

CHST 101

History of the Church from Pentecost to 313

Course Credit: 3 Semester Hours

I. Course Description

This course is a chronological study, progressing from the Ascension of Christ through the period of growth and persecution until the legalization of Christianity with the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. In addition to following the activities of the apostles, course material provides data on the context within which the Church was established, grew, and experienced persecution within the confines of the Roman Empire. Along with the Scriptures, the writings of Church fathers and historians are used to provide as full a picture as possible of the events in these first three centuries of Church history.

II. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- A. Identify the foundations of the Apostolic Church and its progress through the end of the First Century.
- B. Understand the impact of the 10 major persecutions of Christians in the Roman Empire.
- C. Identify the growth of the Christian Church within, and outside, the Roman Empire.
- D. Describe the major heresies of this time period and their impact on the Christian Church.

III. Materials Needed

- A. *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishing)
- B. Eusebius Pamphilus (bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, c. 260 - c.340), *Ecclesiastical History*. Available at: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.html>

C. Optional Materials

1. Harry R Boer, *A Short History of the Early Church*, published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990 (available on Amazon.com)
2. Thomas Herman, *The History of the Christian Church Until the Great Schism of 1054*, published by Authorhouse, 2004 (available on Amazon.com)
3. *Josephus: The Complete Works*
<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/josephus/complete.html>)

IV. Course Content

- Lesson I: Kairos: The Foundational Influence of Judaism, Greek Thought, and Roman Governance
- Lesson II: Growing Pains: Pentecost, Persecution, and the Council of Jerusalem
- Lesson III: Evangelism: The Journeys of St. Paul and the Other Apostles
- Lesson IV: Apostolic Tradition: Liturgy, Creed, and Conduct
- Lesson V: Destruction: The End of Old Testament Judaism
- Lesson VI: Persecution: Rome's Attack on Christians
- Lesson VII: Apology: The Response of St Justin Martyr, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, and Tertullian
- Lesson VIII: Heresy: Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism
- Lesson IX: Three Cities: Rome, Carthage, Alexandria
- Lesson X: Relief: Diocletian and Constantine

V. Assignments

Assignments may consist of reading assigned texts, viewing video presentations, viewing presentation slides, writing short essays (250-500 words each), and creating presentation slides. Rubrics for essays and presentations will be provided with each assignment. Faculty will give substantive commentary on all assignments. Final exam details, if applicable, are explained in the virtual classroom content on moodle.com.

VI. Attendance

We do not have an official attendance policy due to the nature of being a self-paced course (faculty are expected to engage with each student at least once per week through moodle).

VII. Participation

All students must engage at least once per week in the asynchronous forum discussion group. Access is made available to this forum in the virtual classroom.