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Faculty of Arts  
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies  
<http://religion.concordia.ab.ca>

**Introduction to the Christian Faith**

**REL 150B**

**Fall 2017**

**Course Description:** Christian belief and practice from its Old Testament roots, life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and the proclamation of the early church.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Co-requisites:** None

**Hours (3 - 0 - 0):** 39 Instruction hours

**Credit value:** 3 Credits

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**Instructor:**

*Name:* Frederick S. Tappenden, Ph.D.

*Office:* G302A

*Phone:* NA

*Email:* [frederick.tappenden@concordia.ab.ca](mailto:frederick.tappenden@concordia.ab.ca)

*Office Hours:* Friday, 12.00–14.00, or by appointment

**Lectures:**

*Room:* HA009

*Time:* Mondays, Wednesdays, and Firdays, 15:00–15:50

**Required Resources:**

**\*\* Only the Woodhead text is required for purchase; it is available at the Concordia University Bookstore.**

1. Linda Woodhead, *Christianity: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. **\*\* Note: you must purchase the 2014 edition. The older 2004 edition is different and will not suffice. \*\***
2. William Gruen, "The Case for Religious Studies." *Inside Higher Ed* August (2016): n.p. Available online, open-access: <http://bit.ly/2fJ8Svj>.

3. The following primary sources (accessibility is noted)
  - a. A selection of early Christian canon lists (available online at Michael D. Marlowe, “Bible Research: The Canon of Scripture,” n.p.: <http://bit.ly/2i76pMc>)
  - b. The Gospel of Luke (available in any Bible, or online: [biblia.com/books/nrsv/Lk](http://biblia.com/books/nrsv/Lk))
  - c. The Acts of the Apostles (available in any Bible, or online: [biblia.com/books/nrsv/Ac](http://biblia.com/books/nrsv/Ac))
  - d. Origen, *On First Principles*, Book IV, 11–13, 15–20, 23 (available on Moodle)
  - e. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 2.9.14; 3.1.1–3.2.2; 3.5.9; and 3.10.14–16 (available on Moodle)
  - f. The Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed (available online at <http://bit.ly/2fKsXle>)
  - g. *The Rule of St. Benedict*, prologue and chs. 4–6, 22–25, 33, 48, and 73 (available on Moodle)
  - h. Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 20–21 (available on Moodle)
  
4. The following secondary sources (accessibility is noted)
  - a. Rudolf Bultmann. “New Testament and Mythology: Part I, Demythologizing the New Testament Proclamation as Task.” Pages 1–15 in *New Testament and Mythology and other Basic Writings*. Edited by Schubert M. Ogden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. (available on Moodle; al on reserve at the Concordia Library)
  - b. Krista Tippett, Richard Mouw, and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. “Gay Marriage: Broken or Blessed? Two Evangelical Views.” *On Being Podcast* (formerly *Speaking of Faith*) August (2006): n.p. Available online at <http://bit.ly/2uKgSDj>.
  
5. Moodle (CCMS) access. Students should check their course Moodle sites on a daily basis.

### Recommended Resources

\*\* *On reserve at the Concordia Library*

1. A Christian Bible, comprised of both the **Old Testament** and **New Testament**. Both Testaments are usually bound together. They can be accessed either in print (various translations such as the NRSV, ESV, etc.) or online. Here are some print and online editions that are recommended.
  - a. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Edited by M. D. Coogan. Fully Revised 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
  - b. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books with Concordance*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge et al. Fully Revised and Updated. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006.
  - c. Online Old and New Testaments (NRSV): [biblia.com/books/nrsv](http://biblia.com/books/nrsv).
  - d. Online Old and New Testaments (ESV): [biblia.com/books/esv](http://biblia.com/books/esv).
  
