

“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	Fall, 2026
Course Title	HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I
Course Code	HIST 0561 1P
Date	From September 15, 2026 To December 8, 2026 EVERY TUESDAY
Delivery Format	IN-PERSON ONLY
Class information	The course is in-person on Tuesdays 2:15 – 5:05 PM.
Instructor	Dr. ASHOOR YOUSIF, PhD
Contact Information	Email: ayousif@tyndale.ca Tyndale Phone Number: (416) 226-6620 Ext.2228
Office Hours	Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00 PM (in-person) or at a separate time (in-personal or virtual) 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. Acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the global history of Christianity from the Apostolic Age to the Pre-Protestant Reformation.
2. Evaluate critically and reflectively the events, people, themes, and issues encountered in

the course.

3. Synthesize and relate historical insights with contemporary realities.
4. Analyze critically and comparatively primary and secondary sources.
5. Conduct independent research and communicate complex content in clear academic writing.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Gonzalez, Justo L. [*The Story of Christianity, Volume One: The Early Church to the Reformation*](#). Revised and Updated. HarperCollins: New York, 2010. **(Reading G)**

Jenkins, Philip. [*The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia - and how it died*](#). HarperOne: New York, 2008. **(Reading J)**

Online Primary Source Readings. **(Reading S)**

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

1. **In-Class Discussions and Written Posts: 500 Words each (Total 25%). Posts are due on Thursday (11:59 pm). Late submissions are not accepted.**

A set of discussion questions will be posted on the class page on classes.tyndale.ca. Students will be divided into groups in class to discuss and answer the questions. Then, every group will write ONE online post after the in-class discussions.

In these discussions, students should aim for posts that display a thorough understanding of the textbooks and primary sources relevant to each question, as well as a clear engagement with the class lectures and discussions. This engagement should include identifying areas of knowledge related to each week's themes that have challenged, changed, and/or enriched them. This is NOT a summary of the readings and/or the lectures, but a thoughtful interpretation, analysis, reflection, response, and application of themes. In the posts, each group should also engage with the views of other groups if they were shared in the collective

discussion in class. Be specific and brief in your post, but not superficial. Provide clear and proper citations (footnotes) and bibliography that use an academically acceptable documentation style for the content.

NOTE: In-class group discussions require in-person attendance to participate and receive credit. No virtual attendance and/or digital participation is acceptable without the instructor's permission.

2. Christian Tradition Research and Church Visit Reflection Paper: 2000 Words, 30%. Due on October 19 (11:59 pm).

Each student will select an "ancient" Christian Tradition, which s/he doesn't belong to, to conduct historical research about that tradition. Students should consider one of the following: (1) one of the Roman Catholic Traditions, including the Uniate or Eastern-Rite Catholic Churches (e.g. Chaldean Catholic Church), (2) one of the Eastern Orthodox Traditions (e.g. Greek Orthodox Tradition), (3) one of the Oriental Orthodox Traditions (e.g. Coptic Orthodox Tradition), or (4) one of the Church of the East Traditions.

In the research, the student will focus on understanding (1) the origin/birth and contemporary reality of the Tradition, including its chronological, geographical, cultural, and linguistic contexts; and (2) its characteristics, including key theological, liturgical, and practical themes.

Then, the student will visit a church's Sunday worship service that represents that Tradition to observe its contemporary representation. During the visit, the student will observe (1) the language and type of worship; whether the worship is ancient, classic or contemporary; (2) the types of rituals, music, and instruments of worship; (3) the nature of scriptural readings, prayers, sermons and homilies; (4) the recited Creeds, confessional statements, and liturgy; (5) the type of arts, icons and symbols used in the church; and (6) the building and sanctuary structure, characteristics and orientation.

The student will then write a paper that reflects their research and visit, summarizing their historical research findings in one section and their visit observations in the second section. In the introduction section, the student will briefly identify the Tradition and the local church visited, stating the date and time of the visit. In the written section on the research part, the paper cannot be comprehensive. It should focus on the findings that help understanding the Tradition at large and the visit's noted observations. In the observation section, ensure that this is not a personal reflection (e.g. spiritual experience) but a historian's observations of contemporary worship of the Tradition. The student should explain how the history of this Tradition is reflected in its contemporary worship. In the conclusion paragraph, the student may share (1) what they appreciate about the Tradition and the local church and (2) what challenged them, either things they disagreed with or disliked, personally. Provide clear and proper citations (footnotes) and bibliography that use an academically acceptable

documentation style for the content.

