"The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel."

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2027
Course Title	**HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I**
Course Code	**HIST 0561 1A**
Date **Delivery Format**	From January 11, 2027 to April 12, 2027 ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	The course is web-based asynchronous with no fixed class time.
Instructor **Contact Information**	**JAMES TYLER ROBERTSON , Ph.D.** Email: jtrobertson@tyndale.ca Tyndale Phone Number: (416) 226-6620 Ext. 2274
Office Hours	Tuesday nights at 6pm (Eastern) By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Long before the year 1500, global Christianity stretched from Iceland and Ireland to Mongolia and south to Ethiopia. Across this vast area, people of faith confronted dramatically differing and constantly changing circumstances. They made decisions about culture, political power, the spiritual life, the canon of Scripture, and doctrine, decisions that shaped the flow of human history, and they experienced both success and loss on the grand scale. The narrative of the course and the reading from materials they wrote carries students into the dynamism of early Christian life.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the overarching chronology of the development of Christian thought from the time of Jesus up to the early days of the Protestant Reformation
2. Name some of the more prominent men and women in Chrsitian history as well as explain why such people are prominent

3. Recognize the relevance of historical research and apply it to contemporary issues. The student should be able to access the wisdom from the ages in order to help him/her in his/her own life.
4. Explain the cultural and political settings of some of the major developments in Christian theology. The student will learn how to conduct an historical research paper. Included in this will be the ability to access resources, utilize primary and secondary source documents, write critically based on research and analyze and interpret data in meaningful and relevant ways.
5. Analyze and appraise better his/her own traditions and beliefs (both corporately and as an individual) and work through some of the elements of belief on a personal level based on his/her increased understanding of the history of such beliefs Interact with members of other faith communities in order to observe and comment from an educated and gracious perspective

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Vol. I The Early Church to the Reformation*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2010. (ISBN 978-0-06-185588-7)

Primary Reading Assignments Available on Course Page

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends **STEPBible** – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other online resources for Biblical Studies.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

COMMUNITY FORUMS:
3 Forums Total Worth 40% of Total Grade

Forum 1: "Getting to Know You" Classes 1-3 (Worth 5%)
Each student will take a turn uploading a picture, song, or item from his/her house and then offer a one-paragraph explanation what the item means to them, or how it applies to his/her personality. During these first three weeks, each student will return to the forum and respond in two or three sentences affirming another classmate's submission, and offering positive feedback. Each student must submit a "personality item" during the first three weeks and

respond to at least 5 other classmates to receive full marks. **NOTE: This is the only Forum that is open to the whole class and there will be no assigned groups as people will be dropping and adding in the first few weeks. This means there will be a lot of items to read through; which is why you are only required to respond to 5 other classmates.**

Forum 2: Social Media Information Campaign Classes 4-10 (worth 20%)

In Class 4 (Feb 1) students will be placed in groups of 8-10 (depending on total class size) the group will decide on a topic/person who lived/or that took place during the time periods covered in this class. The group will compose 6-8 slides (PowerPoint, Keynote, Canva, or some other visual program) describing the event/person and its/his/her relevance for today. In our world of digital misinformation and influencers, people talk about Christian history with limited awareness of the truth about their comments. They use history to advocate for issues of today. The point of this assignment is to offer a balanced, historically accurate, and visually compelling telling of an important or overlooked event/person in Christian history that is supported by research. The group is free to choose from one of the following topics (but can come up with their own as well as long as it is approved ahead of time by the Professor):

- Early Christian practices (eg. Baptism, Eucharist, Membership)
- The Council of Nicaea
- Monasticism
- Women in Early Christianity
- Constantine
- The Rise of Roman Catholicism
- Non-Roman Christianities
- Augustine
- Charlemagne and the Carolingian Revival
- Investiture and State/Church Power
- The Great Schism of 1054
- The Crusades
- Thomas Aquinas
- Hildegard
- Julian of Norwich
- Early Reformers (Huss, Wycliffe or Erasmus)

Along with the visuals, the group will compose a 500-word written document explaining some of the ways in which this person/event has been told in popular media and the corrections the group is offering to that erroneous narrative. 5-7 sources MUST be used (a bibliography will be attached to the end of the written portion). Each group will submit their visuals and written document to the assignment portal located on the course page. If the group approves, some of these Social Media campaigns will be shared online so that others can see the work as well. One submission/group, so make sure to choose a group "captain" to be in charge of that.