2. Woodhead, Linda. *An Introduction to Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

**Course Objectives:**

In fulfillment of the course description above, at the completion of the Fall 2017 offering of REL 150, students will achieve the following objectives:

1. Students will be able to articulate both understanding and appreciation for the diversity of the Christian tradition, including knowledge of the major branches of Christian faith and the historical happenings that occasioned such diversity.
2. In keeping with the university course description (noted above), students will be able to articulate the role of the Bible in both shaping and being shaped by the Christian faith. This course will not present a/the “biblical” view of Christian faith; rather, students will gain an appreciation for the various ways that the Bible takes significance within differing Christian traditions, and the uses to which the Bible is put within those traditions.
3. Students will have read closely a modest sampling of Christian writings, and they will be able to articulate the socio-cultural, historical, and religious significance of those writings.
4. Students will be able to identify and trace, in broad strokes, major developments in the history of Christianity, including various forms of Christian theology, liturgy, piety, social practice, and world-engagement.
5. Students will have developed critical thinking skills through class discussions, group presentations, and written exams.

**Lecture Topics / Course Outline:**

*\*\* Note: All due dates will remain fixed, but lecture topics may expand or contract as necessary.*

**Sept. 6 Course Introduction**

*Topics:* Why Study Religion? Why Study the Christian Tradition? Overview of Syllabus

*Read (to be discussed in next class):* William Gruen, “The Case for Religious Studies” (online access, see above)

**Part I: Ancient Christianity (4 BCE – 451 CE)****Sept. 8, 11 Canon and Canonization**

*Topics:* Overview of the Canons of Scripture within Modern Christian Traditions; Textual Editions and the History of the New Testament; Differentiating Scripture from Canon; The Process of Canonization

*Read Sept. 8:* Explore the “Canon of Scripture” website, focusing specifically on the folder titled “Ancient Canon Lists Quoted in Full,” and the pages titled “New Testament Canon” and “Disputed Books” (online access, see above)

- Sept.  
13, 15, 18      **Jesus, the God-Man**  
*Topics:* Jesus as a figure of Early Christian Memory; The Gospels as (His)Story; Genre and History of the Gospel Traditions; The Gospels as Distinct and Differing Portraits of Jesus  
*Read:* Gospel of Luke (available in any New Testament)
- Sept.  
20, 22      **Peter and Mary, Paul and James, and the Spread of the Christian Movement**  
*Topics:* Paul and the Gentile Mission; Jewish Christianity; Peter and Paul as Adversaries or Partners; Women in Ancient Christianity  
*Read:* The Acts of the Apostles (available in any New Testament)
- Sept.  
25, 27, 29      **Adopting Jewish Scriptures as Christian Scriptures**  
*Topics:* When did Christianity part from Judaism?; Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Identity; Reading the Jewish Scriptures Christologically  
*Read:* Origen, *On First Principles*, Book IV, 11–13, 15–20, 23; and Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 2.9.14; 3.1.1–3.2.2; 3.5.9; and 3.10.14–16 (online access for both, see above)
- Oct.  
2, 4, 6      **Constantine, Councils, and Creeds**  
*Topics:* The interweaving of Church and Empire; Fourth and Fifth Century Edicts and Councils; Demarcating Christian Doctrine and Identity  
*Read:* The Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed (online access, see above); Students must read the Woodhead text by October 6 (a mere 114 pages!!)
- Oct. 9      **No Class (Thanksgiving)**
- Oct. 11      **Midterm Exam (In Class)**  
*Topics:* The Midterm will cover the textbook and all the content discussed in Part I of the course (namely, Ancient Christianity, 4 BCE – 451 CE).

