



Winter Term 2026
Church History 2 – Middle Ages through the Reformation
With Bishop William Cliff
A Course in The Licentiate in Theology Diploma Program

Huron University College Land Acknowledgment

Huron is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron, and Lenape peoples, whose sharing and stewardship of the land has been governed by the Dish with One Spoon treaty since time immemorial. We are guided by this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. Huron University College acknowledges its past role in perpetuating colonial and exclusionary relations. Because religious and ecclesial institutions were instrumental in such relations, we consider it our particular responsibility as a Faculty of Theology to work towards justice and reconciliation.

Course Dates: April 30, May 7, 28, June 4, 11, 18, 2026

Time: Thursdays from 7 – 9 P.M. (CT), 8 – 10 P.M. (ET)

Delivery: Hosted via Zoom

Instructor: The Right Reverend William G. Cliff, MA, DD

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Course Description

This course will examine the history of the Church from the medieval through the Reformation period. We will be looking at this period through the lens of the theological and historical movements that were part of both the perceived stability of the medieval order through the renaissance and humanist movements and concluding with a look at what happened in the Reformation - both the English Reformation and the Continental Reformation. Rather than seeing the church's development as a series of chronological dates and names, we will look at the documents of those in power and those who will find themselves condemned. In order to do this we will continue to use basic historical methods of document study. In so doing we will

see that the church both shapes society and culture and is transformed by language, history, geography, and culture as well as theology.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will have an introductory knowledge of the major themes and controversies of the Reformation period and their echo in the practice of ministry and theology today.

Required Texts

The Principal Texts/Documents for this course will be:

Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder ed., *Documents of the Christian Church (fourth edition)*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

This is available on Amazon.ca and other sites such as abebooks.com

Please be sure to get the **Fourth Edition**

Course Outline/Plan

Week 1

The Medieval World

Papacy, Feudal authority, Kingship, Monasticism, Heaven, Hell and the Economy of salvation

Documents to Read:

Gregory's *Scheme for the Organization of the English Church* (Bettenson pg 161-162)

William the Conqueror: *Refusal of Fealty to Pope Gregory VII* (Bettenson pgs 164)

William the Conqueror: *Royal Supremacy* (Canons from Eadmer) (Bettenson 165)

Innocent III: *Interdict on England* (Bettenson 171-2)

Week 2

The Disintegration of Medieval social contract

Chafing at Papal claims of authority; The Challenge of the Muslim world; War as a means of "Diplomacy", Mystics (Margery Kemp, Julian of Norwich, Walter Hilton) Prayer and Piety, Changes in the habits of Prayer, Lollards and language

Documents to Read:

Richard II: *Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire* (section b. only - Bettenson 181-183)

Margery Kempe: From the Book of Margery Kempe: *Margery and her husband reach a settlement*

(from: <http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/kempe3.htm>)

Propositions of Wycliffe condemned at London, 1382 and at the Council of Constance, 1415 (Bettenson 184-192)

Week 3

Renaissance

Rediscovery of the ancients and of their knowledge and the Papacy surrounded by change;

Documents to read:

Boniface VIII: *Unum Sanctam* (Bettenson 121-2)

Alexander VI: *Inter Caetera* (<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Alex06/alex06inter.htm>)

Niccolo Machiavelli: *The Prince Chapter XVII Concerning Cruelty and Clemency*
(<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm#link2HCH0017>)

Erasmus: *The Education of the Christian Prince (pg 18-21: excerpt will be supplied)*

Week 4

Reformation on the Continent

Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, the Anabaptists - Protestantism as a State Phenomenon - conscience and Intellectual faith - martyrdom

Counter-Reformation - Council of Trent - movements in art, government and literature and mysticism - the appeal to passion - martyrdom

Documents to Read:

Luther: *The 95 Theses* (Bettenson 197-203)

Luther: *Babylonish Captivity of the Church* (Bettenson 209-212)

Calvin: *Excerpts from the Institutes* (Bettenson 226-228)

Trent: *Justification, the Eucharist etc* (Bettenson 266-271)

Week 5

Reformation in England

Was England always different? The English religious scene under Henry VIII up to 1530

The political reformation and denuding of the Church - catholic but not Roman (Henry VIII) whole heartedly and fully reformed (Edward VI) - reconciled with Holy Mother Church - sort of (Mary I) - The Elizabethan Settlement

Documents to Read:

Henry VIII: *The Six Articles* (Bettenson 249-250)

Edward VI: *The Black Rubric*

(http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1552/Communion_1552.htm)

Mary I: *The Second Statute of Repeal*

(<http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/statuterepeal2.htm>)

Elizabeth I : *Act of Uniformity* (Bettenson 251-255)

Week 6

Integration of the last 600 years - How does this affect us now?

How the Reformation affected what was to follow. Could the nation-state have been formed

without the Reformation?

Reformation questions that are still posed now - solutions to reformation problems

What would Luther think of today's church? Calvin? Cranmer? How might we guess at their reactions? Understanding the reformation fault lines that are still hiding beneath us.

Documents to Read:

Pius IX: *The Syllabus of Errors* (Bettenson 275-276)

Vatican I: *Declaration of Papal Infallibility* (Bettenson 277)

Leo XIII: *On Anglican Orders* (Bettenson 277-278)

ARCIC II: *Declaration* (Bettenson 401-402)

Method of Evaluation and Criteria for Grading

(only for students choosing to be evaluated for full course credit)

Assignments:

Of all the Documents presented and read in this course, you will be asked to submit four (4) 500 word summaries of four (4) of the documents we have discussed. Using your notes from class and your own notes from your readings (hint: make notes as you go) you should be able to summarize the importance of the document, why it was written, what great political, historical, theological or social problem is being addressed in the text and its significance in the history of the church. Ask yourself what is being illustrated by the text as it is presented and what assumptions are present. Some of these texts will be difficult to read because they are laws or declarations, others will be foreign in their language or idiom. Look through that difficulty to the effect of the document, and write a summary of why it was written and why this document matters - what does it show us. If you have real difficulty in choosing 4 documents from this list, other documents may be offered as substitutes - but you may not have the benefit of the class discussion to help you write your summary or research your document.

1. Document Study – 25%
2. Document Study – 25%
3. Document Study – 25%
4. Document Study – 25%

A full description and evaluative expectations document will accompany each the document studies and the final essay.

Huron Grade Descriptors

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable

F	below 50	Fail
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Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails.

While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

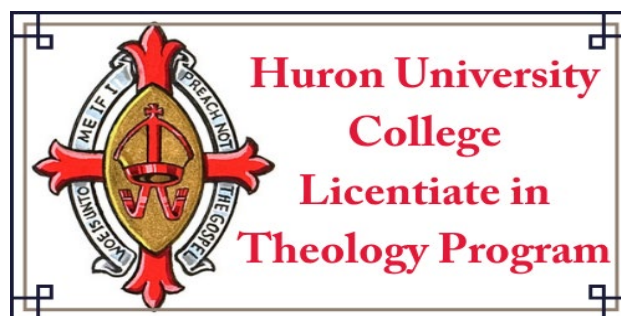
Statement on the Recording of Class Activities

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Online courses within the Licentiate in Theology Program are recorded for student engagement purposes. These recordings are only used by the registered students of the class and made available through a restricted video hosting site to respect both privacy and intellectual property. Should a student be uncomfortable with this practice, they can contact the course instructor or the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should contact the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca.



THIS COURSE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY HURON'S FACULTY OF THEOLOGY COMMITTEE
FOR THE WINTER TERM OF THE LTH PROGRAM, 2024.