

College of Arts & Sciences  
Program in Religious Studies  
Oakland University

REL 1250 | Introduction to Christianity  
4 Credits, Fall 2018

Professor: Randall D. Engle, Ph.D.  
E-mail: engle@oakland.edu  
Course Sections: 1250-10 (43435) MWF 8:00-9:07 in MSC 386  
1250-20 (41492) MWF 9:20-10:27 in MSC 386  
1250-30 (42604) MWF 1:20-2:27 in MSC 185

Prof's Mail Box: 517 Varner  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Cell/Text: (248) 885-0929

**Welcome to Religion 1250!**

Professor Engle is thrilled to have you in this class! I am eager to learn with you and from you as we explore this fascinating and enriching topic together. I care a great deal about this class. That makes me really pleased when you really dive into this material (and also more than a little disappointed when you don't). I love your challenging and constructive questions, testimonies about "aha" moments, and reports about how our study together has either confirmed ideas you've had or changed your mind.

**Catalog Description:** Key ideas, major concepts, and peculiar language of the Christian religious experience. Focus on history of Christianity, creeds and doctrines of various denominations, Christianity's cultural influences, and Christian ethical systems. Satisfies the university general education requirement in the global perspective knowledge exploration area.

**General Learning Goals for Religious Studies *and* your Introduction to Christianity Class:**

Through an interdisciplinary exploration of the Christian tradition, students will enhance their understanding of the peoples, doctrines, rituals, institutions and values historically associated with Christian life and thought. Students will sharpen their critical thinking skills and better appreciate the ways Christian adherents shape and are shaped by culture, politics, economics and society. Utilizing an academic approach to the study of religious traditions, cross-cultural competencies and critical thinking skills will be cultivated enabling students to successfully negotiate increasingly diverse environments and workplaces in a progressively interlinked world.

**Course Prerequisites/corequisites:**

none



**Required texts:**

~The professor will provide you with a class *Reader*. This *Reader* contains our syllabus, schedule, reading assignments, lecture notes and study reviews.

~*The Bible*. There are many (free) downloads if you don't already own a print copy. We will use the New International Version (©Zondervans, 1973).

**General Education:**

This class satisfies the General Education requirement in the Knowledge area of Global Perspective. The Global Perspective area prepares you to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of the environments, political systems, economies, societies and religions of one or more regions outside the United States and awareness of the transnational flow of goods, peoples, ideas and values;
2. Knowledge of the role that different cultural heritages, past and present, play in forming values in another part of the world, enabling the student to function within a more global context.

To fulfill this requirement, this course examines foundational Christian ideas and practices that contribute beyond the specific faith community and helps shape the broader contemporary global civilization. It gives special attention to exploring fundamental concepts and values that exert continuing influence upon contemporary social behavior. In addition, this course examines Christian religious ideas and commitments from a neutral standpoint, and encourages the formation of critical judgment and analysis upon which deeper understanding must be based. It explores the cultural meaning of Christian language and teachings, and probes the deeper questions of human existence underlying its religious symbolism and ethical teaching. This course strives for informed knowledge and understanding of the Christian tradition; including an understanding of its text (the *Bible*), the application of seminal ideas to broader cultural issues and movements, and a deeper knowledge of the context of those ideas as expressed in especially formative historic moments.

**Learning Objectives:**

To fulfill the Global Perspective requirement, this course

1. Informs students of foundational Christian ideas and practices that contribute to global cultural capital operative in public spaces beyond narrowly defined faith communities.
2. Provides a deeper understanding of fundamental concepts and values that exert continuing influence upon broader contemporary social behavior.
3. Develops critical-thinking skills which examine Christian religious ideas and commitments from a neutral, state-university standpoint.
4. Explores the cultural meaning of Christian language and teachings, and probes the deeper questions of universal human existence underlying its religious symbolism and ethical teaching.
5. Achieves a deeper understanding of Christian history and thought that provides a basis of a more informed knowledge of its central teachings and doctrines.
6. Broadens the understanding of the role of foundational texts, theology and church doctrine in Christian renewal and development throughout the world.

