

COURSE SYLLABUS

Church History to the Reformation

Course Lecturer: Garth M. Rosell, PhD

Professor of Church History at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Course Description

Nearly every major doctrine of the Church was established before the Reformation. In this course, learners discover how the Church's doctrine, faith, and practice developed from Pentecost to the time of the Protestant Reformation. The lectures focus on the cultural, political, and economic backgrounds of both the Patristic and Medieval periods of church history, and emphasize the contributions of key figures up to the Reformation. The course culminates with the Renaissance, which was the cultural context for Luther's Reformation. From Augustine to Wycliffe, students will see how God graciously used human people to accomplish divine purposes.

Course Objectives

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

- Articulate the development of Christian doctrine, faith, and practice from Pentecost to the Reformation.
- Reflect upon their significance for the church today.
- Describe the process by which only certain documents came to be regarded as authoritative.
- List the salient elements of early Christian worship.
- Ponder the implications of "martyr faith" for your own life and ministry.

Course Lecturer



Garth M. Rosell, PhD

Education:

- Oxford and Cambridge, sabbatical studies
- Fuller Seminary and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, graduate studies
- University of Minnesota, PhD
- Princeton Theological Seminary, MDiv and ThM
- Wheaton College, BA

Teaching Career:

- Professor of Church History and Director Emeritus, Ockenga Institute at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Academic Dean, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (9 years) – helped secure regional accreditation for the Seminary
- Three of his courses voted “Course of the Year”
- Named “Professor Who Has Had the Greatest Impact on Our Lives” multiple times
- Church History teacher, Bethel Theological Seminary (8 years)
- Lecturer and teacher at various college campuses and seminaries across the United States
- One of the most sought after evangelical scholars

Other Career Highlights:

- Widely regarded as one of the finest church historians in Christianity
- Member of numerous professional societies and a number of boards and committees
- Founding member, *In Trust* magazine Editorial Council
- Ordained in the Presbyterian Church
- Minister in local congregations and volunteer on denominational committees while pastoring various churches throughout the years
- Member of multiple community and philanthropic boards in the Boston area
- Chair of numerous accreditation teams for the Association of Theological Seminaries (ATS)
- Director of Counseling and Follow-Up, Billy Graham Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair

Publications:

- Publications include *Commending the Faith: The Preaching of D. L. Moody*, *The Evangelical Landscape*, *American Christianity*, and *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism*
- Recipient of a *Christianity Today* book award for his *Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*

Recommended Reading

Though not required, you may choose to read the textbooks shown below to supplement your learning.

Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christianity, Volume 1: Beginnings to 1500*. Revised edition with a new format and supplemental bibliographies by Ralph D. Winter. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1975.

Richardson, Cyril C., ed. *Early Christian Fathers*. Reprint edition. New York: Touchstone, 1995.

Alternatives, if Richardson is unavailable:

Eberhard Arnold, ed., *The Early Christians In Their Own Words*, 4th ed. (Farmington, PA: Plough Books, 1998).

Henry Bettenson, ed., *Early Christian Fathers*, reprint (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1969).

Maxwell Staniforth, ed., *Early Christian Writings*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1987).

Optional DVD:

The Trial and Testimony of the Early Church is available for purchase from Vision Video, (800) 523-0226.

Textbooks can be ordered through your local bookstore, various online bookstores, or through your preferred eReader when available.

Course Methods

The lecture content for each lesson is provided in two easy-to-use formats: audio and PDF text (if available). Students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.

Course Assessment and Requirements

To earn a Certificate of Completion, you must complete the course requirements. Course requirements include:

1. Listening to all 24 audio lectures.
2. Completing a final self-assessment form in which you will reflect on the content in the course and evaluate your life in light of what you have learned. The specifics of this assessment are provided in the course materials.

Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded to any student.