



Religious Studies 2205F/G (570)
The Emergence of the Christian Tradition
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: M. Yenson

Email: myenson@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

An exploration of how Christian identity, belief and practice took shape from the beginnings of Christianity to the late Middle Ages. Topics include struggles over Christian doctrine; worship; monasticism; attitudes to the body, sexuality and gender; Christian expression in art and architecture.

Antirequisite(s): [Religious Studies 2218F/G](#), [Religious Studies 2610F/G](#).

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category B

Subject Code: RELSTUD

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College

Religious Studies 2205F (570)
Emergence of the Christian Tradition
Fall 2025

Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Mark Yenson, Department of Religious Studies
Email: myenson@uwo.ca
Course time: Tuesday 6:30–9:30 p.m. (Classroom location provided in OWL Brightspace)
Office hour: Tuesday 12:00–1:00 p.m. (Zoom or in person – link/office number provided in OWL Brightspace) or by appointment

Course Description

An exploration of the how Christian identity, belief and practice took shape from the beginnings of Christianity to the Reformation. Topics include struggles over Christian doctrine, worship, monasticism, attitudes to the body/sexuality/gender, and Christian expression in art and architecture.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, as a successful student, you will be able to:	Demonstrated by means of:
1. Describe and interrelate the major events, figures, movements and doctrinal developments in Christianity up to the Reformation in historical context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Class participation➤ Reading Responses➤ Book Review➤ Final Examination
2. Describe patterns of in worship, spirituality, and artistic expression in early, mediaeval, and early modern Christianity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Class Participation➤ Reading Responses➤ Final Examination
3. Articulate the relevance of Christian history for contemporary Christian life and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reading Responses➤ Class Participation➤ Book Review
4. Demonstrate critical skills in reading, especially with regard to primary historical texts in translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reading Responses➤ Class Participation➤ Midterm Test

	➤ Final Exam
5. Express ideas in your own voice, in writing that is clear, persuasive, balanced and confident	➤ Reading Responses ➤ Book Review

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Attendance and Participation – 10%

This course is scheduled for on-campus, in-person instruction. Consistent attendance and active participation are essential to your success in this class. This component will be assessed based on:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Careful preparation of the weekly readings and readiness to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion
- Participation in in-class writing and group activities
- Respectful listening to and engagement with your fellow students
- Responsible use of technology in class

In addition to active participation in class, students can participate by posing questions or raising ideas outside of class (e.g. emailing the instructor, checking in during office hours).

University Policy on Absenteeism: Significant absenteeism and/or failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year may result in debarment from writing the final examination. See appended College policies on accommodations.

2. Reading Response Notes / Mini-Exercises – 15%

Questions to guide the readings and/or brief exercises based on the week's theme will be posted each week. These responses will also form the basis of class discussion and group activities.

An overall grade will be given for submissions based on completeness, level of engagement with the reading, clarity, and conciseness.

Flexibility is built into this course component: the final grade for reading responses will be based on 9 out of 11 possible submissions. Further academic consideration will not be granted except as approved with documentation.

Because these reading responses are meant as preparation for class, late submissions will not be accepted.

3. Midterm Test – 20%

In class, October 21. Details will be given in class and in OWL. This assessment requires formal documentation for academic consideration (sickness or extenuating circumstances that impede completion of the assessment). One make-up opportunity will be granted in cases of approved academic consideration, after which the final examination will be reweighted.

4. Book Review – 20%

8–10-page critical review of a book on a topic in the history of Christian thought. A list of suggested books will be provided: book must be approved by the instructor. More details will be given in class and under OWL Resources.

Due Monday December 8, 2025, 5 p.m. No late penalty will be applied within the first 48 hours after the deadline. After 48 hours, the late penalty is -5% per day. Further academic consideration will be granted only as approved with documentation.

5. **Final Examination (December)** – 35%

Cumulative. Date and time will be set by the Registrar's Office. Details to be announced. Students are advised not to make travel plans prior to release of the December examination schedule.

Fostering a Community of Learning

All class participants share the responsibility of fostering a classroom environment conducive to everyone's learning. This responsibility includes respectful listening and engagement with each other, and reasoned and civil discussion of different perspectives and challenging questions related to course content. Disruptive, hostile, or disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated. Students are at all times subject to the King's Code of Student Conduct.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to your education and professional development, and to a community of learning committed to honesty, fairness, and mutual respect. Therefore, students are expected to submit work that is their own and in their own words. Whenever you take an idea or passage from another author or source, you must acknowledge your source by using quotation marks where appropriate and by citing your references appropriately.

Course instructors are required to refer suspected cases of plagiarism or other academic offences immediately to the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies. (See appendix for further information and links.)

Turnitin: All written work submitted may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Note on generative artificial intelligence (AI): AI tools such as ChatGPT can be very useful for educational and research purposes, but also have limitations and risks (e.g. misinformation, bias). Your instructors will approach AI in different ways, based on the content and learning outcomes of each course. Some instructors may permit AI use broadly, while others may prohibit any use of AI.

In this course, AI use will not be prohibited, but you are ultimately accountable for the work you submit. If you use AI in any assignment submission, you must state:

- (a) What AI tool you used
- (b) How you used the tool (e.g. brainstorming, creating an outline, editing)
- (c) Where an AI tool is the source of specific content, as you would any other source for content that is not yours. (I recommend strongly against using AI as a sole, unverified source for information.)

Unattributed AI use will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Generative AI and other aids are not permitted in the midterm and final examination.

Academic Consideration

Academic consideration may be granted when a student is unable to carry out academic work due to temporary but substantial extenuating circumstances, including medical or compassionate circumstances. In most cases, academic consideration requests require documentation submitted through the extranet Student Absence Portal.