## Add/Drops & Incompletes:

The University add/drop and incomplete grade policies will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the University deadline dates for dropping the course.

## Class Structure and Grading:

This course is meant to induce heavy thinking. You will not have to memorize lots of facts (though there will be some of this), but you will have to tire your brain thinking hard about the topics at hand. If you read and listen to materials for this course quickly and don't think hard about them, you will be missing out on most of the course.

1. **Attendance** and **participation** at all lectures (see schedule below). 10% of your grade can be achieved simply by showing up. Your attendance will be self-evaluated and graded by you at the time of the final exam. Much of the material on both the mid- and final-exam is taken from the lectures.

2. **Read** the assigned primary texts from the *Bible* and *The Reader*. Reflect. Come ready to dialogue. Though the reading may/not always be reviewed in class, its content will be tested at the mid- and final-exams. Weekly reading quizzes will be given throughout the semester (15% of grade).

The end of a Fall semester in-person class can have weather-related challenges. Obviously, if Oakland University is closed to due inclement, wintry weather then we do not have class that day. Please do not drive to Oakland University if you feel unsafe or if the weather conditions in your area prohibit safe driving. Monitor *your* weather conditions and those of your route—Dr. Engle insists that you *always* put your safety first.

3. **Write** two short papers (10% each):

1. An investigation of a Biblical text that was (is) important to Christianity answering “who, what, where and why?” queries. All details for this assignment in your *Reader*, and I'll later send a link to a video.
2. An investigation into the history and teaching of a “major” Christian doctrine or epoch. Specific topics for these papers will be assigned, though you may suggest an alternative topic if you have something specific you would like to investigate. All details for this assignment is in your *Reader*, and I'll later send a link to a video.

*or*

Fill out and return the *Luther Movie Guide* (to be distributed on those class days).

4. **Present** a class report and submit a supporting paper about a Christian church of any denominational stripe that you have attended *this* semester. I will give you a reporting template to return and to use in your structuring for the class presentation. Please note: as this will require out of classroom time, a couple of normal classroom hours will be given off to compensate. All details for this assignment is in your *Reader*, and I'll send a link to a video. (15% of grade). You may partner with a classmate(s) for a collaborative presentation if desired. Note: you could conceivably do your visit during the first month of class, and spend the rest of the semester reflecting back on the experience and preparing your presentation.. *Note: This will require some university--level planning skills, so that you don't have a crisis in early December.*

5. **Sit** for the mid-term and final exams (20% each respectively = 40% total). I expect all students to take the exams on the days scheduled below. Please make your travel plans accordingly.

## Lecture and Classroom Schedule:

### Introductions:

Wednesday, September 5: Meet and greet. Syllabus review. Expectation review. Calendar review. *Reader* distribution. Appointment of Snack Czar.  
*Today's homework:* Transfer dates, deadlines and days off from this syllabus to your electronic calendar(s).

### Foundation One: Biblia.

What is the Christian *Bible*? How is it distinct? How did it come to be? How do Christians claim its “holiness,” or is The Bible simply another book used for a holy purpose? We’ll learn terms such as *genre*, *hermeneutic*, *inspired* and *canonical*. How is the Bible divided and organized? What are the major sections? What is included and, interestingly, what is *not* included in the Bible?

Friday, September 7: Bible origins. Council of Carthage. The canon. Apocrypha.  
*Week's Reading:* *Lecture One: The Bible*  
*Lecture Two: What Christians Believe About the Bible*

Monday, September 10: **Reading Quiz #1**  
Introduction to Genesis  
Wednesday, September 12: Genesis 3, the Biblical drama begins  
Friday, September 14: Reading day (no in person class session)  
*Week's Reading:* *The Bible*, Genesis chapters 1-3  
*Lecture Three: Genesis Introduction through Chapter Three*

Monday, September 17: **Reading Quiz #2**  
Abraham and “his seed”  
Wednesday, September 19: The Road Out: Exodus  
Friday, September 21: Ruth  
*Week's Reading:* *The Bible*, Genesis 22:1-19; Exodus chapters 1-3; Ruth  
*Lecture Four: From Abraham and His Seed*  
*Lecture Five: The Road Out: Exodus*  
*Lecture Six: Rahab and Ruth*