A.I. is permitted at the research gathering stage of this assignment but cannot be part of the submitted version. A.I. illustrations are permitted though it is better if the group can create as many of their own as possible. Any A.I. detection in the written material (including using an LLM to clean up grammar etc.) will result in a substantial loss of grade and potentially an F on the assignment for the whole group.

Forum 3: The Amazing Race! Online Scavenger Hunt Classes 11-12 Worth 10%

The final project will put students into a new group of 8-10. Each group will be given a series of questions that will take them exploring around the internet to find clues and solve a historical riddle. Websites—and even a couple of museums—will be consulted for the group to discover a hidden artifact, located somewhere in the vast digital world. The group will submit their answer when they believe they have it. Again, only one submission/group so make sure to choose a group "captain" to be responsible for that. This is designed to be a fun group adventure to help close out the semester so … enjoy it!

Finally, because group work can be frustrating if certain members do not contribute, it is the responsibility of the group captain to email the professor and let him know. This is about integrity and communal responsibility because we all do better when we work together. So…stay involved as much as possible!

IMPORTANT: For every assignment handed in the student is required to attach a cover page. No exceptions and grades will be deducted if there is no cover page

Assignment 1: History…Helps? Due: Feb 22 Worth: 10%

Most of you are taking history because you have to…while that hurts this Professor, it is also understandable and the reality of the world in which we all live. With that in mind, the student will compose a 500-word personal essay exploring some of the ways the student believes history can actually help in her/his chosen field of study. What is the relevance of historiography based on the videos, lectures, and readings the student will have viewed/read by this point in the semester. Make sure to reference some of the course material and really think about how history can make you a better version of whatever it is you want to become. Along with this argument, the assignment will be graded based on proper grammar, syntax, sentence structure, and use of course material.

This is a personal reflection and so **NO A.I.** is permitted (even to clean up language). Any use of A.I. on this assignment will result in a serious grade penalty and potential failure of the assignment.

Assignment 2: Church Visit Due: March 22 Worth: 25%

If the student is a Protestant he or she is asked to attend the worship service of either a Roman Catholic or Orthodox Church. The student will then write a 1000-word reflection on the

experience. The reflection will be graded on the level of observation, challenges, and critiques as well as aspects of the worship the student appreciated. Each observation should be supported and explained with historical research and should include references. For example: What is the role of stained-glass in worship?; Explain the significance of iconography in Orthodox traditions; What are sermons called in Catholic worship?; Is this version of Protestantism liturgical or not (this is only if you are Catholic or Orthodox and are choosing a Protestant worship service)?; What is the significance of the prayers that were chosen for the day the student attended (is it a Feast day for a Saint)? Asking these questions, and researching the answer should form the majority of the paper. Here is the format:

- Introduction: Name the church attended and its location and the denomination of the church. Also let the Professor know the student's community of faith.
- Part 1: Initial observations of the space (exegete the space) and first impressions
- Part 2 (the largest part): Observations about the worship experience with historical research to explain these observations to an uninformed person
- Part 3: Challenges and aspects that the student appreciated
- Conclusion: Summarize what the student learned from this experience.

Make sure to include a bibliography of the works consulted (which can include the church's website) and, if possible, include images of the church bulletin or literature (including website if available) as appendices of the paper.

A.I. can be used in order to answer some of the questions for the student. But that answer must be checked against reliable source material. If the student discovers an A.I. mistake, consider including that in the assignment as that will provide valuable information. Therefore, A.I. is permitted at the research-gathering stage of this assignment but cannot be part of the submitted version (with the exception of including an A.I. mistake). Any A.I. detection (including using an LLM to clean up grammar etc.) will result in a substantial loss of grade and potentially an F on the assignment.

NOTE: Please be respectful of the church you choose to attend and dress and act accordingly. You are there to observe and participate (as much as you feel comfortable) in another version of Christian worship. You are not there to evangelize people to your church.

