

COURSE SYLLABUS

CH508: The Radical Reformation

Course Lecturer: Abraham Friesen, PhD

Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara

About This Course



This course was originally created through the Institute of Theological Studies in association with the Evangelical Seminary Deans' Council. There are nearly 100 evangelical seminaries of various denominations represented within the council and many continue to use the ITS courses to supplement their curriculum. The lecturers were selected primarily by the Deans' Council as highly recognized scholars in their particular fields of study.

Course Description

Where the Protestants wanted reform, the Radicals wanted separation. This course examines those groups of the Reformation era that sought a complete break from the Catholic Church. Following a topical and historical progression, learners study the beginning of the movement, its development, and its various manifestations. Students gain insight into the tension between the Radicals and the Reformers that led to the rise of divisions within the church. The goal of the course is to understand more fully the shifts that have formed within the history of the church, enabling them to minister more effectively to contemporary church audiences.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand the nature of the movement in the context of the 16th century.
- Define the meaning of *radical Christianity* in the context of the Reformation.
- Gain insight into the roots of the modern “Free Church” movement, which is important for a proper understanding of American Christianity.
- Describe the origins of the “historic peace churches.”
- Gain a historical perspective on current ecumenical dialogue within Protestantism.

Course Lecturer



Abraham Friesen, PhD

Education:

- Stanford University, MA and PhD
- University of Manitoba, Canada, BA

Teaching Career:

- Professor Emeritus of History, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Professor and renowned historian at University of California, Santa Barbara for more than 40 years
- Lectured at Westmont College, Pacific College, Stanford University, Pepperdine University, Mennonite Brethren Seminary, Regent College, the University of Winnipeg, and the Biblical Seminary in Bonn, Germany

Other Career Highlights:

- Preacher at churches throughout North America
- Service at the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies and on the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission
- Member of the Editorial Board of *Sixteenth Century Journal*, *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, and *Mennonite Quarterly Studies*
- Member of several professional organizations, including The Society for Reformation Research, The Center for Mennonite Studies, and The American Society for Church History
- Fellow for The Institute of European History
- Considered an expert in the works of Thomas Müntzer

Publications:

- Numerous journal articles for a wide range of publications including *Church History*, the *Journal of American Academy of Religion*, and *The Messenger*, with several articles translated and published in languages across Europe
- Author of numerous books, including *Reformation and Utopia*, *Thomas Müntzer, a Destroyer of the Godless*, *In Defense of Privilege: Russian Mennonites and the State Before and During World War I*, and *History and Renewal in the Anabaptist/Mennonite Tradition*

Course Texts

Required:

Estep, William Roscoe. *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*. 3rd rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.

Klassen, Walter, ed. *Anabaptism in Outline*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981.

Ozment, Steven. *The Age of Reform 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe*. London, United Kingdom: Yale University Press, 1980.

Textbooks can be ordered through our online store at CUGN.org, through your local bookstore, or through your preferred eReader when available.

Course Requirements

- 1. Time:** The student must complete the course requirements within a 6-month period unless the particular institution requires the completion of all work within the framework of the semester or quarter. During this time, the student is expected to devote a minimum of 120 hours to the completion of the course.
- 2. Recorded Lectures:** The student is required to listen to all 24 audio lectures recorded by Dr. Abraham Friesen.
- 3. Reading:** The student is required to read all three required textbooks in their entirety. In addition, the student must read at least 800 pages from works listed in the Bibliography (located in the Study Guide). Upon completion of the course, the student will submit a list of completed readings (including page numbers) to his/her proctor.
- 4. Study Guide Questions:** The student will submit thorough, well-developed answers to all Study Guide Questions.
- 5. Spiritual Formation Project**

RATIONALE: Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. With this in mind, CUGN includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. Identify your mentor early in the course, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

A. Personal Reflection and Evaluation: Reflect on the course – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.

- i. Follow these steps in your reflection:

Step 1: What one theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?

Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?

Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?

Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what specific steps should you take to concretely apply what you have learned?

- ii. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length

for this reflection: approximately three pages)

iii. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

B. Community Reflection and Interaction: Interview a mentor – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

- i. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
 1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
 2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
 3. Someone who is not your grader or a family member.
 4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
 5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
 6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

NOTE: Identify your mentor early in the course, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- ii. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
 - What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
 - In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
 - What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

C. Synthesis and Application: Draw your final conclusions – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

- i. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
- ii. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
 - What advice did he/she give?
 - How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?

- Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.

iii. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:

- If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
- In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, specific changes need to occur in your life and what concrete steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life. If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

Course Grading

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Reading	20% of Course Grade
Study Guide Questions	60% of Course Grade
Spiritual Formation Project	20% of Course Grade
Total	100%

Student Name: _____ Course: _____ Interview
Date/Time: _____

Guidelines for Mentors

(Students, give this sheet to your mentor for the Spiritual Formation Project.)

Thank you for your involvement in this student's CUGN coursework. We believe the Christian life is more than an academic exercise, so we encourage students to critically reflect on their life in light of what they learn and then apply those insights to the daily life of faith.

Therefore, students taking CUGN courses are required to complete a final assignment called the "Spiritual Formation Project." This assignment involves two parts: an essay and an interview:

The ESSAY: After completing their coursework, students reflect on the content of the course, evaluate their lives, and discuss the one theme, principle or concept that is most significant to them and why. Students are to identify specific ways this theme/principle/concept should apply to their lives and what action steps they plan to take in order to make these changes a reality.

The INTERVIEW: After writing this reflection, students give a copy to their mentor and meet with him/her to discuss their thoughts and get feedback. The goal of this interview is to facilitate the student's growth through interaction with a mature believer.

NOTES ON THE INTERVIEW:

- You do not need to be familiar with the course to participate in this interview. You will primarily respond to the thoughts of the student. (However, general knowledge of the subject matter of the course and/or experience applying it to ministry is valuable.)
- Prior to meeting with the student, read his/her "Personal Reflection and Evaluation" and prepare to discuss the following:
 1. What feedback can you give the student in response to his/her essay?
 2. Are the student's conclusions from the course appropriate? Why or why not?
 3. What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications would you suggest from your own life and ministry?
- Meet with the student either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc.).
- Suggested length of the interview: 45 minutes

Thanks again for participating in this project! You have a real opportunity to guide this student in the application process and to help him/her connect academics to life – *a valuable process for all who wish to grow in Christ.*

NOTE: If the student's school makes any changes to this assignment, their requirements should replace those described here.