Monday, September 24: **Reading Quiz #3**  
Paper #1 Review  
Psalms and Prophets. Meet Jeremiah.  
Wednesday, September 26: Inter testamentary period. Introduction the synoptics.  
Friday, September 28: Reading and writing day. No class sessions.  
*Week's Reading:* *The Bible*, Psalms 1, 23, 51, 121, 150  
*Lecture Seven: Psalms and Prophets: Jeremiah*  
*Lecture Eight: The Gospels*

Monday, October 1:	<b>Reading Quiz #4</b> The Last week of Jesus' Life
Wednesday, October 3:	The resurrection. Pentecost and Acts
Friday, October 5:	Saul=Paul: His life and letters. Philemon.
<i>Week's Reading:</i>	<i>The Bible</i> , the gospel of Mark <i>The Bible</i> , Acts chapters 1-3 <i>Lecture Nine: Jesus' Last Week</i> <i>Lecture Ten: Easter</i> <i>Lecture Eleven: Pentecost and Paul</i>
Monday, October 8:	<b>Reading Quiz #5</b> The most puzzling book of them all: Revelation The End Times (a-, pre-, post-millennialism) and Engle's Five R's
Wednesday, October 10:	What did Jesus look like?
Friday, October 12:	<b>Short Paper #1 Due</b> Mid-term review
<i>Week's Reading:</i>	<i>The Bible</i> Philemon, Revelation 1, Revelation 22 <i>Lecture Twelve: Paul's Letters: Philemon</i> <i>Lecture Thirteen: Revelation</i> <i>Lecture Fourteen: How Does it all End?</i> <i>Mid-Term Review Guide</i>
<b>Monday, October 15:</b>	<b>Mid-Term exam</b>
Wednesday, October 17:	<b>Mid-Term Break. No Class (#breathe!)</b>
Friday, October 19:	<b>Mid-Term Break. No Class (#breathe!)</b>

### Foundation Two: Christian Church History

With the canon closed and in hand, what did Christians do with it? How did early Christians identify themselves, organize and grow as a religious movement? Why did Rome become the center of Christianity for 1500 years until the time of protests fractured the Christian church's hold on almost every aspect of Western European culture? What is the state of Christianity today?

Monday, October 22:	Church History 1: The Early Church: Beginnings
Wednesday, October 24:	Church History 2: Constantine. The Councils
Friday, October 26:	Church History 3: Desert Fathers and Islam
<i>Week's Reading:</i>	<i>Lecture Fifteen: The First Century</i> <i>Lecture Sixteen: Constantine's Conversion</i> <i>Lecture Seventeen: The Fall of Rome and the Rise of Islam</i>
Monday, October 29:	<b>Reading Quiz #6</b> Paper #2 Review
Wednesday, October 31:	Church History 4: The Mysterious Middle Age
Friday, November 2:	Church History 5: Rationalism and Reform Film: <i>Luther</i> , Part I
<i>Week's Reading:</i>	<i>Lecture Eighteen: The Mysteries of the Middle Age</i> <i>Lecture Nineteen: Rationalism and Reform</i>
Monday November 5:	Film: <i>Luther</i> , Part 2

- Wednesday, November 7: Meet John Calvin, Knox and Zwingli  
 Friday, November 9: What about the English? Meet Henry VIII and the Church of England (Anglicanism)  
*Week's Reading:* *Lecture Twenty: Martin Luther*  
*Lecture Twenty One: John Calvin*  
*Lecture Twenty Two: Zwingli*  
*Lecture Twenty Three: Henry VIII*
- Monday, November 12: **Reading Quiz #7**  
 Presentation expectation and requirements explained thoroughly with a handout.  
 The Roman Catholic Response. The Enlightenment. The Wesley Brothers. The Great Awakening.
- Wednesday, November 14: Reading and writing day. No class (Prof in Europe)  
 Friday, November 16: Reading and writing day. No class (Prof in Europe)  
*Week's Reading:* *Lecture Twenty Four: Catholic Counter-Reformation.*  
*Lecture Twenty Five: Christianity Takes Sail*
- Monday, November 19: **Reading Quiz #8**  
 Christianity sails across the Atlantic: migration and pillarization  
**Paper # 2 Due**
- Wednesday, November 21: **No Class. Thanksgiving Break**  
 Friday, November 23: **No Class. Thanksgiving Break.**  
*Week's Reading:* *Lecture Twenty Five: Christianity Takes Sail*
- Monday, November 26: New denominations: meet the Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

