

# Religion/History 232: The Development of Christianity, 100-451

Meeting Time	9:30 to 10:45 am
Meeting Location	141 Hughes Hall
Instructor	James Constantine Hanges, Ph.D, University of Chicago, New Testament
Office	201 Old Manse
Phone	529-2029
E-mail	<a href="mailto:hangesjc@muohio.edu">hangesjc@muohio.edu</a>
Office Hours	TR 4:00 to 5:00 pm

As a 200 Level course it is presupposed that you have taken college level courses, and that you have taken a 100 Level Religion class (although the latter prerequisite is desirable, it has not been rigidly applied in recent years). First year students have traditionally been admitted to the class, but their success has required serious effort. This course DOES NOT REQUIRE that you have any familiarity with the New Testament or Christianity. In simple terms I expect you to be able to communicate clearly and effectively in English, both oral and written, at the college level. I also expect you to be able to read sophisticated literature and to be able to critically reflect on it. Although this is not the primary goal of this course, improvement in writing skills is one of the benefits you should anticipate. I will note grammatical and stylistic problems in your written assignments, and will expect to see these comments incorporated in subsequent work. Written comments in assignments that are indecipherable due to grammar or style will suffer grade reduction.

*Please note: I would like to be informed as early as possible if you have any specific concerns which might effect your participation and success in the class, or of which my awareness might enhance your learning experience. If you have, or need, a letter regarding a specific condition effecting your participation in the class from the Office of Learning Assistance, you should give a copy of this letter to me as soon as possible.*

## Goals of the Course

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The goal of the course is **not** to teach you theology, although in order to understand our principal character we will need to describe his theological ideas. **Neither this course, nor its instructor, advocates or promotes any religion, or religious system of belief and practice.** This is an historical survey, the nature of which will be explained as we go along. While a certain number of historical

details (concepts, names, places, dates) must be learned before you can begin to understand the phenomena we will be examining, your primary emphases will be on:

- 1) **Learning the basic steps** in interpreting essentially foreign texts (originating in another culture, in another language, and in another time and place);
- 2) **Exercising critical thinking skills** that are applicable to all other areas of university study;
- 3) **Understanding the nature of historical investigation**, its uncertainties and its limitations, and particularly the crucial issues and problems which characterize the historical study of religion.

**Our focus** will be on the evidence, literary, epigraphical, and archaeological for the development of Christianity from the end of the first century of our era until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 C.E. We will be especially interested in identifying and analyzing certain cultural themes that help define and shape the development of the Christian communities of the ancient Mediterranean world.

### **The Required Texts**

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You will need to purchase one each of the following texts:

W. H. C. Frend, The Rise of Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

This text is your basic secondary scholarly source for historical information about the persons, issues, and events we shall be discussing.

Ralph Martin Novak, Christianity and the Roman Empire: Background Texts (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001). This volume will serve as your basic primary source. By primary we mean that it contains translations of a large number of ancient texts that serve as the basic evidence for our research, accompanied by explanatory background information to set each text in its historical context.

Ramsay MacMullen, Christianizing the Roman Empire (A. D. 100-400) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984). This volume is essentially a thematic, interpretive essay, describing major concepts and processes important to understanding the tremendous cultural changes we will be surveying. The most important to read here are the individual ancient texts and not so much the background materials. I will give inclusive page numbers most often for this volume, but at times I will list the specific reading by its numeric designation.

## Requirements and Examinations

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**1) Five (5) one page "reports"** will be required during the course. Each of these will require you to react to a specific text, or perhaps, exercise an interpretive skill in terms of a particular text. All of these assignments have not yet been determined, but they will be announced as the course progresses. These reports will not be graded, but **"on-time" submission and an honest effort** to engage the assignments will contribute 5% of your final grade; this is enough to make the difference between a B+ and an A-.

**2) There will be two (2) mid-term examinations**, and the **Final**, dates are listed in the syllabus schedule. The first exam will count for 25%, while the second and third exams will each count for 35% of your final grade.

