Modern Church History

Syllabus | MS-322–M | Ministerial Studies - 3 credits

Lead Instructor



Hello! I am Lisa Quintana, the Lead Instructor for this course, which means I attend each class to facilitate guest lecturers, occasionally teach, conduct exams, maintain student records/ registration, and grade.
lquintana@citychurchonline.org
or T. 608-221-1528, x1306.

Academic Dean



Dr. Greg Pechacek is our Academic Dean for Christian Life College, Madison. He oversees the program and teaches, too. He's been preaching for decades! Questions about CLC-M? Email: gpechacek@citychurchonline.org

Class: when/where?

Thursday evenings, January 28 to May 13, 2027, 6:00-8:30 p.m. at Abundant Life Christian School, 4901 E. Buckeye Rd., Madison (upstairs, room 202). Doors open at 5:45 PM & close at 6:15 PM for security reasons.



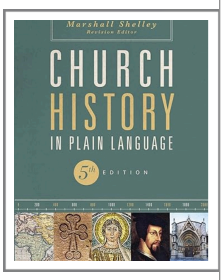
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Why Take This Course?

Modern Church History invites you on a captivating journey through the vibrant life and thought of the Christian church, from the dawn of the Reformation to the present day. Instead of dry facts, you'll discover a story brimming with dramatic events, colorful personalities, and revolutionary ideas—each shaping the church we know today. We'll explore how doctrines, institutions, and ethical debates shaped the church's last five centuries.

Textbook You Need to Purchase

1. *Church History in Plain Language* by Bruce Shelley, 5th edition (Zondervan, 2021)
2. You should also have a good "word-for-word" (no paraphrased versions) translation of the Bible, i.e., ESV, NET, or NASB.





Learning Objectives

1. This course will provide you with an overview of the significant individuals and groups which have shaped the direction of church history.
2. You will examine the influence and rapid growth of Christianity.
3. Your devotional life will be enhanced by connecting your understanding of Scripture and life experiences with major figures and events in church history.
4. You will be enabled to converse intelligently about current church issues from an historical perspective.
5. You will be inspired to continue seeking your personal role in participating in the life of the Church and serving Christ's command of the Great Commission.

Additional resources for your further research into church history can be made available to you by asking the lead instructor for recommendations.

Assignments & Requirements

1. **Weekly Discussion Posts** – 10 points each. Credit students will answer questions in Google Classroom by midnight on most Thursdays (access to Google Classroom is emailed). **Late entries will incur a points deduction.**

2. **Term Paper** – Students will write a 2,500- 3,000-word research paper (approx. 10–12 pages, double-spaced; Times New Roman 12-point font): **Theological Biography** (30% of your total grade). MLA format.

   A. Assignment Overview—For this assignment, you will write an argumentative, college-level theological biography focusing on a significant figure from the Reformation through the modern era. Using Shelley's *Church History in Plain Language (5th Edition)* as your historical launchpad, you will select an individual whose life serves as a window into a major theological shift, crisis, or development.

   A theological biography is not a simple chronological report of a person's life. It is an analytical research paper that investigates the interplay between a person's historical context, their internal spiritual and intellectual evolution, their primary theological writings, and their lasting systemic impact on the Church.

   B. Core Requirements & Expectations: To achieve a passing grade on this paper, your research must successfully demonstrate the following elements:

   • **A Clear, Arguable Thesis**: Your introductory paragraph must conclude with a strong thesis statement. Do not merely state who you are writing about; argue how and why their biographical circumstances uniquely shaped their theology, or how their theological convictions forced a specific historical turning point.

   • **Engagement with Primary Sources**: You must directly analyze at least one major primary text authored by your chosen figure (e.g., Luther's *The Bondage of the Will,* Calvin's *Institutes).* Your paper should balance historical narrative with close textual analysis.

   • **Robust Academic Bibliography**: In addition to Shelley's textbook, you must cite a minimum of two (2) peer-reviewed, academic secondary sources (including academic journal articles, monographs, and/or critical biographies).

