

# Global Church History

Dr. Sean Doyle

Institute of Biblical Studies

May 20-24, 2024, 10:00 am-12:00 pm, 1:30-3:30 pm EDT

**Course Description:** This course will trace the global expansions of Christianity from its beginnings to the present era. Attention will be paid to the theological, cultural, sociological, and missiological dimensions of the worldwide Christian movement as it developed and spread throughout history. In addition to exploring European and American Christian history, the course will also investigate African, Asian, and Latin American varieties of Christianity, which are currently enjoying resurgence in the global south.

**Learning Outcomes:** After completing the course, participants should have:

- Extended and deepened their knowledge regarding significant historical and theological developments within the worldwide Christian tradition in multiple global contexts.
- Learned to appreciate the diverse intellectual and spiritual expressions of Christian communities throughout various historical eras and locations.
- Acquired the ability to trace the geographical spread of Christianity from its beginnings to its present worldwide distribution.
- Attained an understanding of the distinctives of the major branches of Christianity (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal).
- Encountered major figures, movements, and theological debates within the global Christian Church and reflected upon their enduring significance.
- Learned to apply insights gained from studying the origins, development, and expansion of Christianity to the present task of crossing cultures with the gospel.

## Required Textbooks:

\* *Global Gospel: An Introduction to Christianity on Five Continents*, Douglas **Jacobsen**, Baker, 2015.

\* *Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia*, Mark **Noll** and Carolyn Nystrom, IVP, 2011.

Note on the Textbooks: Global Church History is an emerging discipline, and solid textbooks are just beginning to be produced in the field. These two sources represent a helpful broad overview of the subject (Jacobsen) and biographical vignettes of global south Christians (Noll). Only the second textbook (Noll) is written from an Evangelical perspective, so you should read with an eye to critically engage the views.

**IBS Grading Scale:** 100-94 = A , 93-92 = A- , 91-90 = B+ , 89-84 = B , 83-82 = B- , 81-80 = C+ ,  
79-74 = C , 73-72 = C- , 71-65 = D , 64 and below = F

### **Requirements and Assessments:**

**Reading Report:** 15% of overall grade (due Saturday, May 25, by 11:59 PM)

Reading should be done thoroughly and thoughtfully with a sincere attempt to learn all you can. Students will submit a reading report, which is attached at the end of the syllabus, on the Jacobsen text and a "First Christians of Africa" PDF.

**Noll Response Reflection:** 30% of overall grade (due Friday, May 24, by the start of class)

Students will submit a written response to the Noll *Clouds of Witnesses* textbook. Please select chapters to read on three people from Africa, three from India, three from China, and Sun Chu Kil from Korea (for a total of 10 chapters out of the 17 featured in the book). In engaging the textbook, students will respond to the following questions:

- How did your selected global south Christians seek to communicate and/or translate key dimensions of the Gospel into their specific contexts through their actions, ministries, revivals, and/or messages? Discuss 4-5 individuals, providing relevant historical examples from each of their lives which help you to engage and analyze these issues.
- How did your selected global south Christians seek justice, social/political reform, or challenge established power structures in the Church or in the wider culture? Consider 3 individuals *not previously discussed*, providing relevant historical examples from each of their lives which help you to engage and analyze these dynamics.
- What challenged and/or surprised you most when learning about the lives and testimonies of your selected global south Christians? {Example: Were there theological emphases or ministry practices which were different from those of American Christianity?}

The paper will be at least 4 and no more than 7 pages, double-spaced, New Times Roman, 12 pt. font, one inch margins. You are encouraged to make connections between the information conveyed in the Noll textbook and the course lecture material, which will often provide the general historical or cultural background for the biographies. In terms of documentation, you only need to cite the appropriate page number in parenthesis after a direct quotation from the Noll text.

**Church Visit Experiential Learning Reflection:** 35% of overall grade (due Wednesday, May 29, by 11:59 PM)

Each student will visit a church that represents an earlier or a non-Western branch of World Christianity. Examples: Armenian, Greek (or Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian, or Bulgarian) Orthodox, Ethiopian, Coptic, Syrian, Eastern-Rite Catholic churches. Or, if you like, you could visit a modern worship service of a church that is significantly culturally different than your own, such as an African Methodist Episcopal church, Primitive Baptist, or Holy Ghost Pentecostal church. This is not an exclusive list.