## **Part II: Ways of Being in the World (Christian Theology and Practice in History)**

- Oct. 13      **Schisms and Branches: Mapping the Diversity and Spread of the Christian Tradition (451–Present)**  
*Topics:* General Overview and Discussion of the Three Major Branches of the Christian Tradition; Trends in Christian Proselytization
- Oct.  
16, 18, 20      **Conceptualising the World: Principles of Christian Theology**  
*Topics:* Revisiting the Nicene Creed; General Overview of Major Principles in Christian Theology (the Trinity, Christology, Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Eschatology)  
*Read:* Re-read the Nicene Creed
- Oct.  
23, 25, 27      **Living in the World: Liturgy and Ritual**  
*Topics:* Diverse Expressions of Baptism and the Eucharist; the Church Calendar; Prayer Books; Church Buildings and Spaces of Worship  
*Read:* Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 20–21 (online access, see above)
- Oct. 30,  
Nov. 1, 3      **Escaping the World: Monasticism and Apocalyptic Movements**  
*Topics:* This World and the World-to-Come in Christian Theology; Apocalypticism as the Mother of Christian Theology; Monastic orders and the Monastic impulse; Apocalyptic Movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
*Read:* *The Rule of St. Benedict*, prologue and chs. 4–6, 22–25, 33, 48, and 73 (online access, see above)
- Nov.  
6, 8, 10      **Losing One’s Grip on the World: Christianity and the Challenge of Modernity**  
*Topics:* From Scholasticism to Enlightenment; The Reformation Roots of the Enlightenment; Effects of the Enlightenment on Christian Faith and Practice; The Rise of Critical Biblical Scholarship; Splinters of Protestant Christianity (e.g., Liberal Protestantism, Evangelicalism, Anglicanism).  
*Read:* Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology: Part I” (on reserve at library)
- Nov.  
13, 15, 17      **No Classes (Fall Reading Week)**  
*Recommended Reading:* Re-read Woodhead (only 114 pages!)

### Part III: Christianity in the Contemporary World

- Nov. 20, 22, 24      **Christianity in the Contemporary World: Gender and Sexuality as a Case Study**  
*Topics:* In these lectures we will examine the place of Christianity within the contemporary world, and explore a variety of ways that different branches of the Christian tradition have responded to contemporary social issues. Our discussions will be oriented around issues of Gender and Sexual Minorities within the Christian Tradition.  
*Listen (Podcast):* Tippett, Mouw, and Ramey Mollenkott, "Gay Marriage: Broken or Blessed?" (online access, see above)
- Nov. 27, 29,  
Dec. 1, 4, 6      **Group Presentations: Site Visit and Critical Reflection**  
*Topics:* In small groups of 4–5, students will visit a site of Christian worship and report back on their findings to the class.  
*Due Nov. 27 – Dec. 6:* Group Presentations, to be organised by the professor
- Dec. 8      **Course Conclusion**  
*Topics:* Overview of Course Content and Major Themes; Final Exam Preparation  
*Final Exam:* 2.00–4.00 PM on 11 December 2017
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#### **Evaluation:**

Students will be graded on the following requirements:

1. **Midterm Exam (30%):** There will be one midterm examination, which will test the content of the textbook and Part I of this course (as outlined above). The midterm will be on 11 October 2017. The midterm will be handwritten and will likely consist of three sections: definitions, short answer, and one essay question (note: the essay question will be given in advance).
2. **Group Site-Visit and Presentation (30% [25% + 5%]):** As an exercise in appreciating the diversity of the Christian tradition, students will work together in groups of 4 or 5 to visit a site of contemporary Christian worship. Students are to visit this site, answer a series of questions that relate the course content to that site, and then present their findings to the class. Grading for this assignment will consist of two parts: (a) the presentation itself (25%), and (b) a self/group assessment (5%). More information will be handed out in class (including detailed presentation instructions, and a grading rubric). Groups will be determined through a sign-up sheet, which will be distributed by the professor. The professor will also provide a list of acceptable sites to visit, and will coordinate which groups attend which sites. Students are to attend their site outside of class time; group presentations will take place in class during the weeks of 27 November – 6 December 2017.

3. **Final Examination (40%):** The Final Exam will be cumulative and will cover all readings, lectures, and class discussions. Information pertaining to the final examination will be handed out in class. The date of the final examination is 11 December 2017, 2.00–4.00 PM. A supplemental examination will be available for this course.

Grade Breakdown:

Midterm	30%
Group Site-Visit and Presentation	30%
Final Examination	40%
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Total	100%

See Concordia's [Extended Description of Grade Levels](#) (below, and Section 9.3.2 of the Calendar) for further information on grading.

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**Course Policies:**

I. The following policies are in place regarding participation in the classroom:

*Electronic Devices:* Mobile computing and communications devices are permitted in class insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Use of Facebook, Messaging Apps, and other social media is prohibited.