The student may include images of the church, bulletin, and literature, and a website link (if available), as appendices to the paper (if possible). The paper will be graded on the level of in-depth (1) research and (2) observation.

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 and/or invite people to your church, tradition, or beliefs or to engage in debate.

3. Critical Historical Documentary Video and Paper: 10 Minutes, 15%. Due on November 9 (11:59 pm).

Create and record a critical historical documentary (video) about a key Christian “debatable” theme (e.g. theological, ecclesiastical, missional, socio-religious or religio-political controversy) and its key involved figures (e.g. theologians, apologists, historians, missionaries, clergy, monks, poets, artists, kings, rulers, etc.) from the period under study (after 100 and before 1500 AD), which the textbooks do not treat extensively/sufficiently.

Conduct historical research about the theme and the persons to develop the video. In the research, focus on understanding (1) the theme’s historical context, including its chronology, geographical context, and cultural aspects; (2) its characteristics, including key theological, intellectual, ecclesiastical, literary, and socio-religious or religio-political aspects; (3) its historical significance, including its contribution, impact, legacy on the Church in the past; and (4) its contemporary value to today’s Church, People, or Community.

Submit a written copy of the video’s content, supporting your information and evidence with clear and proper citations (footnotes) and bibliography that use an academically acceptable documentation style.

4. Research Paper: 2000 Words, 30%. Due on December 7 (11:59 pm).

Write an argumentative historical research paper with a thesis that engages with one of the issues, themes, events, or people from the period under study (After 100 and before 1500 AD). The topic should differ from assignment #3. The paper needs to demonstrate familiarity with the specifics and details of the selected issues, themes, events, or people beyond the acquired knowledge in the course, and it should demonstrate the student’s ability to place their topic within the larger context of Christian history of the selected topic.

The paper should not simply report, summarize, or review historical materials, but demonstrate thoughtful historical analysis and reflection and embody an argument (thesis), which will be a

summary of the paper's argument or opinion on the topic, stated clearly in the introduction. The introduction should present the topic, the thesis, and the paper's outline (its main sections). The body of the paper (its largest section) should support the thesis by providing evidence, examples, and details that prove the thesis. Finally, in the conclusion, the paper should engage with the implications of the research's findings, either by noting how they help understand the historical context of the researched topic (the past) or speaking on the value of the findings on the contemporary reality of Christianity (e.g., lessons, applications, outcomes), especially to you (e.g. how this research challenged and impacted you, and how it will shape your future life and ministry).

The paper must demonstrate thoughtful and deep engagement with the topic by engaging in academic research of the topic and incorporating primary and/or secondary external academic sources in the paper, besides the provided textbooks and reading materials in this course. The paper must be transparent, reflecting the highest level of academic integrity, meaning that it will clearly and completely state what sources were consulted and used in writing the paper and how they were used and where (i.e., their information, insights, and/or arguments) in the paper through clear and proper citations (footnotes) and bibliography that use an academically acceptable documentation style.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	Value
In-Class Discussions & Posts		25%
Christian Tradition & Church Visit Paper	October 19	30%
Documentary Video & Paper	November 9	15%
Research Paper	December 7	30%
Total Grade		100%

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Date	Theme	Readings
Sept 15	Introduction to History & The World of Christ	G 1-2
Sept 22	Birth of the Church	G 3-4 S 1 (all 3 texts)
Sept 29	Church and Empire	G 5-7, 10-14 S 2

Oct 6	Dissident Christians	G 8-9, 16-20 S 4
Oct 13	Faith and Society	G 15, 21-24, 27 S 3, 5, 6, 7
Oct 20	Global Faith	G 25-26, 28 S 8
Oct 27	Reading Days: NO CLASS	
Nov 3	Islam and Christianity	J 2-3 S 9
Nov 10	Religion and Politics	G 29-30 S 11
Nov 17	Crusades	G 31 S 12
Nov 24	Reshaping the Christian Map	J 1, 4-9
Dec 1	Christendom	G 32-33 S 10, 13, 14
Dec 8	Proto-Reforms	G 34-38 S 15

ONLINE PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS

The readings below can be found as PDF files on the course web page at classes.tyndale.ca under "Readings".