**3) Class attendance** is expected, as clearly stated in the Student Handbook.

However, I do not regularly take attendance after the first couple of weeks.

Nevertheless, repeated absences do make an impression on me, and that can prove to be a crucial impression when grades are on the borderline.

Theoretically, there are no excused absences. If you know now that you will not be able to take exams or meet the class on the days and at the times scheduled, you should not be registered for the course. Other "serious" absences should be discussed with me prior to the absence, or immediately thereafter in emergency situations.

**Office Visit:** Each student is required to schedule an appointment to visit my office sometime before the first half of the semester is over. This visit will have no particular agenda beyond getting acquainted. If you have concerns about the class, you should feel free to discuss them also. This visit does not preclude scheduling an appointment to see me at any point during the semester. Please take seriously my readiness to discuss any difficulties you should have. I cannot try to help you with them if I am not aware of them. So, don't withdraw and suffer in silence over a problem; take advantage of my office hours or schedule a more convenient time to meet with me.

**4) The primary concern** in this course will be your intellectual performance as represented by your written responses to assigned materials. Work that touches on most of the basic issues in question, but only to a minimal level will be considered "Satisfactory" and will receive a (C), work that covers almost all of the major issues in question and demonstrates above average grasp of the material and concepts presented in the course will receive a (B), work that covers all of the important issues under consideration, and is by its clarity, well-reasoned argumentation, and perceptivity superior will receive an (A). Work that is poor with respect to the minimum requirements of the course, i. e., covering only some of the relevant issues under examination, and treating those covered poorly, will receive a (D). A failing evaluation (F) is reserved for work which demonstrates little or no evidence of awareness of the relevant issues under scrutiny, and is characterized by factual errors and confusion over the material presented.

***Note especially:** I will have little sympathy for essay writers whose work, regardless of how informative or well written it may be, does not directly address the question or assignment at issue, or is not constructed on the basis of the*

*available historical evidence incorporated within a framework of well-reasoned argumentation.*

### Success in the Course

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Success in the course is not a mystery. Some important ingredients include:

**1) taking careful notes;** if you do not take adequate notes you will not do well.

One way of increasing the effectiveness of your note-taking is to compare your notes with others in the class to see if you have selected the same points noted by your colleagues. Also, compare your notes to the available Lecture Outlines to see that your organization of your notes makes sense.

**2) discussion of the class;** locate one or two persons in the class and develop a regular habit of informal discussions of the issues brought up in class. Use these discussions to come up with questions that could be raised in class.

**3) keeping up with assignments;** the reading demands of the class are considered by most students to be heavy. There is a substantial body of primary and secondary reading that must be done in order to comprehend the issues being discussed. Failing to keep current can lead to disaster because much of the lecture material and examination expectations presuppose your knowledge of the background materials. **You must do the reading.**

## Lecture Guides

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### Week 1

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**Tuesday, January 13**

**Lecture 1:** Introduction to the Course: The Jewish Background.

Readings: Frend, 15-22; 30-43; MacMullan, 10-24.

**Thursday, January 15**

**Lecture 2:** Earliest Christianity

Readings: Frend, 101-110; Novak, 10-30.

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### Week 2

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**Tuesday, January 20**

**Lecture 3:** Church and Synagogue: The Parting of the Ways?

Readings: Frend, 120-151; Novak, 30-42.

**Thursday, January 22**

**Lecture 4:** Martyrdom.

Readings: Novak, 43-89; MacMullen, 25-42.

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### Week 3

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**Tuesday, January 27**

**Lecture 5:** Heresy and Orthodoxy, 1.

Readings: Frend, 162-185.

**Thursday, January 29**

**Lecture 6:** Heresy and Orthodoxy, 2.

Readings: Frend, 194-218.

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### Week 4

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**Tuesday, February 3**

**Lecture 7:** Apologetics.

Readings: Frend, 230-243; Novak, 89-100.

**Thursday, February 5**

**Lecture 8:** Canon.

Readings: Frend, 244-257.

