

Course Syllabus
TRH2421 – The Emerging Christian Church: Church History to 451
Trinity College
Toronto School of Theology
January to April (Winter/Spring) 2021

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: By appointment

Apart from the scheduled 1:1 each month, feel free to contact Prof. Schneider, either if you need help or have just become excited by your own ideas and want to talk about them. Several fixed times will be established for voice communication – 416-532-5488 or we can set a Zoom – or you can email any time, as shown above.

Course Identification

Course Number: TRH2421
Course Name: The Emerging Christian Church: Church History to 451
Course Location: Online only
Course Week Begins: Every Thursday (starting 14 January)
Live Sessions (*Optional*): Thursdays – 14 January and three others TBA
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

In this course we will study the key events, figures, controversies, and the development of ideas in the truly formative period of the early church. We will explore the relationship between the external pressures the church faced, its internal struggles, and the role of divine revelation in the process of the church's formation. However, we will also ask questions about whether the stories we tell about our subject, based very much on texts, can be supplemented or even corrected by the record of material culture and archeological discovery. Thus, in addition to understanding the intellectual and structural developments of church history as presented in texts, we will ask whether a different picture emerges from an examination of the material record. Finally, we will place a great deal of emphasis on examining primary sources alongside the secondary literature; we will continually step back to reflect on our own assumptions and on the ways in which church historians make use of the primary sources they draw on to construct their versions of the story of the early church.

Expanded Course Description

History is central in Orthodox studies for two emphatic reasons – first, Orthodox understanding of history, when properly studied, replaces the dull idea that history is a mere record of “what happened” with a dynamic theology of the church – in fact, a more accurate, more full and rich theology of “church” than any formal model derived from systematic ecclesiology. Through historical study we come to realize that “church” is always a struggle, a work in process, a work of constant discovery as new questions and problems arise and new insights are gained when culture moves through waves of changing circumstance. The church is neither an abstraction nor a fully formed institution, but a rich life lived in response to God by people constantly faced with unanticipated issues creating the responsibility of making “the right decisions” and certain that on those decisions rest the path to salvation. All Christian people of whatever condition, be they bishops or merchants or peasants on the farm, lay or clergy, men or women -- which is why all of them must be queried in a study of church history – are engaged in this struggle, are constantly making decisions about what is good and true, and what (and who) is false. Such decisions about truth and falsity, about necessary or frivolous acts, about what obeys God's commandments or rejects them, are absolutely vital -- one choice will lead to salvation, the other to destruction. But since the axiom of “Truth is One” underlies this life-engaging dialectic of decision, there must be some judgment about “who got it right?” and that creates a parallel, and equally dynamic, social process in which the “church” discerns and develops who has authority, and so creates the institutions of the church, thereby ordering and arranging Christian society and Christian ethical aspirations. This dynamic is why it is most appropriate that in our Orthodox Studies curriculum such topics as bishops, councils, canon law, pastoral care, and even dogmatics are taken up in history courses rather than in systematics.

This dynamic life of the church is its reality at every era, but before the 20th century, its dialectical dynamism – debates, dialogue, competing definitions, condemnations – can be seen at its most intense during the era studied in this course, from earliest Christianity until to 4th Ecumenical Council. From the earliest loosely organized and un-institutionalized local gatherings that are the churches in the New Testament, the life of Christianity undergoes a rapid process of change in almost every aspect as it copes with pressure from a context of persecution and opposition, competition of religions and philosophies which lead to clashing dogmatics (“heresies”), and shift from city culture and city bishops to ruralization. Even so, during this era Christianity spreads widely through “conversion” – but what is “conversion” in a church offering such opposite alternatives as Christian Roman imperium and desert monasticism? How are church councils a solution to potential disorder, and is such conciliarism a rival, or an adjunct, to the authority of new Christian emperors? The rapidity of cultural change can even be seen in the developments of liturgical ritual, church architecture, and art.

This understanding of church-as-process emerging within a foundation of Church-as-Truth has significant consequences for the personal development of our students. To be sure, one desired outcome in this course is that students should learn to think like disciplined historians rather than polemicists or apologists, even while asking how a strict historical method can provide valid truths for ecclesiological theology. But the much more significant outcome will be the discovery that “church” is a not-yet-finished project, an eschatological adventure in which the past of “church” – Tradition – is not over-and-done-with, a long ago past, but rather a living present, a basis on which wise new choices can be made when new situations arise. The church fathers had to make decisions to provide truthful solutions to problems, and so do today's students; church history creates responsibility.