Reading S1: Early Christian Fathers (Didache, St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch). *Early Christian Fathers*. Vol. 1, LLC. Ed. C.C. Richardson. Westminster, 1953.

Reading S2: St. Perpetua and Felicitas. *The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas*. In *Acts of Christian Martyrs*. Edited and Translated by Herbert Musurillo. Oxford, 1972.

Reading S3: St. Athanasius of Alexandria. *St. Athanasius: The Life of Saint Antony*. Translated by Robert T. Meyer. Paulist Press, 1978.

Reading S4: St. Ephrem of Nisibis. *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*. Translated by

Sebastian Brock. *St. Vladimir's Seminary*, 1990.

Reading S5: St. Augustine of Hippo. *Confessions*. Translated by F.J. Sheed. London, 1943.

Reading S6: St. Patrick. "Translation of St. Patrick's Works: The Confession." In *The Life and Writings of the Historical Saint Patrick*. Translated by R. P. C. Hanson. Seabury, 1983.

Reading S7: St. Benedict of Nursia. *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Tr. Boniface Verheyen, OSB.

Reading S8: The Jesus Sutras. *The Jesus Sutras: Rediscovering the Lost Scrolls of Taoist Christianity*. Ed. Martin Palmer. Wllspring, 2001.

Reading S9: Patriarch Timothy I and Caliph Mahdi. "The Debate on the Christian Faith between Timothy I and Caliph Mahdi in 781 A.D." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12. Vol 2. Translated by A. Mingana. Cambridge, 1928.

Reading S10: St. Symeon the New Theologian. "On Faith" and "Three Methods of Prayer" in *The Philokalia*, Vol. 4. Translated by G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware. Faber and Faber, 1995.

Reading S11: St. Anselm of Canterbury. "Cur Deus Homo" In *Anselm, Basic Writings*. Edited and Translated by S. N. Deane, 2020.

Reading S12: Patriarch Michael the Great. *The Chronicle of Michael the Great, Books XV-XXI*. Edited and Translated by Amir Harrak, Gorgias, 2019.

Reading S13: St. Francis of Assisi. "The Rule of 1221." *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. Edited by Marion A. Habig. Franciscan, 1991.

Reading S14: Hildegard of Bingen. "Christ's Sacrifice and the Church" In *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*. Translated by Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop. Paulist, 1990.

Reading S15: Erasmus of Rotterdam. *The Manual of Christian Knight*. Methun, 1905.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barnett, Paul. *After Jesus, Volume 1: The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Chidestre, David. *Christianity: A Global History*. New York: HarperOne, 2000.

- Dowley, Tim (ed.). *Introduction to the history of Christianity*. Minneapolis: Lion Publishing, 1990.
- Evan, G. R. *A Short History of Medieval Christianity*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Volume One: The Early Church to the Reformation*. Revised and Updated. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.
- Jenkins, Philip. *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia - and how it died*, New York: HarperOne, 2008.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Irvin, Dale T. and Scott W. Sunquist. *History of the World Christian Movement. Volume I: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. New York: Orbis Books, 2009.
- Kydd, Ronald A. N. *Finding Pieces of the Puzzle: A Fresh Look at the Christian Story*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- Madigan, Kevin. *Medieval Christianity: A New History*. New Haven: Yale Press, 2015.
- Marty, Martin. *The Christian World: A Global History*. New York: Modern Library, 2009.
- Mcculloch, Dirmid. *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*. New York: Penguin, 2011.
- Moffett, Samul Hugh. *A History of Christianity in Asia, Volume I: Beginnings to 1500*. New York: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Shawe, Ian J. *Christianity: The Biography: 2000 Years of Global History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Spickard, Paul R. and Kevin M. Cragg. *a Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994.
- Ware, Timothy. *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*. Third Ed. UK: Penguin Books, 2015.
- Wilhite, David. *Ancient African Christianity: An Introduction to a Unique Context and Tradition*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

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. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR BLENDED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 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 individual assignment.

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.

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 academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Academic Integrity and 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 this course 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](#).