



# The Christian Faith & Ethos

## *Theology (THE) 101 – Course Syllabus ONLINE*

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### **Required Texts:**

- The Holy Bible (*English Standard Version [ESV] is preferred*), available online [HERE](#).
- Additional readings provided online.

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to explore and enhance the central teachings of the Christian faith through the study of Scripture, Christian history, culture, philosophy, and liberal arts. The course will have a detailed focus on the life of Jesus Christ and the impact of Christianity throughout time and across the globe.

### **What to Expect:**

This is a course based and built upon reading, writing, and interaction. You will be exposed to a range of diverse material dealing with Christianity, and I am expecting you to read it for understanding, and also to read pieces in conjunction with each other, so you can connect the dots, when necessary, and so you can spot and understand differences, when necessary. You will be asked to write about and discuss the material with your fellow students in order to facilitate that process. Much of your writing and interaction will be in response to the readings. You will be prompted to write in such a way as to show your understanding, but also to help you in thinking through the various viewpoints you will encounter.

## Student Learning Outcomes:

The purpose of the course is to gain a deeper, more extensive understanding of the Christian faith and its place and presence among various contexts. The intention of this course is to allow for students to openly ask difficult, challenging questions about the foundations of the Christian faith, using the Bible, culture, history, philosophy, and liberal arts as a lens for study. The course will not only help students appreciate the basics of Christianity, but also the diversity of Christian expression throughout the ages. Furthermore, students will not only learn about the beliefs and rituals shared by Christians over time (continuity), but in our time (contemporaneity). This means investigating how the Christian faith has cooperated with, influenced, and contended with social and cultural issues such as science, ethnicity, the environment, politics across the centuries and multiple cultures. At its core, the course seeks to answer the following question: Who is Jesus & why does he matter? Beyond looking at how he matters to those who identify as “Christian,” this course will also consider his relevance beyond the Christian faith. Students will be assessed through discussion posts, reading responses, quizzes, a final exam, and writing assignments. By the end of the course, students will have gained a deeper understanding of Jesus, themselves and how the Christian faith is valuable within our world today.

## Expectations:

- Be actively engaged in all study of the Word of God (*The Holy Bible*) and all class texts
- Be able to discuss all class material & to participate in all class activities
- Be thorough in preparation of all readings and diligent in study for all quizzes, writing assignments, and the final exam
- Be prepared (*texts, notebook, pencil/pen for notes, computer and/or tablet/smart phone*)
- Be kind/respectful (*towards the instructor & fellow students*)
- Be reverent (*respect and listen to the Word of God when read in class*)
- Be involved (*pay attention, ask/answer questions, complete all assignments*)

## Grading Policy:

- A = 93.5% - 100%
- A- = 89.5% - 93%
- B+ = 86.5% - 89%
- B = 83.5% - 86%
- B- = 79.5% - 83%
- C+ = 76.5% - 79%
- C = 73.5% - 76%
- C- = 69.5% - 73%
- D = 60% - 69%
- F (*failure*) = Below 60%

## Quality Points Scale:

- A = 4.0 quality points
- A- = 3.7 quality points
- B+ = 3.3 quality points
- B = 3.0 quality points
- B- = 2.7 quality points
- C+ = 2.3 quality points
- C = 2.0 quality points
- C- = 1.7 quality points
- D = 1.0 quality points
- F = 0.0 quality points

## Requirements:

**1. Careful and thoughtful reading of all assignments prior to the class for which they are assigned:** You are expected to actively engage the texts and to be able to discern central themes. Material from the reading assignments will not necessarily be covered in class. It is essential that you read the course material.

**2. Punctual attendance and active participation in all live sessions + recorded lectures:** If you need to miss a live session due to illness or emergency, it is your responsibility to inform the professor and to gather any missed information from another student. Due to the nature of our meeting schedule, more than **ONE** absence during the live sessions will impact your grade. *Credit for participation requires the following:* Listening and thinking. Taking notes during lectures. You are expected to provide thoughtful contributions and questions during our live sessions.

**3. Discussion Posts:** You will be expected to participate in weekly discussion boards by 1) posting your own original response to the discussion prompt and 2) posting two questions and/or comments to your fellow students' original post. You will only receive partial credit if you only post your own response, leave just one comment, etc. That means that each discussion post will require three actions from you: 1) your original post, 2) a comment or question on a fellow students' post, and 3) an additional comment or question on your fellow students' post. The points will be assigned as follows: 5 pts. for your original post, 2.5 pts. for each of your additional comments and/or questions.

