DR1038: THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

15 credits: Weeks 1–11

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM
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TIMETABLE

*Students can view their university timetable at*

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will introduce you to the first five centuries of Christian life and belief. It traces the rise of Christianity from its origins as a Jewish sect to a position of cultural and religious dominance in the Roman Empire. It also looks at the development of central themes in early Christian theology and spirituality. The course consists of a series of lectures on key topics, and tutorial seminars on researching and presenting your work, and on various early Christian texts. The course also requires your own reading and research.

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. An understanding of the historical development of the life and thought of the Christian church in the first five centuries after Christ.
2. An awareness of the development of theological understanding and scriptural interpretation in the early church.
3. An awareness of a range of Christian doctrines that were formulated in the early church and continue to shape contemporary theological expression.
4. An awareness of the diversity and debate which characterises the secondary literature concerned with the early church.

LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME

*Lectures*

Week 1: Introduction to course
The Graeco-Roman world at the time of Jesus

Week 2: The Jewish world at the time of Jesus
Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

Week 3: Early Christian communities
Women in early Christianity

Week 4: Tradition and Scripture
Ministry and authority

Week 5: The enemy within (I): the Gnostics
The enemy within (II): Marcion

Week 6: The enemy within (III): the Montanists
Persecution ... and repentance

Week 7:
The rule of Constantine
The rise of monasticism

Week 8:
The Christian God
The Council of Nicaea

Week 9:
Figures of the faith – Jerome
Figures of the faith – Ambrose

Week 10:
The Council of Ephesus
The Council of Chalcedon

Week 11:
Figures of the faith – Augustine (I)
Figures of the faith – Augustine (II)

Week 12:
Revision lecture

PowerPoint slides for each lecture, together with ideas for preparatory reading, will be available in advance of each lecture on MyAberdeen.

Seminars
Week 2: Cameron, Interpreting Christian history
Week 3: Workshop – Evaluating web resources
Week 4: Workshop – Bibliographies and footnoting
Week 5: Workshop – Planning an essay
Week 6: Tertullian, Apology
Week 7: Passion of Perpetua
Week 8: Eusebius, Life of Constantine
Week 9: Athanasius, Life of Antony
Week 10: Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed
Week 11: Augustine, Treatise on the Spirit and the Letter
Pelagius, Letter to Demetrias

The seminar pack will be available before the start of the course on MyAberdeen. Note that there is no seminar in the first week of the course.

READING LIST

Many volumes cover the history of early Christianity. The three texts which are particular reference points for the reading suggestions in this course are:


Some of the following literature may also be helpful as you seek further information on a given theme or as you research for your course assignments:


**ASSESSMENT**

1. 10% - seminar exercise (annotated bibliography 500 words)
2. 30% - one essay (1500-2000 words)
3. 60% - two-hour online exam

**PLEASE NOTE**: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

If you submit your work on time, you can expect that feedback will normally be provided within three working weeks (excluding vacation periods) of the submission deadline.

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to MyAberdeen - Organisations - Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

**SEMINAR EXERCISE**

The task is to compile an Annotated Bibliography of 800–1000 words.
First, select an essay topic from the list below and write it at the top of your assignment – note that it will save time if you use same topic for this exercise and for the essay itself. Second, compile a provisional bibliography of at least 8 items for this topic. Third, give a short summary of the content of each item. The annotated bibliography must include at least:

- one relevant book that is not from the recommended reading list
- one relevant chapter or article from an encyclopaedia / edited volume
- one relevant website

ESSAY

Select one essay topic from the selection below and write an essay of between 1500 and 2000 words, including all quotations and footnotes. Note that essays will be penalised for being outwith these limits. The essay does not need to be on the same topic as your seminar exercise but it will save you work if it is. Initial reading suggestions are included in respect of each essay topic, but you are encouraged and expected to seek further resources in your research. You should include a Bibliography of sources consulted at the end of your essay.

1. Why did Christianity attract hostility from the Graeco-Roman world in the first three centuries?
   Hazlett, I. *Early Christianity*, 231–255.

2. To what extent were early Christian (ca. 30–500CE) views on women influenced by attitudes in the wider Graeco-Roman world?
3. Why was Montanism treated as a heresy?

4. Why did Constantine favour Christianity?

5. How did the persecutions of the third century affect Christian views about who belongs to the church?
EXAMINATION

The exam (two hours) in December will consist of two sections:

Section A (one-third of the exam): You will be asked to offer comment on ONE of three extracts from the seminar texts.

Section B (two-thirds of the exam): You will be asked to answer TWO essay questions on topics covered in the course.

General exam guidance will be given in the Student Handbook.

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

Seminar Exercise: Friday 27th October 2017, 3.00pm

Essay: Friday 24th November 2017, 3.00pm

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

If you submit your work on time, you can expect that feedback will normally be provided within three working weeks (excluding vacation periods) of the submission deadline.

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SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Submit a .doc or .docx and include the word count.

Submit by the due date, no hard copy will be required unless directly requested by the course coordinator through MyAberdeen.

In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student id number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 DRXXXX Essay 1.

When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. 59999999 DRXXXX Essay 1.

Please note: failure to submit by the due date (unless a prior arrangement has been made) will result in a deduction of marks. Where no submission is received, this will result in a mark of zero.

Please note: Safeassign text matching software will be used, however the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy reserves the right to also submit material to TurnitinUK when deemed necessary.

Resit Information

The resit is by way of examination (100%).
Access to the resit which is provisional on:

- All submitted coursework having been submitted and graded at CGS E3 or higher.
- Student having a valid Class Certificate. Students with C7’s are not eligible for resits.

Past exam papers can be viewed at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/.

Please Note: Candidates whose first language is not English may refer to English/native tongue dictionaries, when permitted by their Schools to do so. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted in the examination venue. Invigilators are entitled to request inspection of dictionaries prior to the
examination, thumbing through them to check that there is no extra written material present.