HIS 640/740  REFORMATIONS OF THE 16TH CENTURY

Instructor: R. Gerald Hobbs
Professor emeritus of church history & church music

Purpose
- to develop the student’s understanding of the central events and issues in the complex of movements called the “Sixteenth-Century Reformation”, in their relationship to the social context of early modern Europe (1400-1700)
- to enable the student to acquire a deeper knowledge of the life and thought of central figures of the Western church in the context of Early Modern European society and the church;
- to develop in students an awareness and understanding of religious movements as they are shaped by, and affect, the little people, the so-called “common man (and woman)”, in reaction to clericalism; to view these ecclesial and social events from ‘the underside’, from the viewpoint and experience of those excluded by gender, class, race, etc.
- to increase familiarity with social & ecclesial character of the Evangelical Reformation of the Sixteenth Century through examination of key elements of the Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican traditions as they shaped and defined themselves in a series of conflicts and developments;
- to encourage exploration of the resources for worship and spirituality that are particular to the Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican traditions.
- to develop understanding of continuity in the midst of major change
- to encourage an understanding of the relationship, as well as the ruptures, between the events of the Reformation period and the 21st C. Christian churches.

Format
A three-hour weekly lecture-seminar presentation from 2-5 pm Wednesdays;

Method
It is my practice to assign approx.20 pp. of background reading weekly, plus a selection of approx.10 pp. of original sources in translation.

Content
- European society and church at the end of the Middle Ages, including the emerging social setting in town and countryside, and early bourgeois society;
- Erasmus, Luther and other originators of humanist and evangelical reformation movements;
- the urban model in Zurich and Strasbourg; social and political revolutionary movements;
- the place of women in these movements;
the emergence of an evangelical lay leadership; the challenge of religious radicalism, and the Radical church traditions (Anabaptist and Quaker)

the establishment of evangelical churches; exploration of the key elements of the thought of Luther, Calvin & other central reformers;

later developments in the Evangelical, Reformed and Anglican traditions; worship and spirituality, including the role of hymns in forming Lutheran and the Psalms in forming Reformed and Anglican character; each class will involve the singing of a psalm or hymn from the 16th C.

to consider the relationship of these movements to the Other in Europe & the Americas

the future of the Reformation traditions in an ecumenical and post-Christian world.

Emphasis will be placed on the reading of primary sources, as these are distributed in the course and assigned for class presentation and discussion.

Expectations of the Student
Regular class attendance (80% is required for VST credit), preparatory reading and class participation in discussion & dramatizations.

Evaluation
Two short (5-10 min.) oral class presentations on assigned readings, plus a final essay examination. Premium is placed, not upon memorization of “facts”, but on the ability to interpret readings critically.

Prerequisites
Note that this course may be required for students preparing within the M.Div. programme for denominational ordination.

This course may also be taken at the graduate level. This needs to be discussed with the instructor after the first class.

Bibliography


Both are available in paperback. They are also available used on-line.

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