**4. Quizzes & Reading Notes:** For each module/week in the course, you will be asked to take a brief quiz or submit a one-page reading notes assignment. The quiz will be made up of multiple-choice, true/false, and/or short answer questions. The reading notes will be a one page outline or set of notes that you took as highlights from the assigned readings. One quiz will be on the first lecture video on plagiarism and will be in addition to the assigned quiz/reading notes for the first module/week.

**5. Interview with a Christian:** As we are trying to explore and enhance your understanding of the Christian faith, you will be required to interview a Christian and write-up a brief report (1500 words) about that experience. The interview should focus on three questions: WHY are you a Christian? WHAT does being a Christian mean? HOW does your Christian faith impact the way you think about, talk about, and live in the world? You may ask other questions or explore other issues, but you will be graded on the basis of these three questions. The interview can take place in person or online. You can interview members of your family, friends, the professor, or fellow classmates with their permission. The write-up will not only involve your report about their responses, but also a brief analysis and reaction from you about how this interview impacts your understanding of the Christian faith and ethos. Further details about this assignment will be addressed in class. The write-up must be written in 12-point font (Times New Roman, Arial, Helvetica, or Cambria), 1" Margins, Double-Spaced (without extra spacing between the paragraphs).

**6. Final Exam:** The final exam will cover all course content included in the readings, lectures, and discussions. It will consist of a mixture of question styles: multiple choice, true/false, matching, and short answer. You will be graded on the accuracy and thoroughness of your responses.

### **Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities**

Concordia College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must submit documentation of the disability to the Concordia Connection Program in order for reasonable accommodations to be granted. Students are encouraged to notify their instructors and the Connection Program as soon as they determine accommodations are necessary; however, documentation will be reviewed upon receipt at any point in the semester. The Connection Program will partner with students to determine the appropriate accommodations and, in cooperation with the instructor, will work to provide all students with a fair opportunity to perform in the particular class. Specific details of the disability will remain confidential between the student and the Connection Program, unless the student chooses to disclose or there is legitimate academic need for disclosure on a case-by-case basis.

### **Program Procedures and Academic Integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. For written assignments, use MLA or Chicago Style. Academic integrity in all areas related to this course is absolutely expected. All students are expected to comply with Concordia College's Academic Policy (see student guide). Violations of the College's policy are very serious and documentation will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students, where records are kept until a student graduates or withdraws from the College. Violation of the policy may result in a failing grade for the course or even dismissal from the College. Examples of conduct which have been regarded as being in violation of the policy include (but are not limited to): plagiarism (see student guide and Concordia's writer guide for definition), allowing someone else to represent your work as his or her own, copying from another's examination, etc.

## Grading & Evaluation:

Discussion Posts	= 50 Pts. (@ 10 Pts. Each)
Participation	= 25 Pts. (@ 5 Pts. Each)
Final Exam	= 50 Pts.
Quizzes/Reading Notes	= 50 Pts. (@ 10 Pts. Each)
<u>Interview w/ a Christian</u>	= 50 Pts.
<b>Total Pts</b>	<b>= 225 Pts.</b>

## Course Outline (Assignments are in ITALICS):

### ■ Week 1 (August 26-September 1) –

- Syllabus Overview (*Watch Lecture*)
- The Ins & Outs of Plagiarism: What it is, what it is not, and how to avoid it (*Watch Lecture*)
- Introduction and Welcome to “The Christian Faith & Ethos” (*Watch Lecture*)
- Jesus and the Christian Bible
  - The Gospels and the Life of Jesus (*Watch Lecture*)
  - The “New Testament” and the Christian Bible (*Watch Lecture*)
- **READINGS:**
  - Introduction to the ESV Bible
  - The Gospel of Mark
  - Leviticus chs. 1-10 & the Letter to the Hebrews
  - The Letter to the Galatians
- **DISCUSSION:**
  - Describe your personal faith/ethos, especially when understanding your place in the world. Answer the question – what do you think about Christianity and its place in the world? Also, write one question that addresses something that you would like to ask about God (for example, how do we know what happens to us when we die?)
- **PLAGIARISM QUIZ**
- **READING REPORT:**
  - Write down notes (including highlights, questions, thoughts, personal reactions etc.) as you read the Gospel of Mark.