Assignment 3: Analyze This! Primary Reading Due: April 19 Worth: 30%

The student will choose one (1) of the Primary Sources located on the course page. The Student will approach the document as an historian and offer a cogent analysis. This means the student will explain the following with the support of research:

- Author of the document (1 paragraph explaining this person)
- Time the Document was composed (a couple sentences explaining the dating)
- Where was the document written (1 paragraph explaining the region)
- Issue the document was addressing (1-3 paragraphs explaining the issue)

- Intended audience of the document (1 paragraph)
- Larger issues taking place in society that were occurring at that time that influenced the document (1-3 paragraphs to offer a fairly substantial explanation)
- Importance of this document over subsequent Christian development (1-5 paragraphs offering a fairly comprehensive explanation)

This part does not need to "flow" like a normal paper. Rather, each point above should form a header with the student's answer following. **At least** 10-15 sources need to be consulted (which can include books, journal articles, book chapters, other writings from the author or other writers from the time period, reputable online sources [NO WIKIPEDIA!]) and will be included in a bibliography attached to the end of the submission.

A.I. can be used in order to answer some of the questions for the student. But that answer must be checked against reliable source material. If the student discovers an A.I. mistake, consider including that in the assignment as that will provide valuable information. Therefore, A.I. is permitted at the research gathering stage of this assignment but cannot be part of the submitted version (with the exception of including an A.I. mistake). Any A.I. detection (including using an LLM to clean up grammar etc.) will result in a substantial loss of grade and potentially an F on the assignment.

Finally, once the above questions have been answered, the student will compose an 800-word essay explaining why Christians of today should know about the chosen primary source. The student will add to her/his analysis by explaining the relevance and importance of the document to our present age. Make sure to note that the issues of the document are not the same as the issues of today, but explain the wisdom that can be received from the source that could be applied to questions of the faith present in our age.

NO A.I. is permitted for this final section. The point of this part of the assignment is for the student to demonstrate her/his ability to wrestle with the implications of historical studies for the present age. ANY A.I. usage in this section (including using an LLM to clean up grammar etc.) will result in the automatic loss of grades for this entire section.

LATE POLICY:
All assignments are to be submitted via the designated course portal. Assignments submitted to the Professor via email will **not** be counted.

1-3 Days late: ½ the Instructive comments but no deduction of grade
4-9 Days late: ¼ the Instructive comments & loss of one grade point (eg. B becomes B-)
10 or more days: No comments from instructor & loss of one grade level (eg. B becomes C) and a further 2% per day grade reduction beginning on day 10 (eg. B handed in 14 days late=D)

Exceptions to this policy:

- Immediate family or personal medical emergency with Doctor's note

- Extreme family emergency (eg. death in the family) with proper documentation
- Tyndale Accommodation Plan: Due Dates MUST be agreed upon ahead of time with Professor as per University guidelines.

These are the ONLY reasons an extension will be granted. Busyness, work schedule, sick child (unless noted by a doctor), other course requirements, personal reasons, illness not requiring hospitalization etc. are NOT satisfactory reasons for an extension.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments

"Getting to Know You" Class Forum	5%
"Social Media Campaign" Group Forum	20%
"Amazing Race!" Group Forum	10%
History…Helps? Assignment	10%
Church Visit Assignment	25%
Primary Analysis Paper	30%
TOTAL GRADE	**100%**

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Class 1 (Jan 11-17):

Course Introduction: What Is Church History? Why do it?

Readings: G 1

"Getting to Know You" Class Forum Begins

I. The Early Churches

Class 2 (Jan 18-24):

The Birth of the Church (c. 49 -150 A.D)

Readings: G 3-4, 7 & 9

Class 3 (Jan 25-31):

Imperial Faith (200-350 A.D.)

Readings: G 5-6, 8, 10-14, & 19

Final week to participate in "Getting to Know You" Class Forum

Class 4 (Feb 1-7):

Dissident Christians (300-450 A.D.)

Readings: G 15-18, 20

Social Media Campaign Group Assignment Begins

II. Late Antiquity Churches

Class 5 (Feb 8-14):
The Fall of Rome (600-800 A.D.)
Readings: Texts: G 21-24 & 27

SEM READING BREAK

Class 6 (Feb 22-28)
A Global Faith (450-900 A.D.)
Readings: G 25-26, & 28

History…Helps? Assignment Due Monday the 22nd

III. Early Medieval Churches

Class 7 (March 1-7):
Islam (600-1000A.D.)
Readings: Primary Source Timothy I & Caliph Madhi

Class 8 (March 8-14):
The Investiture Controversy (800-1090 A.D.)
Readings: G 29-30

IV. Medieval Churches

Class 9 (March 15-21):
The Crusades (1095-1400 A.D.)
Readings: G 31

Class 10 (March 22-28):
Reshaping the Christian Map (1200-1300 A.D.)
Readings: G 32-33

