REL 110 - History of Christianity I: 100 - 700 CE
Fall 2003
MW 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Eaton 110

Professor: Douglas R. McGaughey
Office: Eaton 116

Teaching Schedule:
MWF 1:50 - 2:50 Intro. to the Study of Religion
MW 3:00 - 4:30 History of Christianity I: 100-700 CE
TTh 1:50 - 3:20 Contemporary American Theology

Office Hours: W,Th 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
OTHER TIMES BY APPOINTMENT

Phones: Office (375)-5415
Home 566-8944
E-mail: dougm@willamette.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS
(listed alphabetically)

Vallée, Gérard. The Shaping of Christianity: The History and Literature of its Formative Centuries [100 - 800].
New York: Paulist Press, 1999


COURSE DESCRIPTION

REL 110 - History of Christianity I: 100 - 700 CE introduces the student to the literature and institutional history of
the Christian tradition from the Apostolic Fathers down to the formation of the early Medieval Church under
Gregory the Great. This is a history of rich diversity, bloody conflict, imperial intrusion, increasing institutional
hegemony, and major fracture between Eastern and Western Christianity.

With respect to the literary history, the primary objective of the course is to allow an encounter with the cognitive
and experiential character of the faith pluralism of the Christian tradition. The models of Christian self-
understanding stretch from the apocalypticism, martyrlogy, asceticism, dualism, and spiritualism found in the New
Testament “canonical” traditions through Gnosticism, the New Prophecy, Modalistic and Dynamic Monarchianism,
Christian Platonism, and mysticism of the Patristic period to the emerging Latin hegemony in the West under the
influence of Augustine of Hippo. Every effort will be made to help the student understand the experiential
motivations driving these various models of the Christian faith as well as to indicate the motivations leading to the
attempt to establish an “orthodox” faith beginning in the 3rd century.

With respect to the institutional history, the course asks such questions as: How did Christianity take shape as an
organized religion? What was its status in the Roman Empire (e.g., the extent of persecution and the compatibility
with, as well as differences from the other religious traditions present in the empire)? How did Christianity come to be
the official religion of the Empire, and what impact did that have on Christianity? How did Christians decide
what was “orthodox” and what was “heresy”? How did Christians change their organizational structure over time?
What and when was the origin and impetus of monasticism? How did the church arrive at its calendar of holidays?
When and under what circumstances did the church assume the power to forgive sins? When and why did
Christianity split between Eastern and Western institutions? How did the papacy come to have the power it did/has
(?) over Western Christianity?

The intent of this investigation of Christian literature and institutions is to demonstrate that, although a broad
consensus developed concerning the “normative” claims of the Christian message, the tradition has always been
characterized by rich diversity and struggle with the perennial questions of the human condition (who are we, what is the meaning of our experience, what is the purpose and goal of life, why is there such suffering in the world, etc.?) in relationship to what is taken to be ultimate reality (God).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance at all class sessions - students are responsible for all information given at all class sessions
2. Reading assignments according to the assignment schedule (or as modified by the professor)
3. One short paper (5 pages minimum) (@ 20%).
   Paper Due Date: Wednesday, December 3rd, by 5:00 p.m.
4. 2 tests (each @ 25%)
5. Final comprehensive exam (30%): Monday, December 15, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

PAPER PROJECT

Women and the Genesis of Christianity

This paper is to describe the various roles of women in the world of the early history of Christianity. Your paper is

first, to sketch the role of women in the following cultural settings: Judaism, Hellenistic World, Rome

second, to compare and contrast the role of women in the cultural settings you selected with one of the following: 1) Jesus and Women: chapters 4 and 7; 2) Paul and Women: chapter 11; or 3) Women and the Evangelists: either chapter 13 or chapter 14.

DUE DATE: Wednesday, December 3rd, by 5:00 p.m.

Writing Guidelines:

Papers are to be typed double-spaced.

Document whenever you have referred to the material in the text (e.g., when you claim that an author maintains or believes something, provide a page citation to substantiate your claim; when you paraphrase a position of an author, provide a page citation to the original from which you paraphrased). In other words, you are to be able to show where in the text your conclusions are being drawn with respect to a position by an author.

Quoting of more than five words in a sequence from a source must be set off by quotes and footnoted in some fashion. More than three lines of quoted material should be indented, single-spaced, and footnotes in some fashion (style sheet isn’t as important as consistency and one’s ability to find the material you are citing)

Document whenever you have used a source (e.g., when you claim that an author maintains or believes something, provide a page citation to substantiate your claim; when you paraphrase a position of an author, provide a page citation to the original from which you paraphrased).

ON PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is the use of another’s text or thoughts without giving credit to that person. Knowing where an author discusses a certain issue in her/his text is the mark of scholarship. Hence, quoted and even paraphrased material must be footnoted in some fashion (when only one text is being used, page numbers in parenthesis following the quoted or paraphrased material are okay).
ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES

Should a student fail to meet an assignment deadline for any reason other than serious illness, there will be a penalty on the grade each late day of a portion of a letter grade (e.g., the day after the due date of the assignment results in the highest possible grade of an “A-,” the second late day results in a “B+,” etc., down to a “C”).

Incomplete: An incomplete is possible in the course only in the case of serious illness documented by a physician. In any event, arrangements must be made for an incomplete no later than the date of the final exam (Monday, December 14th at 2:00 p.m.).

STUDENT DISABILITIES

Any student eligible for and desiring academic accommodation due to a disability should provide documentation to Disability Services located in the Bishop Wellness Center within the first two weeks of the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1
September 3:

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, September 8:

Vallée, 1-9; 214-227

Week 2
September 8 and 10:

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, September 15:

Vallée, 11-22
Women and the Genesis of Christianity, 3-26

Week 3
September 15, 17

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, September 22:

Vallée, 23-41
Women and the Genesis of Christianity, 29-120

Week 4
September 22, 24

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, September 29:

Vallée, 42-59
Women and the Genesis of Christianity, 123-197

Week 5
September 29, October 1

Review

TEST 1: Wednesday, October 1
Reading Assignment completed by Monday, October 6:

Vallée, 60-76
*Women and the Genesis of Christianity*, 201-250

Week 6
October 6,8

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, October 13:

Vallée, 77-100

Week 7
October 13,15

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, October 20:

Vallée, 101-121

Week 8
October 20,22

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, October 27:

Vallée, 122-146

Week 9
October 27,29

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, November 3:

Vallée, 147-168

Week 10
November 3,5

Review

TEST 2: Wednesday, November 5

Week 11
November 10,12

Reading Assignment completed by Monday, November 17:

Vallée, 169-194

Week 12
November 17,19

Reading Assignment completed by Tuesday:

Vallée, 195-213
Week 13
November 24, 26

Week 14
December 1,3

   Paper Due: Wednesday, December 3 by 5:00 p.m.

Week 15
December 8,10

   Review

Final Exam: Monday, December 15, 2:00 - 5:00 in Eaton 110