   • **Theological & Historical Tension**: Your paper must focus heavily on a core tension or conflict. Avoid hagiography (uncritical praise). Examine your subject's blind spots, the fierce resistance they faced from the status quo, or the internal contradictions between their ideals and their practical execution.

   C. Approved Research Tracks. You may select your subject from the following curated options rooted in our textbook readings. If you wish to propose a figure or group topic not listed below, you must email the lead instructor for approval at least two weeks before the draft deadline.

   • **Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough**: From Terror to Justification. **Focus:** Trace the internal, psychological, and theological transformation of Luther from a terrified Augustinian monk trying to earn his salvation to the reformer who discovered "justification by faith



Class Grade Points

Midterm	25%
Final	25%
Term Paper	30%
Weekly Posts & Reading	15%
Class Participation	5%

Deadlines & Policies

- **Drop Date (Feb 26):** Final day to receive a partial refund or change status from credit to audit.
- **Extensions:** Allowed only for family or medical emergencies. Unfinished work results in an "Incomplete," which automatically turns into an "F" 30 days after the semester ends.
- **Academic Integrity:** Cheating, plagiarism, fabricating research (including using AI instead of your own brain), or helping others cheat will result in a denial of credit and possible dismissal.

alone" (*sola fide*). **Core Tension:** Analyze his early struggle with the *Anfechtungen* (overwhelming spiritual dread and anxiety before a righteous God). Examine how his linguistic breakthrough while translating Romans 1:17—realizing God's righteousness is a gift given, not a standard demanded—fundamentally shifted his entire worldview. **Key Primary Texts:** Luther's Preface to the Latin Writings (1545 retrospective), Commentary on Galatians.

• **John Calvin:** The Pastoral Intellectual. **Focus:** Analyze how Calvin's personal experience of exile shaped his theology of church order in the *Institutes*. **Core Tension:** Evaluate the tension between his intellectual pursuit of pure doctrine and the practical, pastoral realities of governing Geneva through the Consistory.

• **Jonathan Edwards:** The Intellectual Catalyst of Revival. **Focus:** Examine how Edwards integrated highly demanding, rigorous Reformed theology with the raw, emotional phenomena of the First Great Awakening. **Core Tension:** Detail how his biographical experiences—particularly his defense of religious emotions in *Religious Affections*—contrasted with his eventual dismissal by his own congregation over communion standards.

• **William J. Seymour:** The Forgotten Architect of Global Pentecostalism. **Focus:** Evaluate Seymour's theological and personal journey from a son of enslaved parents to the leader of the 1906 Azusa Street Revival. **Core Tension:** Analyze how his foundational theology of the Holy Spirit sought to dismantle racial barriers, and how contemporary racial segregation and theological fracturing within the early Pentecostal movement challenged his vision.

• **Argula von Grumbach:** The First Protestant Woman Writer. **Focus:** Analyze how this Bavarian noblewoman became a highly influential pamphlet writer of the early Reformation, explicitly utilizing Luther's theology of the "priesthood of all believers" to justify her public voice. **Core Tension:** Evaluate the severe backlash she faced for challenging the faculty of the University of Ingolstadt in defense of a young Lutheran student. The paper can examine her theological argument that Scripture compelled her to speak out when male theologians remained silent, contrasted with the era's rigid social restrictions on women. **Primary Focus Text:** To the University of Ingolstadt (her 1523 open letter).

• **Teresa of Ávila:** The Mystic Reformer of the Catholic Reformation. **Focus:** Trace her transformation from a compromised Spanish nun into a foundational theologian of Christian mysticism and the leader of the Discalced Carmelite reform movement. **Core Tension:** Examine how she navigated the intense scrutiny of the Spanish Inquisition—which deeply mistrusted claims of direct mystical experience—while establishing dozens of reformed monasteries and articulating a complex, enduring theology of prayer and spiritual growth. Primary Focus Texts: *The Interior Castle* or her *Autobiography*.