Course Resources

Books for Purchase

The only **required** purchase is Owen Chadwick, : *The Early Church: The Story of Emergent Christianity, Revised Edition* (Penguin History of the Church Vol. 1); see notes above.

Strongly recommended: The primary source excerpts will be taken from two outstanding anthologies, which should ideally be part of every serious book collection about Orthodoxy, since they contain a vast resource of translated textual excerpts for the first 5 centuries of the church with fine introductions and detailed notes. If you can own them, you will be consulting them all the time, way beyond the 1% of their material we can study in one semester [The second volume has an e-book edition, but the bound volume is much more useful for consultation]. **If buying used, be sure you are getting the new edition, revised by the great W.H.C. Frend, which contains many new documents and the notes by Frend. You do not want the 1st ed. by Stevenson alone.**

A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to A.D. 337. ed. J. Stevenson (1957, new edition revised by W.H.C. Frend. (1987) [London: SPCK and other publishers]

Creeks, Councils, and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church A.D. 337-461, ed. J. Stevenson (1966, new edition revised by W.H.C. Frend. (1989) [London: SPCK and other publishers]

Course Portal

Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>.

As in the classroom, online communication must be carried out respectfully and civilly at all times. Writing within the online media of blogs, discussion forums is not an excuse for laziness, lack of proper reflection or uncivility. Arguments must be carefully crafted, respectfully presented and grounded in source texts and solid reflection. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will not succeed in this course.

Course Learning Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following outcomes.

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

- to work with both primary and secondary sources and to gather, analyze and prepare materials for reflection and engaged class discussion
- to improve their reading-analytical and idea-critical skills
- to write analytical commentaries on texts
- to write a book review integrating analysis and reflection on primary and secondary sources

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

- identify key figures, events and dates in church history from the period.
- recall key primary source materials from the period and their authorship.
- communicate more effectively, verbally and in writing, about church history by making logical arguments about primary materials, engaging relevant secondary sources, and meeting academic standards for writing and annotation.
- analyze their own historiographical assumptions, and those of various secondary and primary authors.

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- to manage his or her own learning
- to demonstrate behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

- to demonstrate qualities and skills necessary for ministry, further study, and community involvement
- to exercise initiative, personal responsibility, and accountability in both personal and group contexts
- to work effectively with others

Time Management, Expectations, Required Assignments and Weighting

The total workload each week to accomplish this work is approximately 7 hours/week

Return written work as a Word document attachment through the Quercus portal

A. Weekly Readings / Critical Commentaries (35%)

The course will mostly operate asynchronously, there will be reading and short writing tasks assigned for each week **which must be completed during that week** but students will manage their own work schedules, For the most part the materials for assignments will be posted on Quercus; each week students will write a short (2 pp. max) critical commentary or analytical notes about one of the assigned primary source readings of that week. These will be returned with professor's comments each week because **the aim is for students to improve their text-analytical skills from week to week to gain nuance when finding meaning in primary sources.** NB: there will be not be written assignments on the weeks when class is meeting as a whole by Zoom; see below.

B. Data Quizzes (30%)

There is no such thing as history without data. Each week students will receive a list of data – between 10-15 items each week – for the topic of the week, keyed to pages of Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society from Galilee to Gregory the Great* [Oxford History of the Christian Church; an e-book in Roberts Library], accompanied by a page of questions about the meaning and import of the data. [Most weeks there will be a very short PowerPoint laying out basic concepts about the weekly topic and these question, and also showing works of art and architecture]. Students are expected to master and remember these data items; three times in the semester there will be a brief (one-hour) quiz asking the student to identify by memory 6 of these data items covering the weeks since the last quiz; the knowledge-standard will be Chadwick. These will all be asynchronous, done on the honour system at your own time, but completed during the assigned week.

C. Class Participation (10%)

Once each month, the entire class will meet synchronously by Zoom at a time when all can be present; the discussions will review the readings and work of the weeks since the previous Zoom, and will also be an opportunity to present various thoughts and ideas leading to a class evaluation or debate, and also to ask questions of interest to all, and generally to get to know each other. Also once each month the professor will have a 1:1 Zoom meeting with each student for about 30 minutes; this is basically to “check in” and to answer any questions or confusions the student may have. Together these constitute the “class participation.”