Do research online in advance to discover the history of the church you plan to visit, and perhaps how you should dress, behave, and speak to the people you will meet. Imagine that this is your target mission community—how should you make your first visit if your goal is to become an insider?

Each student will then write a reflection paper upon the history and the experience of worshipping with the community selected for the Church Visit exercise. In terms of the overall structure of the reflection, please indicate in the Introduction of the paper the name and the address of the Church, the date of visit, and the reasons for choosing this Church. Then, in the first main section, spend some time discussing the history of this particular Church community. Possible questions to explore here might include:

- When was the denomination founded, by whom, and under what circumstances? Is it a division of a previous denomination?
- Are there any elements of the service that appear to arise from the Church's historical roots?
- What are the key theological distinctives and commitments of this community? (You may have observed these distinctives in the way the service was conducted).

In the next main section, please reflect upon your experience in this Church. Possible questions to explore:

- What liturgical, homiletical (preaching), and/or worship practices, as well as perceived values of this community were different from those of your own Church community?
- What aspects of the Church do you think should be celebrated? Was there anything confusing and/or surprising about the service?
- How would this experience be helpful for you in your future cross-cultural and ministry interactions? What thoughts or realizations have you had about your own culture and/or Church?
- How did you respond when encountering a perceived value or perspective different from your own?

Conclude by summarizing the most valuable insights you gained from this experiential learning exercise.

The paper will be at 6-7 pages, double-spaced, New Times Roman, 12 pt. font, one inch margins.

**Quizzes:** 20% of overall grade

There will be two quizzes administered in the course, through Canvas, with 25 objective questions each based directly upon the lecture material. The first quiz will cover the lectures on Europe and Asia. You must complete the quiz online by Wednesday, May 22 at 11:59 PM. The second quiz will cover the final lectures on Africa and the Americas. You must complete the second quiz online by Saturday, May 25 at 11:59 PM. **No use of notes or other materials** is allowed. You are on your honor.

About the Instructor: Dr. Sean Doyle is currently Professor of World History and Religions at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. He has taught courses for two decades in global Christianity, world religions, and world history at Geneva College, at Trinity Anglican School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, and at Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He has greatly enjoyed offering this particular IBS course every summer for Cru since 2017. He earned a Ph.D. in global Christianity from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, an S.T.M. in Church history from Trinity Anglican School for Ministry, and an M.A. in religion from Gordon-Conwell Seminary. Sean and his wife Joy love to travel; they lived in Rome, Italy, for two wonderful years. His research interests involve the history of Christianity in south Asia and in Reformation-era Italy.

## READING ASSIGNMENT AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

<p><b>Monday</b></p> <p>5/20</p>	<p><i>Europe I</i> (Read: Jacobsen Introduction, CH 1, p. 1-13; CH 5, p. 106-108)</p> <p><i>Europe II</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 2, p. 14-34; CH 5, p. 109-113)</p>
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p> <p>5/21</p>	<p><i>Europe III</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 2, bottom p. 34-39; CH 5, p. 114-145)</p> <p>West and South Asia (Read: Jacobsen CH 6, p. 146-top 164)</p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p> <p>5/22</p>	<p><i>East Asia</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 6, p. 164-187)</p> <p><b><u>Quiz I (Europe and Asia) - due by 11:59 PM on Canvas</u></b></p> <p><i>Africa I</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 3, p. 40-middle 54; “First Christians of Africa” PDF)</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p> <p>5/23</p>	<p><i>Africa II</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 3, p. 54-72)</p> <p><i>Latin America</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 4, p. 73-105)</p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p> <p>5/24</p>	<p><i>North America I</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 7, p. 188-204)</p> <p><i>North America II</i> (Read: Jacobsen CH 7, p. 205-223; Conclusion)</p> <p><b><u>Submit Noll Response Reflection - due by start of class</u></b></p>

**\*\*Submit Reading Report and Quiz II (Africa/Americas) by Saturday, May 25, at 11:59 PM**

**\*\*Submit Church Visit Historical/Theological Reflection by Wednesday, May 29, at 11:59 PM**

## READING REPORT (Global Church History)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Of the Jacobsen textbook and the "First Christians of Africa" PDF, what percentage of the required reading did you complete?

\_\_\_\_\_

To determine the percentage of reading completed, divide the number of pages you completed by the total number of required pages (**250 pages total**) and convert to a percentage.