The Medieval Church
Syllabus

This course will take students through the early history of the Christian Church in western Europe, from its roots in Roman Palestine, through the zenith of its power in the high Middle Ages, to its decline on the eve of the Reformation. The course will focus on the Church less as a religion (although it will by necessity deal with some basic theology) than as an institution that had an enormous political, social, cultural, and economic impact on medieval life and for a time made Rome once more the mistress of Europe.

Readings: There is only one required textbook for this course: Joseph H. Lynch, The Medieval Church: A Brief History (Longman, 1992), ISBN 0582494672. I will ask you to read sections of this book as we go along to supplement my lectures. The bulk of the course readings will consist of primary source texts about the medieval church. I will provide these readings to you electronically. I have noted the specific readings in the course schedule below.

Grading: The course focuses on the reading, analysis, and discussion of the readings. Class participation and attendance will therefore make up 40% of your grade. There will be no midterm and no final examination. Instead, I will ask you to write three papers at select points during the course. These papers will together make up the remaining 60% of your grade.

In addition, I will ask you to write short summaries/reaction papers before each discussion meeting. These papers MAY BE NO LONGER THAN one page long. They should include a BRIEF summary of the essential points or essential content of the reading(s) and a BRIEF statement of your reaction, i.e., things you found interesting, questions you had, things you agreed/disagreed with, etc. These papers will help me set up and guide the discussions. Please send these papers to me VIA E-MAIL. They must reach my in-box BY 10.00 AM ON THE DAY OF THE RELEVANT DISCUSSION. In accordance with their purpose, I will not grade these papers as I would essays; instead, they will form part of your attendance/participation grade.

Schedule:

WEEK ONE:
  Readings: The Gospel of Matthew; The Acts of the Apostles; select letters of SS Paul and Peter; Lynch: Chapters 17 and 18

Sep. 26: Lecture – The Birth of the Christian Church
Sep. 28: dicussion – Gospel of Matthew
Sep. 30: discussion – Acts and letters

WEEK TWO
Readings: Eusebius of Caesarea, History of the Church, Books 8-10 and Life of Constantine; Acts of the First Council of Nicaea; Lynch: Chapter 1, pp. 1-17.

Oct. 3: Lecture – The Age of the Church Fathers
Oct. 5: discussion – History
Oct. 7: continue discussion – Life of Constantine, Council of Nicaea
PAPER I TOPICS HANDED OUT

WEEK THREE
Readings: Athanasius, Life of St. Anthony; Sulpicius Severus, Life of St. Martin; The Rule of St. Benedict; Article: "What Chores Would Jesus Do?"; Lynch: Chapter 1, pp. 17-18; Chapter 2, pp. 29-34.

Oct. 10: Lecture – Early Monasticism
Oct. 12: discussion – Lives of Anthony and Martin
Oct. 14: discussion – "What Chores," Rule of Benedict.

WEEK FOUR
Readings: select documents on the early papacy; Gregory of Tours, Ten Books of Histories (excerpts); Bede, History of the English Church (excerpts); Lynch: Chapter 2, pp. 19-29; Chapters 3 and 4

Oct. 17: Lecture – The Early Papacy; PAPER I DUE
Oct. 19: discussion – select documents
Oct. 21: discussion – Gregory of Tours, Bede

WEEK FIVE
Readings: Willibald, Life of St. Boniface; Annals of Lorsch: the pope makes the Carolingians kings; The Donation of Constantine; Acts of the Synod of Frankfurt 794; poem Charlemagne and Pope Leo; select charters from a Bavarian cathedral church; Lynch: Chapters 5 and 6

Oct. 24: Lecture – The Carolingian Church
Oct. 26: discussion – Life of Boniface, Annals of Lorsch
Oct. 28: discussion – Synod of Frankfurt, Charlemagne and Leo, Bavarian charters

WEEK SIX

Readings: select documents on the Peace of God; John of Salerno, Life of Abbot Odo of Cluny; select charters from the monastery at Cluny; Liutprand of Cremona, A Chronicle of Otto's Reign; Lynch: Chapters 7 and 8

Oct. 31: Lecture – The Church at the Turn of the First Millennium
Nov. 2: discussion – Peace documents, Cluny charters, Life of Odo
Nov. 4: discussion – Life of Odo continued, Liutprand
PAPER II TOPICS HANDED OUT

WEEK SEVEN
Readings: Orderic Vitalis, Ecclesiastical History, Books VII and IX (excerpts); select documents on the Investiture Controversy; the Concordat of Worms 1122; Lynch: Chapters 9 and 10

Nov. 7: Lecture – The Church Militant
Nov. 9: discussion – Orderic
Nov. 11: discussion – Investiture Controvery, Concordat

WEEK EIGHT
Readings: John of Salisbury, History of the Papal Court; Acts of the Fourth Lateran Council; Lynch: Chapters 11 and 13

Nov. 14: Lecture – The Roman Church at its Zenith; PAPER II DUE
Nov. 16: discussion – John of Salisbury, Fourth Lateran
Nov. 18: Lecture – Rumblings of Discontent

WEEK NINE
Readings: Thomas of Celano, First Life of St. Francis; Rule of St. Francis; Caesarius of Heisterbach on heretics; the Cathar Gospel of John; inquisition register of Jacques Fournier (excerpts); Lynch: Chapters 12, 14, and 15

Nov. 21: discussion – Life of Francis, Rule of Francis
Nov. 23: discussion – Caesarius, Cathar Gospel, Fournier register
Nov. 25: THANKSGIVING; FINAL PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT

WEEK TEN
Readings: select documents on the disputes between Pope Boniface VIII and King Philip IV of France; Marsilius of Padua, Defensor Pacis (excerpts); select documents on John Wycliffe; Acts of the Council of Constance 1414-18; Bull of Pope Pius II, Excrabilis, 1460; Lynch: Chapters 19 and 20

Nov. 28: Lecture – The Church Divided
Nov. 30: Boniface v. Philip, Marsilius of Padua
Dec. 2: Wycliffe documents, Council of Constance, Pius II

FINAL PAPER DUE ON OR BEFORE LAST DAY OF FINALS WEEK: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9