Church Visit Due Monday March 22

Social Media Campaign Group Assignment Due Saturday, March 27 @ Midnight

Class 11 (March 29- April 4):
Christendom (1400-1500 A.D.)
Readings: G 35-37

"Amazing Race" Group Assignment Begins

V. Proto-Reformation Church

Class 12 (April 5-11):
Something's In the Air: Early Reforms. (1450-1500 A.D.)
Readings: G 34 & 38

"Amazing Race" Group Assignment Due Saturday, April 10 @ Midnight
Analyze This! Primary Source Due April 19 @ Midnight

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A selected bibliography will be uploaded to the course page.

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the Accessibility Services at the Centre for Academic Excellence to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to "Guidelines for Interactions" on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Academic Integrity website for further details. Students must review the policies and procedures regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) outlined in Academic Calendar and consult guidance from their course instructors.

For proper citation style, consult Citation Guides for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult Writing Services.

Students should also consult the current Academic Calendar for polices and expectations on Attendance and Classroom Expectations, Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tyndale Seminary's Academic Calendar provides a definition and broad descriptions of types of Academic Dishonesty using AI.

Academic dishonesty includes the submission of work for which previous credit was given, the submission of work under one's own name that is largely the result of another person's efforts, aiding another's dishonesty, cheating on exams and giving false information for the purpose of gaining admission, credits, etc. … Academic dishonesty also includes submitting academic work which has been written, rewritten, or substantially edited by an artificial intelligence program. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 173.)

AI programs are not adequate information sources for academic writing. Students should not use AI in academic writing without explicit permission from their course instructor. Given the tendency of AI programs to give inaccurate information and even falsify citations, students are cautioned against using AI prompts to begin researching or summarizing a topic. Instructors may deduct points from [or give a failing grade to] assignments for the improper use of AI sources. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 174.)

Students *may* use AI as an enhanced search engine, provided they are extremely careful about checking its sources. That means personally verifying texts and claims *every time* by clicking through to the source link or independently searching. This also means public information sources like Wikipedia are not satisfactory sources. We recommend using sites like Google Scholar or the variety of journal and research databases available with a Tyndale student ID.

Students *may* use AI to transcribe interviews, videos, or dictations of their own ideas when preparing for assignments. But they must read through the transcripts themselves and *manually* verify accuracy, make selections to quote, or edit for concision and clarity. This use of AI is reserved only for ideas that students have created themselves. Students may not submit course lectures, videos, or other course material to AI or any other software to transcribe, synthesize, annotate, or otherwise summarize course content.

Students *may not* use AI in any aspect of the planning and writing process for class assignments, including but not limited to early planning, ideas, outlining, argumentation, grammar, syntax, or phrasing. Struggling with all this is fundamental part of human learning. This struggle is precisely what develops writing ability and is essential to developing critical thinking and communication skills. If further clarification is required, students should ask their professors, not an AI assistant.

Students *may not* use Grammarly or similar AI copyediting programs, including Copilot in Microsoft Word. Tyndale students are expected to write with sophistication in English. Use of a LLM to edit/re-write/re-phrase/alter student work will be viewed as a breach of the Tyndale AI policy. Students should also be aware that many of these programs can/will change student ideas without permission or notification and should be careful to turn off any generative AI features in any software they use for course assignments.

Special Note:
Students should carefully discern and justify any use of AI tools. Convenience, efficiency, academic pressure, lack of time or even health issues are not sufficient reasons to rely on AI. If personal or external difficulties affect your work, you should first speak with your instructor before using AI assistance. Your personal formation, theological reflection, and authentic engagement with the course remain the priority in completing assignments.

Some course professors may allow AI use for specific projects within specific limits. All Seminary syllabi (or course pages on Moodle) will contain guidelines for permitted uses of AI. When using AI for any professor-approved application in assignments, students should save all rough work and earlier versions of their assignments before editing. Students may be required to produce these versions on request. The name of the AI software used must be noted (Claude, ChatGPT, etc.) including the specific version number and model of that software, and the specific text of all prompts employed to get the results must be reported in the submitted assignment.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- Student Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity (Guide, Video, Spectrum)

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (REB). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the Extension Request Form. The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Tyndale Library supports courses with e-journals, e-books, and the mail delivery of books and circulating materials. See the Library FAQ page.

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary Grading System & Scale.