### Foundation Three: Your Analysis

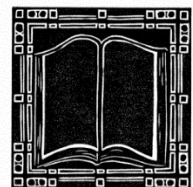
Understanding the Christian sacred text (the Bible) and the history of the church, we now explore contemporary expressions of Christianity in a self-guided investigation and project.

- Wednesday, November 28: Class presentations begin  
 Friday, November 30: Class presentations  
*Week's Reading:* *Lecture Twenty Six: Home Grown Religions*

- Monday, December 3: Class Presentations  
 Wednesday, December 5: Class Presentations conclude  
**Class Finished!**

### Final Examination:

- 1250-010 (44313): Monday, December 10, 8:00am in 386  
 1250-020 (41674): Wednesday, December 12, 8:00am in 386  
 1250-030 (43140): Monday, December 10, 3:30pm in 185



The Final exam is non-cumulative: Foundation two and class presentation material only. A scantron is *not* needed.

### Behavioral practices:

Learning and respect for each other are integral to the University experience. Specific expectations include the following:



- A. **Internet functions on your computers may not be accessed during class time.** Students are permitted to bring laptop computers to class for the *sole* purpose of note-taking and ordering online gifts for the professor. Any use of computers for e-mail, Face booking, text-messaging, twittering, doing extraneous projects, snap-chatting, playing Pac-Man (or whatever it is you kids do nowadays) or other forms of entertainment during class will result in the banishment of your computer to outer darkness, where there will be much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth – or some other suitable judgment. You will be next. You decide.
- B. Coming **late for class** mandates a word of apology, just as it would in professional and work environment. A pattern of lateness is not acceptable.
- C. **Skipping** class is disrespectful, and then requires more work from your colleagues and professor to update you on class discussion. Please be sure to inform me by email or text if you cannot attend class.
- D. **Extensions** for assignments are negotiable but must be discussed ahead of time, otherwise your grade for a late paper will be lowered.
- E. All Oakland University students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to an environment of **academic integrity** and respect for the educational process and the safety and well-being of all members of the community. Adherence to the Student Code of Conduct will be expected; violations of this code will be reported to the Dean of Students. The Code of Academic and Student Conduct can be found at <http://www2.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/handbook/conduct.cfm>.

Below are examples of academic dishonesty in our class. Students, faculty or staff who know of possible academic violations are expected to report the alleged violation to the Dean of Students Office. The report will include a brief written statement and relevant evidence (original material when available). A copy of this report with supporting evidence is given to the accused student as the statement of the charge. When appropriate, the faculty member will issue a grade of Incomplete until the academic conduct matter has been resolved.

1. **Cheating** on assignments and examinations. This includes, but is not limited to, the following when not authorized by the instructor: the use of any assistance or materials such as books and/or notes, acquiring exams or any other academic materials, the use of any other sources in writing drafts, papers, preparing reports, solving problems, works completed for a past or concurrent course, completing homework or carrying out other assignments. No student shall copy from someone else's work or help someone else copy work or substitute another's work as one's own. No student shall engage in any behavior specifically prohibited by an instructor in the course syllabus or class discussion.



2. **Plagiarizing** the work of others. Plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas without giving that person credit. By doing this, a student is, in effect, claiming credit for someone else's thinking. This can occur in drafts, papers and oral presentations. Whether the student has read or heard the information used, the student must document the source of information. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotations, which reproduce information from the source word-for-word within quotation marks, and paraphrases, which digest the source of information and produce it in the student's own words. Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if a student rephrases, condenses or selects from another person's work, the ideas are still the other person's and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student's actual work and plagiarism of another's ideas. Buying a paper or using information from the Internet without attribution and handing it in as one's own work is plagiarism.