*Disabilities:* If you have a disability and feel the instructor should be alerted, please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. We will make every effort to accommodate your needs and to help ensure successful learning. Such matters will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Concordia provides learning accommodation services for students with disabilities. Please refer to Section 8.4.1 of the Calendar for more details.

*Lecture Recording:* Recording of classes is permitted only if recording is part of an approved accommodation plan or with prior written consent of the instructor. Please refer to Section 9.2.3 of the Calendar for more details.

*Decorum:* Please refer to Section 9.2.8 of the Calendar for details regarding Educational Decorum. It is the responsibility of both students and instructors to facilitate the educational process.

*Advising:* At Concordia, Faculty Advising allows students to build a relationship with faculty members so they can plan their university education and access appropriate resources and services. To make use of faculty advising, please talk to your instructor or program coordinator for input or referral.

## II. The following policies are in place regarding assignment submission and due dates:

*Due Dates:* All assignments are due in accordance with the Course Outline above. Any extensions of these deadlines must be arranged beforehand (barring unforeseen circumstances). For convenience, I summarise all Due Dates here:

**Readings:** due weekly, according to specified dates

**Midterm:** The midterm will be held in class on 11 October 2017

**Group Presentations:** Due in the class periods between 27 November – 6 December 2017

**Final Exam:** 2.00–4.00 PM, 11 December 2017

*Submission:* All assignments can be submitted either as a hardcopy to the instructor during class periods, during office hours at the Instructor's office, or as a softcopy via the Moodle website. When submitting a hardcopy, please be sure the time, date, and signature of the receiver are noted on the submission. When submitting electronically, be sure that you receive confirmation of your submission via the Moodle system (this feature can be turned on at: *My Profile settings* → *Messaging*). Please note that, barring exceptional circumstances, appeals to technical difficulties experienced while trying to submit an assignment electronically is not a valid excuse for handing something in late.

*Late Policy:* Assignments are considered late if they are submitted after the prescribed times outlined in the *Assignment Submission and Due Dates* section above. Late assignments will be penalised one grade point per day (e.g., from B to B- for one late day; from B to C+ for two late days, etc.) up to a maximum of 3 grade points in accordance with the Concordia University Grading Scale (e.g., from B to C; or C- to F). Exceptions will only be made for unusual circumstances such as illness or by prior arrangement (or at the discretion of the instructor).

*Writing Requirements and Style:* All work should be written in good academic prose and should be double-spaced, paginated, and typewritten in 12 pt. Times New Roman font; margins set at 1-inch (sides) and 1½ (top and bottom).

*Citation Style:* Students must use a bibliographic style when citing primary and secondary literature. All sources—both primary and secondary literature—are to be cited clearly and consistently within the conventions of a major bibliographic style. Students for REL 150 are free to use the style that is most common within their major field (e.g., APA for Psychology, MLA for Literature, Chicago for History, SBL for Religion). Students who major in Religion must choose either the SBL Style (preferred) or the Chicago Manual of Style. Excellent guides to various styles can be found at the Concordia University Library website: <http://library.concordia.ab.ca/citation-guides/>.

## III. The following policies are in place regarding final exams:

*Deferred Final Examination:* Deferred final examinations may be granted to students who are unable to write final examinations because of illness, severe family difficulty, religious observance, or circumstances beyond their control. Documentation is required. Students are directed to Section 9.2.5 of the Calendar for further information. Of note is that the application for a deferred exam must normally be started within 48 hours of the missed examination.

*Final Exam Schedule and End-of-Term Travel:* Please note that students are strongly advised to delay their end-of-term travel planning until the final exam date has been set by the University. In the event that travel plans such as plane tickets conflict with a final exam date, there is a zero tolerance policy for either rescheduling or deferring the exam.

IV. The following policies are in place regarding academic integrity:

*Academic Honesty:* Academic honesty is fundamental to the academic enterprise. Students are urged to familiarize themselves with Section 9.2.9 of the Calendar and to take note that cases of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, collusion, unauthorized submission for credit of previously graded work, and misrepresentation) are serious offenses. Penalties for academic dishonesty range from a grade of zero on the work in question to expulsion.

*Appeals:* Refer to section 9.2.9 of the Calendar (Section G).