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**Week 5**

**Tuesday, February 10**      **First Examination:** Review sheets providing potential questions will be passed out well before the exam day.

**Thursday, February 12**      **Lecture 9:** Growth and Engaging the Empire.  
Readings: Frend, 272-297; Novak, 104-114; 117-119; 134-138.

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**Week 6**

**Tuesday, February 17**      **SWITCH-DAY, NO CLASS**

**Thursday, February 19**      **Lecture 10:** The Church and Roman Response.  
Readings: Novak, 132-133; carrying over the readings in Novak from last class.

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**Week 7**

**Tuesday, February 24**      **Lecture 11:** Decian Persecution.  
Readings: Frend, 308-328; Novak, 120-134.

**Thursday, February 26**      **Lecture 12:** Christianity and the Intellectual World.  
Readings: Frend, 338-357; 368-387; 403-412; 421-424.

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**Week 8**

**Tuesday, March 2**      **Lecture 13:** Diocletian and the Last Great Persecutions.  
Readings: Frend, 440-463.

**Thursday, March 4**      **Lecture 14:** The Victory of Constantine.  
Readings: Frend, 474-488; Novak, 154-159; 162-164, 168; MacMullen, 43-51.

**Important Note ►►►**      **Second Exam as Take-Home Exam given out. Essay due the following Thursday.**

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**Week 9**

**Tuesday, March 9**      **Lecture 15:** The Victory of Constantine, Nicea.  
Readings: Frend, 488-505; Novak, 169-179; MacMullen, 59-67.

**Thursday, March 11**      **Lecture 16:** Constantine and the Age of the Councils.  
Readings: Frend, 522-532, Novak, 198-199; MacMullen, 68-85.

**Important Note ►►►**      **Take Home Essay Due.**

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**MARCH 15-19: SPRING BREAK - BE SAFE!****Week 10**

**Tuesday, March 23**      **Lecture 17:** The Beginnings of a Christian Roman Empire, 1.  
Readings: Frend, 532-579; Novak, 199.

**Thursday, March 25**      **Lecture 19:** The Beginnings of a Christian Roman Empire, 2: Residual Polytheism.  
Readings: Frend, 554-579; Novak, 195-196.

**Week 11**

**Tuesday, March 30**      **Lecture 20:** Julian and Pagan Resistance.  
Readings: Frend, 594-609; Novak, 181-192; 201-202;

	209-210.
<b>Thursday, April 1</b>	<b>Lecture 21:</b> Theological Perspectives after Julian. Readings: Frend, 616-642.
<b>Week 12</b>	
<b>Tuesday, April 6</b>	<b>Lecture 22:</b> Augustine and the Donatists. Readings: Frend, 652-673.
<b>Thursday, April 8</b>	<b>Lecture 23:</b> Augustine and Pelagius. Readings: Frend, 673-683.
<b>Week 13</b>	
<b>Tuesday, April 13</b>	<b>Lecture 24:</b> The End of Rome. Readings: Frend, 700-721.
<b>Thursday, April 15</b>	<b>Lecture 25:</b> Emperor Theodosius. Readings; Frend, 721-729; Novak 210-214.
<b>Week 15</b>	
<b>Tuesday, April 20</b>	<b>Lecture 26:</b> Prequel to Chalcedon. Readings: Frend, 742-770.
<b>Thursday, April 22</b>	<b>Lecture 27:</b> Chalcedon. Readings: Frend, 770-772.
<b>Week 16</b>	
<b>Tuesday, April 27</b>	<b>Lecture 28:</b> The Repression of Polytheism. Readings: MacMullen, 86-101; Novak, 220-222; 227-241.
<b>Thursday, April 29</b>	<b>Lecture 29:</b> Concluding Discussions and Review.
<b>Week 17: FINAL EXAM WEEK</b>	
<b>May 3-6</b>	<b>REL 232 FINAL EXAM; Wednesday, May 5, 12:30 141 Hughes Hall</b>