3. **Unauthorized collaboration** on assignments. This is unauthorized interaction with anyone in the fulfillment of academic requirements and applies to in-class or take-home coursework. Individual (unaided) work on exams, homework, computer assignments and documentation of sources is expected unless the instructor specifically states in the syllabus or verbally that it is not necessary. Collaboration can also include calculating homework problems with another person, having another help to rewrite a paper, sharing information/sources with others and checking coursework with others.

4. Completion of **original work**. When an instructor assigns coursework, the instructor intends that work to be completed for his/her course only. Work students may have completed for a course taken in the past, or may be completing for a concurrent course, must not be submitted in both courses unless they receive permission to do so from both faculty members.

5. **Important note:** Wikipedia and/or google are **neither acceptable nor reliable** research tools for collegiate academic work.

**Dr. Engle's Class Grading Scale:**

<b>GPA</b>	<b>Percentile</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
4.0	95-100	A
3.9	94	A-
3.8	93	A-
3.7	92	A-
3.6	91	A-
3.5	90	A-
3.4	89	B+
3.3	88	B+
3.2	87	B
3.1	86	B
3.0	85	B
2.9	84	B-
2.8	83	B-
2.7	82	B-
2.6	81	B-
2.5	80	B-
2.4	79	C+
2.3	78	C+
2.2	77	C+
2.1	76	C+
2.0	75	C
1.9	74	C
1.8	73	C
1.7	72	C-
1.6	71	C-
1.5	70	C-
1.4	69	D+
1.3	68	D+
1.2	67	D+
1.1	66	D
1.0	65	D
0.9	64	D
0.8	63	D-
0.7	62	D-
0.6	61	D-
0.5	60	D-
0.4	59↓	F

**The Tutoring Center:**

Tutoring assistance may be found at the Tutoring Center, 103 North Foundation Hall (<https://www.oakland.edu/tutoring/>). The Tutoring Center offers a host of free support services — individual and group peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction and study skills assistance through a number of instructional and informational videos. The students and staff of the Tutoring Center understand that everyone learns differently. Their mission is to coach and challenge you to take control of your own academic success. All services and support programs are available at no cost to currently enrolled OU students.

**Counseling:**

The Oakland University Counseling Center, located in the Graham Health Center, provides a broad range of mental health services which include:

- Personal Counseling
- Psychological and Psychoeducational Testing
- Career Testing and Counseling
- Substance Abuse Evaluation, Treatment, and Prevention
- Consultation and Outreach
- Crisis Intervention

More information can be found at <https://oakland.edu/oucc/> Counseling is provided by licensed psychologists and interns. Staff that are not fully licensed are supervised by licensed psychologists. Counseling services are based on a short-term model. If long-term counseling is indicated, the staff is happy to help with outside referrals. In order to meet with a counselor, you can call or come in to the Counseling Center and schedule an appointment. Same day appointments may be available, subject to counselor availability.

**Identification:**

If you do not identify with the name that is listed with the registrar, please notify me so that I may appropriately amend my records. In addition, if you prefer to go by a different pronoun, please inform me.

**Disabilities:**

Students with Disabilities: Students who require any special arrangements due to disabilities should contact me so that we may resolve the issue with in-classroom alterations, or so that we may take advantage of university offerings. A student with a documented learning or physical disability must contact the Office of Disability Support Services, 103A North Foundation Hall, (248) 370-3266, and inform the professor of special needs during first week of classes. For more information, visit <http://www.oakland.edu/dss>. Disability Support Services acts as an advocate for students with disabilities.

**Oakland University Writing Center:**

Students are encouraged to seek help with writing first from the Professor. If additional help is needed, students may seek assistance from the university writing center, 212 Kresge Library (<https://www.oakland.edu/ouwc/>).