D. Longer primary source commentary (10%)

Where most of the weekly primary sources will be short excerpts of a few paragraphs, two or three longer, narrative primary texts (30-50 pp) will be assigned during the semester. Once students will write a longer (6 pp), in-depth analysis of one of these, done asynchronously at your convenience but in late March/early April, after receiving professor's comments on your early weekly analyses. This should be in essay form, with a thesis-point and an organized argument. (10%)

E. Final Book Review (15%)

After the final class week, but during the exam period, you will write a book review of an “easy-read” book written for the general public by Owen Chadwick, one of the greatest masters of early church history: *The Early Church: The Story of Emergent Christianity, Revised Edition* (Penguin History of the Church Vol. 1). This will give you an excellent oversight review of the entire study of the semester, but

your aim is not a mere summary. Rather, you are making a thoughtful critique of this book based on your factual knowledge and thinking all term. You must deal with such issues as the analytical values in Chadwick's historical method, the image of the church to 451 which he creates, his value judgments, what he expects the reader to understand as "Christianity," and also whether this is an adequate presentation of "church." If you were writing a history of the early church, would the contents and the argument look like this? This must be a prose essay, with a thesis and an organized argument. Buy this book; from Amazon.ca the cost is less than \$25, and there is also a Kindle e-book, but be sure you are getting the revised edition.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A RANGE: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, and broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base
B RANGE: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work. Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. A 2% per day penalty applies (up to a maximum of 20%) for late work. This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly

requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your

course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Anti-harassment policy. As we all adjust to online classes and lectures, and increasingly participate in virtual learning environments, students are reminded of the expectation that we all demonstrate respect for one another. As outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, the University of Toronto does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities especially when based on grounds protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The University of Toronto recognizes its commitment to human rights, equity and inclusion and acknowledges the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has on various parts of our community. COVID-19 is not isolated to people of any particular ethnic origin, place of origin or race. Equity, diversity and respect must remain integral as we continue to transition during these challenging times. The institution will monitor and address discriminatory comments or behaviour including on U of T's online platforms and classrooms.

In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, no person shall engage in a course of vexatious conduct that is directed at one or more specific individuals, and that is based on the race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age marital status, family status or disability. This includes:

- Racial slurs or “jokes”
- Insults due to racial identity
- Online posts of cartoons or pictures, in a workplace or school that degrade persons of a particular racial group
- Name-calling due to race, colour, citizenship, place of origin, ancestry, ethnic background or creed
- Pseudonyms or handles that are inappropriate about ancestry, colour, citizenship, ethnicity, place of origin, race, or religion.

The University of Toronto's Equity Offices remain available to students to provide support on equity issues that arise as a result of COVID-19. Students are encouraged to support one another and the University's commitment to human rights and our values of diversity, inclusion, and respect in managing any inappropriate comments or disruptive behaviours. If you experience or witness inappropriate comments or behaviours in your classes, you are encouraged to contact your instructor. If you can, take and share a screenshot of the inappropriate content with your instructor so they can follow-up with you and address the conduct.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introd. to Historical Methodology; the Church(es) in the 1st century

Video (1 hr.) (a) historical methodology: is church history different or special? (b) why Christianity developed and spread – ways to salvation; social and cultural implications; apostles/bishops

R. Schneider, *Church History as the hermeneutics of ecclesiology*

Selected passages from the New Testament and Apostolic Fathers

Week 2 Sept. Zoom: discussion of week 1; start of 2nd century

Social and insitutional history of Christians; why do offices – bishops, etc. – institutionalize?

Dynamics of relation with the great state – impact of persecution; death and cemeteries; Jews

Christian writing genres

Week 3 2nd C. continued: dynamics between teachers and offices; localism; “heresy”; apologetics

Week 4 3rd century to 312 (first data quiz due)

Gradual organization and intensification of all the above; church and state

From urban to rural; localism of early councils; social history – who are Christians?

Liturgical developments, church geography and culture; why does monasticism start?

Significanc of Constantine?

Week 5 the fourth century – does “church” change with adoption of Christianity by state?

Why, if state accepts Christianity, does monasticism flourish?

Emperor and bishops; councils as universal, not local; church law and canons

Cult of saints; why pilgrimages? Significance of Jerusalem? Why write history –Eusebius?

Heresy and controversy: who is in charge? Role of Constantinople; impacts – Ambrose,

Theodosius I

Latin-Greek separation; East vs. West

Week 6-8 continuation of Week 5 (2nd data quiz week 7)

Weeks 9-12 5th cent.: conciliarism vs. separation: who’s a heretic? (3rd quiz week 9; analysis week 11)

Why does Christology cause a major split? Is the issue doctrine or culture

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change in accordance with the regulations in the TST *Basic Degree Handbook*.