• **Phoebe Palmer:** The Architect of the Holiness Movement. **Focus:** Explore how Palmer, a Methodist laywoman from New York, systematically developed the "altar theology" (shorter/longer ways to entire sanctification) that fundamentally reshaped 19th-century American evangelicalism. **Core Tension:** Analyze how she maintained a massive international teaching ministry through her "Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness" while defending a woman's theological right to preach, arguing that the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost overrode traditional gender restrictions. **Primary Focus Texts:** *The Way of Holiness* or *The Promise of the Father*.

Internet sources should be used cautiously and sparingly. Late papers



Tuition & Fees

Credit: 3 college credits cost $400.

- **Deadlines:** Half is due by the first class; the remainder is due before the fourth class (or by an alternative pre-approved arrangement).

  All fees must be paid by week 4.

- **Discounts:** Save $25 by paying in full by the first class. Save an additional $25 by registering and paying in full 2 weeks prior.

Audit: Lecture fee is $170 (CLCM graduates pay $50).

- **Discounts:** same as above.
- **Expectations:** No formal requirements, but reading and participation are highly encouraged.

Application Fee: $25 one-time fee required for all first-time credit or audit applicants.

receive one letter grade reduction for each day they are late. All papers should be written in APA style, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. For writing and citing help, see the Lead Instructor.

DO NOT USE AI to write your paper! AI detectors exist, and the Lead Instructor will use them to determine whether you wrote your paper. If you want, you can use AI as an editorial assistant to help with the flow of ideas and to edit for grammar/punctuation only.

D. Deadlines: • Topic Selection & Preliminary Bibliography— Due: April 1
• Final Research Paper Submission— Due: **May 6**

3. **Mid-term & Final Exams** – There will be two in-person exams based on the assigned reading & weekly lectures.
4. **Reading** – Report Thursday by midnight the quantity of reading completed (via Google Classroom)
5. **Attendance** is mandatory. More than 3 excused absences will adversely affect your grade.
   • Email the lead instructor if you are going to be absent. Unexcused absences = a grade deduction.
6. **Class participation**: contribute to discussions to earn extra points.

College Grading System

Letter Grade	*Score*
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
C	73-77
C-	70-72
D+	68-69
D	63-67
D-	60-62
F	0-59
I	Incomplete

RECOMMENDED STRUCTURAL BREAKDOWN FOR A 2,500+ WORD PAPER

Section	Target Word Count	Purpose
1. Introduction & Thesis	~250 – 300 words	Introduce the figure, the historical/ theological crisis they faced, and a clear argument regarding their impact.
2. Historical Context	~400 – 500 words	Set the stage. What was the theological status quo before this figure arrived? What was the dominant system they challenged?
3. Biographical & Intellectual Turning Point	~600 – 700 words	Focus on the specific moments, trials, or insights that forced the subject to evolve or break from tradition.
4. Analysis of Primary Theological Texts	~700 – 800 words	Deep dive into their specific writings. Quote directly and analyze their exegesis, rhetoric, and core arguments.
5. Historical Legacy & Critique	~400 – 500 words	Evaluate the long-term impact. What did they change permanently? What were their blind spots or failures?
6. Conclusion	~150 – 200 words	Synthesize findings and restate the significance of their theological legacy.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All dates and assignments are tentative and may be changed at the discretion of the Lead Instructor according to the development of the course material.

Be alert in class for any announcements of changes.

Date	Lecture Topic	Assignment	Lecturer
January 28 Week 1	Martin Luther & Protestantism	Shelley, chapter 25	Craig Lehnherr
February 4 Week 2	Anabaptists & John Calvin	Shelley, chapters 26 & 27 Week 2 Question	Craig Lehnherr
February 11 Week 3	The Church of England & the Catholic Reformation	Shelley, chapters 28 & 29 Week 3 Question	Devin White
February 18 Week 4	Gospel spreads to America/Asia; Puritanism	Shelley, chapters 30 & 31 Week 4 Question	Bob Grahmann
February 25 Week 5	Denominations	Shelley, chapter 32 Week 5 Question	Bob Grahmann
March 4 Week 6	The Age of Reason; Pascal & the Pietists	Shelley, chapters 33-34 Week 6 Question	Isaac Fleming
March 11 Week 7	(Wesley) Methodism & The Great Awakening	Shelly, chapters 35 & 36	Greg Pechacek
March 18 Week 8	Writer's Workshop (optional)	**Mid-Term Exam**	Lisa Quintana
March 25 Week 9	**Spring Break**		

