

REL 358: Life and Work of the Church

Spring Semester 2009 | Meets Thursdays 6:00-9:00PM

Professor **Hans Wiersma**
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Memorial Hall 227B
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“Regular” Office Hours:
Mon/Fri 1:15-2:15pm
Wed 1:15-2:15; 3:45-5:15pm
Tue/Thu 9:30-11:15am; 2:00-4:00pm

Course Goals

By the end of the term, students should be able to

1. to identify basic biblical foundations and principles regarding the “the People of God”
2. to evaluate various definitions of and claims about “The Church”
3. to demonstrate knowledge of the formation of Christian communities from New Testament to modern times.
4. to articulate the diversity of belief and practice within Christianity around the world
5. to assess various models of education and socialization practiced by present-day Christian families, congregations, organizations, and institutions
6. to experience and analyze encounters with various faith communities near Augsburg
7. to offer informed insight regarding the notion that the church is “always reforming”

Required Reading

The Bible (any “Study Bible” edition; i.e., an edition with extensive annotations)

They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations
by Dan Kimball (2007)

Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian
by Heath White (2006)

Additional readings as assigned in the syllabus and in class.

These will be handed-out, linked, and/or available for download via Moodle.

Academic Honesty

Augsburg College’s Academic Honesty Policy, as described in part I, section I, of the Augsburg *Student Handbook*, is in effect and will be enforced in this course.

Evaluation

Participation = 33% of final evaluation

- Regular attendance is required and will be monitored. If you miss more than half of a given class on a given Thursday, you will be considered absent for that day. You may miss two classes without penalty. For each class thereafter, 0.5 will be subtracted from your final grade.
- A “Featured Church” Report will be given by each student.
- Coming to class prepared (having done the reading, bringing asked for small assignments, arriving on-time, etc.)
- A history of constructive contribution to in-class discussion is highly encouraged and will be rewarded.

Reflection Essays and Learning Assessment = 33% of final evaluation

- Complete ten Reflection Essays. Guidelines for each week’s reflection themes will be made available after each class meeting.
- An evaluation rubric for the Reflection Essays will be made available.
- Reflection essay will cover lecture material, and/or reading from the previous weeks and/or your impressions gained from our site visits. Some of these reflection essays may require additional research and reading.

Final Group Presentation = 33% of final evaluation

A final group presentation is due on Thursday, April 23, 2009. Half of the evaluation given for this assignment will be based on the quality and effectiveness of the in-class presentation. The other half will be based on written work completed by each individual in the group. Final presentations will be given in class on April 23.

Final Grade determined as follows:

In terms of meeting the challenges described in the course objectives listed above:

- 4.0 you met the highest standards of excellence determined for this course.
- 3.5 with the exception of one or two considerations, you met the highest standards of excellence determined for this course.
- 3.0 you did well in terms of achieving the basic course standards determined for this course.
- 2.5 with the exception of one or two considerations, you did well in achieving the basic course standards determined for this course.
- 2.0 you met the basic course standards determined for this course.
- 1.0 you did not meet the basic course standards determined for this course

Course Calendar Spring 2009*		
THUR.	SUBJECTS / ACTIVITIES	READING DUE**
JAN 14	The Problem with "Church"	
JAN 22	The Head of the Church	Matthew 21-28; Mark 11-16; Luke 22-24; John 13-21
FEB 29	"Church" in the New Testament (1)	Acts 1-28
FEB 05	"Church" in the New Testament (2)	1 & 2 Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Revelation 1-3
FEB 12	Forming Churches	<i>The Didache; Perpetua & Felicity;</i>
FEB 19	Church and Power	<i>The Grand Inquisitor; Dominus Iesus</i>
FEB 26	The Age of Reform	<i>Record of Luther's Appearance at Worms; Pleissenberg Sermon; Heidelberg Catechism</i>
MAR 05	Semper Reformanda	<i>Site Visit: Basilica of St. Mary Pia Desideria, Pilgrim's Progress (selection)</i>
MAR 12	Reason vs. Revelation	White, chapters 1-2 (pp. 9-38)
MAR 19	SPRING BREAK – Class does not meet	
MAR 26	"Postmodernity" and the Church	<i>Site Visit: Magus Books & Herbs Kimball, intro + chapters 1-2 White, chapters 3-4 (pp. 39-66)</i>
APR 2	"Post-Church" & "Post-Christian"?	<i>Site Visit: Dar al-Hijara Islamic Center Kimball, chapters 3-4 White, chapters 5-6 (pp. 67-102)</i>
APR 9	The Global Church/Critical Concerns	<i>Site Visit: North Heights Lutheran Ch. Kimball, chapter 5-10 White, chapters 7-8 (pp. 103-138)</i>
APR 16	The Global Church/Critical Concerns	Kimball, chapters 11-13 + appendix 1 White, chapter 9 + epilogue (pp. 139-166) American Religious Identification Survey
APR 23	Presentations	

* All items subject to change!

** Additional reading beyond texts listed here may be assigned!