### ■ Week 2 (September 2-8) –

- The Christian Faith and Creeds
  - The Canon and its Development (*Watch Lecture*)
  - Major Creeds & Heresies (*Watch Lecture*)
  - Theology, Liturgies, Art & Icons – *lex orandi, lex credenda* (*Watch Lecture*)
- **READINGS:**
  - Read Apostle’s Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, Chalcedonian Creed
  - Read Hymns: “Amazing Grace,” “How Great Thou Art,” “It is Well,” & “A Mighty Fortress”
  - Read Luther’s Small Catechism (pp. 11-44) & 95 Theses
  - Read Assembly of God Statement of Truth, Barmen Declaration, Lausanne Covenant, Indian Pentecostal Church’s Statement of Faith, & Maasai Creed
- **DISCUSSION:**
  - This week, we looked at how Christian faith gets codified and expressed in multiple ways – creeds, confessions, music, etc. Christian faith also gets expressed in art. Looking at [ten different famous Christian paintings](#), this collection of [African Christian art](#), and the work of [He Qi](#) explain how you think these pieces of art express aspects of the Christian faith and ethos. What stories do they tell? What points do they make? What questions do you have about these pieces of art or the Christian faith based on your viewing of the art?
- **READING QUIZ**

### ■ Week 3 (September 9-15)

- Christianity Across Time and Across the World (*Watch Lecture*)
  - Early Expansion – the Book of Acts (Jerusalem, Judea, Samara, & the Ends of the Earth)
  - Eastern Christianity
  - Western Christendom
  - Christendom and Colonialism
  - Post-colonial Christianity
- **READINGS:**
  - The Book of Acts
  - Linda Woodhead, Ch. 3: The Spread of Christianity
- **DISCUSSION:**
  - Woodhead wrote, “Over the course of two thousand years, Christianity has grown from being a tiny movement within a Jewish context to being the world’s largest religion with a presence in every part of the world. Its growth has not been smooth and uniform.” Discuss what you see as the major turning points – a time when a decisive and consequential change occurred – in Christian history. How did they transform Christianity and the world at large? Why were they such major “turning points?” What was their substance and significance?
- **READING REPORT:**
  - Write down notes (including highlights, questions, thoughts, personal reactions etc.) as you read the Book of Acts.

### ■ Week 4 (September 16-22)

- Denominations and Christian Diversity
  - Major “Denominational” Divisions (*Watch Lecture*)
    - Orthodox Christianity
    - Roman Catholic Christianity
    - Protestant Christianity
    - Charismatic Christianity
  - A Typology of Christian Diversity (*Watch Lecture*)
    - Church Christianity
    - Biblical Christianity
    - Monastic and Mystical Christianity
- **READINGS:**
  - Linda Woodhead, Chapter 4: Church and biblical Christianity
  - Linda Woodhead, Chapter 5: Monastic and mystical Christianity
- **DISCUSSION:**
  - Having overviewed the major types and divisions of Christianity, do you believe that it is best to speak of “Christianity” or instead to refer to multiple “Christianities?” Defend your position based on the lecture, readings, and your own personal opinion/experiences.
- **READING QUIZ**

### ■ Week 5 (September 23-29)

- Christianity, Today
  - Christianity in the Modern World (*Watch Lecture*)
  - Christianity Amidst Diversity and Difference (*Watch Lecture*)
    - Christian Miscellany
    - Christianity and the World’s Religions:
      - Hindu Traditions
      - Judaism

- Islam
- Secularism
- Christian Hybridity & Transformation/Translation
- **READINGS:**
  - Harvard Religious Literacy Project, “The Modern Era”
  - John Davison Hunter, “Toward a Theology of Faithful Presence”
  - Ken Chitwood, “Building Bridges: Toward Constructing a Christian Foundation for Inter-Religious Relationships in the Shift from Religious Privilege to Spiritual Plurality”
- **DISCUSSION:**
  - While it is best to avoid prophecy, I want you to reflect on what you’ve learned about the global spread and impact of the Christian faith and ethos in this course and consider the future of Christianity. What do you think Christianity will look like over the next 100 years?
- **FINAL EXAM & INTERVIEW WITH A CHRISTIAN DUE**

*Updated, Fall Term, 2019*