V. The following is my general course policy:

*My intent* and desire is to assist and guide you in the learning of the material of this course, as well as to stimulate your own thinking. Should you have any questions and/or concerns with the course content, readings, assignments, etc., *please do not hesitate* to contact me by email or in person during office hours. I am also happy to listen to suggestions about how we use class time, the texts, and the assignments. If you need help at any point in the course, please ask. During office hours I hold an open-door policy and look forward to hearing any questions and/or concerns that you may have.

*Your responsibility* is to come to class prepared, especially in terms of familiarity with primary sources for discussion, and to be willing to explore ideas. I ask that you be willing to take risks, venture new ideas, ask questions, critique your preconceptions, and respect the perspectives, questions, and statements of your colleagues.

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**Additional contacts and services:**

- a. Academic Administration
  - i. Dean of Faculty of Arts  
Name: Dr. Neil Querengesser, Ph.D.  
Office: HA224  
Email: [Neil.Querengesser@concordia.ab.ca](mailto:Neil.Querengesser@concordia.ab.ca)  
Telephone: +1 780 479 9364
  - ii. Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies  
Department Chair  
Name: Dr. InHee C. Berg, Ph.D.  
Office: L286  
Email: [inhee.berg@concordia.ab.ca](mailto:inhee.berg@concordia.ab.ca)  
Telephone: +1 780 479 9370
  - iii. Program Coordinator / Director as needed
  - iv. Registrar's Office (HA120, [registrar@concordia.ab.ca](mailto:registrar@concordia.ab.ca), +1 780 479 9250)
- b. Academic Support
  - i. Vice President of Student Life and Learning (Dr. Barbara van Ingen, Ph.D., [barbara.vaningen@concordia.ab.ca](mailto:barbara.vaningen@concordia.ab.ca), +1 780 479 9289, HA217)
  - ii. Student Life and Learning ([studentlife@concordia.ab.ca](mailto:studentlife@concordia.ab.ca), +1 780 479 9241, HA114)

c. Writing Centre

- i. The Writing Centre (located in the Concordia library, L266) is a free service that provides support for teaching and learning through writing for students, staff, and faculty
- Throughout the academic year, one-on-one consultations are offered (book online at: <http://studyspaces.concordia.ab.ca>).

**Concordia Calendar Table 9.3.2: Extended Description of Grade Levels**

Grade Description		Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Outstanding	Outstanding performance, demonstrating complete and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter; full mastery of concepts and skills; exceptional interpretive and analytical ability; originality in the use of concepts and skills; achievement of all major and minor objectives of the course.	A+	4.0
Excellent	Excellent performance, indicating superior grasp of subject matter and concepts; development of relevant skills to a high level; a high level of interpretive and analytical ability; originality or intellectual initiative; achievement of all major and minor objectives of the course.	A	4.0
		A-	3.7
Very Good  Good	Very good to good performance, indicating thorough understanding of subject matter and concepts; development of relevant skills to a fairly high level; good interpretive and analytical ability; evidence of intellectual initiative; achievement of major and minor objectives of the course.	B+	3.3
		B	3.0
		B-	2.7
Satisfactory	Intellectually adequate performance, of fair but not good quality, demonstrating an acceptable understanding of the subject matter and concepts; development of skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability; achievement of major objectives of the course; some minor objectives may not be achieved. The bottom of this range (C-) is the minimum satisfactory standard of achievement in a course.  In courses graded CR or NC, CR denotes that the student has attained at least the C-level.	C+	2.3
		C	2.0
		C-	1.7
Poor  Minimal Pass	Minimally acceptable performance, demonstrating some understanding of basic subject matter and concepts and partial development of relevant skills, with some evidence of interpretive or analytical ability; achievement of most but not all major objectives of the course; failure to achieve several minor objectives.  The bottom of this range (D) indicates that the student has achieved a marginal level of performance which may not be sufficient background for success at the next level in the discipline.	D+	1.3
		D	1.0
Failure	Unsatisfactory performance, demonstrating an inadequate understanding of the basic subject matter; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve major and minor objectives of the course.	F	0