and complete the brief syllabus quiz in order to satisfy this requirement no later than Friday, August 24 at 5:00 pm. If you complete the quiz after this time you will still receive your financial aid but it may be late. Even if you are not receiving financial aid you should complete this quiz in order to receive credit for the 5 points.

**Grade Summary**

Discussion Posts= 220 points  
Paper Assignments= 60 points  
Tests= 45 points  
Syllabus Quiz = 5 points  
**TOTAL = 330 points possible**

**Grading Scale (%)**

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
NC	< 70.0 %	to 60.0%
F	< 60.0 %	to 0.0%

**Late Work Policy:** This class operates in Eastern Time Zone (US & Canada) and assignments are due by

11:59 pm of the date specified in the course schedule, with the exception of the Syllabus Quiz.

- Late posts in the forum (initial posts) will be deducted by 1 point per day late and the forum will close on Sundays.
- Late papers will be deducted by 5 points per day late up to 3 days after the due date.
- Quizzes are due on Sundays by the due date and will time out after that point.

**\*\*IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT ONLINE CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES\*\***

This is a self-directed, fast-paced course where you MUST work independently, stay organized and complete your work on time. We have the freedom of not having to meet at a set time every week, but that makes the assignment due dates even more important: they are the equivalent of attendance and quiz grades wrapped in one and they are the only way to keep pace with the class.

If you have an **exceptional** circumstance that prevents you from completing your work on time, then please notify me as soon as possible and I will determine extensions on a case-by-case basis. In most situations I will need documentation to verify the reason. Extensions will be given **only at the discretion of the instructor and in very rare circumstances.**

**\*\*Extensions will not be granted if you forget a due date, have work, personal conflicts, etc.** Each week you have a window of time to complete your assignments. If you wait until the last minute to complete your work and then have internet problems, are not feeling well, etc., it is still your responsibility to find a way to finish your work. It is up to the student to plan accordingly.\*\*

**Grades of "Incomplete":** The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. Your instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

**Email:** Since this is a Webcourse, email will be our primary form of communication. In most circumstances, you can expect a response from me immediately, but please allow 24 hours for a response. If something arises and I will be away from email, I will let you know in advance. **If you have any questions about the assignments or course, please send me an email rather than posting questions to me in the discussion forum.**

**Movie screening:** Most of the movies are accessible online through Webcourses. If a movie is not able to be streamed online (due to licensing issues), then I will notify you in advance and it will be your responsibility to obtain the movie through Netflix, Redbox, Amazon, etc.

**Course Access:** The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services, Ferrell Commons Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

**\*\*Professionalism Policy and special note regarding the purposes of this class\*\*:** I look forward to lively and engaged discussions in the forum, although please keep your posts respectful and appropriate for the classroom environment at all times. Please note that this course assumes no prior knowledge of

or religious affiliation with Christianity. **You are free to share your personal experiences as you wish and as is appropriate for the discussions, but please note that your personal experiences are not a substitute for the assigned academic readings and assignments.** We will be approaching the tradition of Christianity from an objective, academic perspective. We are not here to promote the religion or convert followers, but to understand the religion from historical, cultural, and theological perspectives. I will be asking probing questions to consider its formation and the philosophical and cultural implications of the tradition as it is lived, **but respect is to be maintained for all traditions and viewpoints at all times.**

**Academic Conduct Policy:** Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. ALL WORK IN THIS CLASS MUST BE YOUR OWN. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult The Golden Rule, the University of Central Florida's Student Handbook <http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/> for further details. As in all University courses, The Golden Rule Rules of Conduct will be applied. Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question AT A MINIMUM. At the instructor's discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Confirmation of such incidents can also result in expulsion from the University. PLEASE ALSO SEE THE RUBRIC FOR GUIDELINES ON WRITING POSTS AND PAPERS. Citation of your work is required for all posts and papers. Please see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> for information on APA citation format.

**University Writing Center:** The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu>, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

The dates and assignments listed in the syllabus are tentative and can be changed at the discretion of the professor.

### **Course Schedule**

**\*\*please see Modules for additional information for each week's assignments\*\***