

ST. MARY'S ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Fall 2019

Monday, 6:00 – 8:30 pm

H601 Early & Medieval Church

Dr. Derek A. Olsen

We will explore the course of Christianity from its earliest days until the eve of the Protestant Reformation. While we will consider the spread of Christianity during this period from its Palestinian roots across the known world, the focus will usually center on the Latin Christianity of North Africa and Western Europe that produced modern Roman Catholicism and the western Protestant churches. This course will examine important Christian thinkers and movements within their context; attention will be given to the cultural trends and forces that raised various questions about God, humanity, and the shape of human society that, in turn, shaped the way that the Church sought to answer these questions.

This class will move chronologically through the time period under discussion, but will also engage the work of a representative medieval preacher to gain a clearer sense of what medieval Christians actually believed about the faith. Each class session will begin with a review of the chronologically-directed reading, then an exploration of material artifacts relating to the time, then a discussion of a central topic based on a medieval sermon

Course Requirements:

- **Reading:** Students should expect to read at most 850 pages of required reading and should come prepared to discuss readings in class.
- **Writing**
 - Each week a brief (1-2 page) informal writing assignment will respond to a prompt regarding the required reading
 - At the conclusion of the course, a 12-15 page research paper will explore a topic chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor.
- **Other**
 - Because much of the student learning will occur within class discussions, attendance and participation are essential aspects of this class.

Required Texts:

- Coakley, John W., and Andrea Sterk. *Readings in World Christian History. Volume I: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004; reprinted 2014. ISBN: 1-57075-520-5 (pbk.: v.1)
- Madigan, Kevin. *Medieval Christianity: A New History*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-300-21677-6 (pbk.)
- Wilken, Robert Louis. *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-300-19838-6 (pbk.)