Date	Lecture Topic	Assignment	Lecturer
April 1 *Week 10*	The Age of Progress & 19th Century England	Shelley, chapters 37 & 38 Week 10 Question Paper Topics Due	Karrie Landsverk
April 8 *Week 11*	Protestant Missions & A Christian America	Shelley, chapters 39 & 40 Week 11 Question	Paul Allen
April 15 *Week 12*	Protestant Liberalism & the Social Gospel	Shelley, chapters 41 & 42 Week 12 Question	Biju George
April 22 *Week 13*	20th C. Ideologies & American Evangelicals	Shelley, chapters 43 & 44 No more questions - work on your paper	Nic Gibson
April 29 *Week 14*	The Ecumenical Movement & Roman Catholicism / Vatican II	Shelley, chapters 45 & 46	Paul Lundgren
May 6 *Week 15*	The Age of Technology & The Spirit (1990 – present)	Shelley, chapters 47 & 48 **Papers Due**	Tom Flaherty
May 13 *Week 16*	n/a	**Final Exam**	Lisa Quintana

Course Workload

In a 3-unit college class, it is expected that approximately 100+ hours of course work is involved. This includes the lecture time in class and homework. For a 16-week semester, this equals to about 6-hours of work per week, and depending on your reading speed, expect about 3 hours of homework per week. Most of this will be reading and posting on Google classroom. You also will be conducting research on your term papers.

The Lead Instructor may allow a weekly post to be skipped so that you can study for exams or do writing/research. Keep an eye out on Google for announcements!

For questions or clarifications, please email the Lead Instructor: lquintana@citychurchonline.org.

Our Adjunct Faculty

We are blessed to draw from some of the best Bible teachers/pastors in the Madison area to teach for CLC-M:

Paul Allen
YWAM - Madison
MA, University of the Nations

Tom Flaherty
Lead Pastor, City Church
BA, University of Wisconsin
MCM, Olivet Nazarene University

Isaac Fleming
Traveling Pastor (currently at Living Water Church)
BA, Ohio Christian University
MDiv, Asbury Theological Seminary

Biju George
Instructor/Preacher, Sharon Fellowship, Kenosha
BA, Div., India Bible College, India
M.Th., Faith Theological Seminary, India

Nic Gibson
Sr. Pastor, High Point Church
BA, State University of New York
MDiv, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Bob Grahmann
Sr. Ambassador/Missions & Bible Study, IVCF
MDiv, New Brunswick Theological Seminary
ThM, Princeton Theological Seminary
PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Karrie Landsverk
Pastor, Living Gospel Church, Rio
BA, Edgewood College
MA, Christian Leadership University
PhD, Christian Leadership University

Craig Lehnherr
Educator, Abundant Life Christian School
BA, Wheaton College
MA, UW Madison

Paul Lundgren
Pastor, Gateway Community Church
BBA, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire
MDiv, Denver Seminary

Greg Pechacek
Associate Pastor, City Church
BS, North Central Bible College
MAR, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
DMin, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Lisa Quintana
Christian Apologist/Lead Instructor, City Church
AA, Christian Life College-Madison
BA, California State University
MA, Biola University - Talbot School of Theology

Devin White
Associate Pastor, High Point Church
BA, Grand Valley State University
MTS, Chandler School of Theology
PhD, Emory University



Some of our CLC teachers pictured (from left to right): Paul Allen, Paul Lundgren, Greg Pechecek, Lisa Quintana, Karrie Landsverk, Tom Flaherty, Nic Gibson, and Craig Lehnherr at last year's faculty appreciation luncheon.