

COURSE SYLLABUS

The Radical Reformation

Course Lecturer: Abraham Friesen, PhD
Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara

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*

Recommended Reading

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

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 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.