Please note above where flexibility has already been built into course structure to provide for academic consideration situations.

Please see the appendix on general policies for information on academic consideration.

Getting in Touch

E-mail is the best way to contact me (myenson@uwo.ca). When sending me an e-mail, please use your UWO e-mail address, and include the course code, *RS2205F*, in the subject line.

Remember that e-mailing your instructors is different from texting your friends. Aim for a professional tone in all your correspondence.

I will do my best to respond to e-mails within two working days of receipt, during regular office hours. If you have not received a response to your message within two working days, please resend your message.

Technology Use

Every individual student, along with the instructor, plays a role in fostering a positive and respectful learning environment. Please do your part by using technology appropriately:

- Laptops and other devices are permitted in class for the purposes of note-taking only.
- Texting and other cell-phone use is strictly prohibited during class time. Cell phones should be turned off and put away, not on the desk in front of you.
- As inappropriate use of technology in class is a distraction both to the instructor and to your peers, repeated violations can result in a significant reduction in one's attendance and participation mark.

Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Instructors are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of the instructor. Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If I would like to post a student's answers or papers on the course web site, I will ask for your written permission.

(Commercial use of Course material: <http://umd.edu/legal/commercial.html>. Adapted.)

Required Texts

Required text:

William C. Placher and Derek R. Nelson, *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 2nd edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013).

- You may purchase a print copy of this book online (e.g. available as paperback or Kindle edition from [Amazon](#)). The first edition is also acceptable—just be mindful of pagination differences.
- Print copies of this book are also on 2-hour reserve in the King's Cardinal Carter Library.
- The book is also available electronically through the library system:
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=5974421>

Additional required texts will be made available on OWL.

Finally...

I welcome you to the course and look forward to your participation. Please be in touch. E-mail me if you have questions or concerns. Contact with your instructors is important to your success in your academic and professional life.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

<p>Week 1 Sept 9</p>	<p>Introduction; The Beginnings of Christianity</p> <p><i>Readings (recommended):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 7–31 (Ch. 2, “The Hope of Israel”; Ch. 3, “The Mission to the Gentiles”).
<p>Week 2 Sept 16</p>	<p>Gnosticism and the Rise of Orthodoxy</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 33–42 (Ch. 4, “The Beginnings of Orthodoxy”). ➤ Gospel of Thomas (complete). ➤ <i>Second Treatise of the Great Seth</i> (excerpts: to be skimmed).
<p>Week 3 Sept 23</p>	<p>Martyrs and Apologists</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 43–53 (Ch. 5, “An Alliance with Philosophy”). ➤ <i>Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity</i> (complete).
<p>Sept 30</p>	<p><i>National Day of Truth and Reconciliation – No Class</i></p>
<p>Week 4 Oct 7</p>	<p>Church and Empire: Constantine; The Trinitarian Controversies</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 55–66 (Ch. 6, “Truly Human, Truly Divine,” only up to end of the section, “The Trinity”) ➤ Letter of Arius to Alexander ➤ Creed of the Council of Nicaea
<p>Week 5 Oct 14</p>	<p>The Christological Controversies; Eastern Christianities</p>

	<p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 66–72 (Ch. 6, “Truly Human, Truly Divine,” conclusion). ➤ Letters of Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople. ➤ Definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.).
<p>Week 6 Oct 21</p>	<p>MIDTERM TEST</p>
<p>Week 7 Oct 28</p>	<p>Latin Christianity; Augustine of Hippo</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 91–102 (Ch. 8, “Augustine”). ➤ Augustine of Hippo, <i>Confessions</i> VIII.vi-xii.
<p>Nov 3–9</p>	<p>FALL READING WEEK</p>
<p>Week 8 Nov 11</p>	<p>Monks and Mendicants: The Middle Ages</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 103–136 (Ch. 9, “The Path to Salvation”; Ch. 10, “The Fragile Synthesis”). ➤ Anselm of Canterbury, <i>Proslogion</i>, <i>Cur Deus Homo</i> (excerpts). ➤ Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> I.2.3.
<p>Week 9 Nov 18</p>	<p>Things Fall Apart: The Late Middle Ages</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 137–152 (Ch. 11, “The Absolute Power of God”) ➤ Julian of Norwich, <i>Revelations of Divine Love</i>, Longer Text, chapters 58–63. ➤ Recommended: Julian of Norwich. Films On Demand. 2000: https://fod-infobase-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=98133&xtid=11058 (Duration: approx. 24 minutes)

Week 10 Nov 25	The Renaissance and Protestant Reformation <i>Readings:</i> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 155–169 (Ch. 12, “Faith Alone, Scripture Alone”); 187–201 (Ch. 14, “God’s Governance”).
Week 11 Dec 2	The Catholic Reformation; Expansion and Colonization <i>Readings:</i> ➤ Placher and Nelson, pp. 171–186 (Ch. 13, “The Catholic Reformation”).
Week 12 Dec 9	Summary and Review <i>BOOK REVIEW DUE MONDAY DEC 8, 5 P.M.</i>
December	<i>FINAL EXAMINATION</i> <i>(Date set by the University)</i>

(Schedule of topics and readings subject to change. Students will be notified on OWL Brightspace of any changes.)

King's University College
General Course Policies
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Considerations for Absence/Missed Assessments

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration using the extranet portal (www.extranet.uwo.ca). Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs and further consideration may be denied. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

Academic consideration for examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar always requires documentation.

The policy on academic consideration is found here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the final examination, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup final examination).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

For policy on accommodation for religious holidays, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools are permitted in the course, including generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools). Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright of their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.