History of the Church

Prof. Marco Rainini

Module 1 - *General section* (6 ECTS)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to introduce students to the critical understanding of the main issues and lines of development in the Church history. By critically reading and interpreting sources and the latest studies, students will be taught a methodology. For this purpose, major collections of sources, the most important reference works and bibliographical tools will all be presented to students; certain aspects of historiographical debate will also be taken into account. Special attention will focus on the issue of the gradual development of a Christian representation of space, time, the cosmos and history.

By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and contextualise various themes and issues of Church history within a more structured, general framework, identifying developments and recurring crisis ridges, also with regard to the development of a personal critical capacity. Students will also be equipped with the basic methods and knowledge required to undertake independent research. The course is also aimed at enabling students to adopt the most appropriate language and terminology for the discipline, and to enable them to organise a clear exposition, using suitable materials and tools.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Overview of the history of the Church from its origins to the end of the 15th century, focusing on the following topics: the origins of Christianity; a comparison with Hebrew tradition and the question of the Holy Scriptures; the Constantinian turn; monastic life from Antiquity to the Middle Ages; intellectuals and bishops from the end of the Roman Empire in the West to the rule of the Lombards; from Charlemagne to the "Investiture Conflict"; religious and intellectual movements in the 12th century; the "century of monks and friars”; the Avignon papacy; the fifteenth century: councils, conciliarism, reforms and new spirituality.

***READING LIST***

1. Lecture notes and material handed out or provided by the lecturer in the form of photocopies or e-format.

2. G.L. Potestà-G. Vian, *Storia del cristianesimo,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2014 (2nd ed. revised and amplified), only chaps. I-XV (pg. 7-321).

Suggestions for further reading will be given at lectures and posted on the lecture’s webpage on the University website.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures in class. The course will explore the topics identified in agreement with the students, and potentially include interventions by specialists on the specific areas covered. In the event that the health emergency should continue, all teaching activities and any forms of learning monitoring, both ongoing and final, will also be provided remotely through our University's Blackboard platform, the Microsoft Teams platform and any other tools envisaged and communicated at the beginning of the course, so as to ensure the full achievement of the formative objectives set out in the study plans and, at the same time, the safety of our students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral examinations: one or more questions on the indicated books; two or more questions on the topics developed during lectures, one of which is generally based on a text or image among those distributed. Students are entitled to choose to write a paper on a subject chosen with the lecturer that will count towards their examination mark.

The final exam will assess students in terms of their specific knowledge of the material presented on the course; their ability to contextualise themes, recognise the development of processes throughout the centuries and to link them, in various ways, to other issues, including those covered by other courses. They will also be assessed on their ability to structure a clear and coherent discourse and their use of specific terminology and language of the discipline.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course is introductory in nature; nevertheless, students should know the main developments in Western history between the first and 15th century, as generally presented in textbooks. Any gaps in their knowledge will be verified in lectures and remedied with tailored interventions

Students who are unable to attend lectures regularly are advised to clarify the situation in good time and arrange an alternative study syllabus with the lecturer individually.

In the event that the health emergency should continue, both teaching activities and any forms of learning monitoring, both in progress and final, will be provided also remotely through our University's Blackboard platform, the Microsoft Teams platform and any other tools envisaged and notified at the beginning of the course, so as to ensure the full achievement of the formative objectives set out in the study plans and, at the same time, the safety of our students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.

Module 2: *Single-subject part (6 ECTS)*

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

By the end of the course, students will be able to recognise the various themes and problems covered, contextualising them in the more general development of the history of the Church. In particular, the aim is to develop the critical skills they need to make links - often poorly emphasised - between intellectual and social history and institutions.

Moreover, students will have enhanced their knowledge and ability to use the tools for studying the discipline, building on their learning from the general course, based on collections of sources, bibliographies, reference and bibliographic tools and basic digital resources. Through the particular case study, students will have developed awareness of how to critically interpret documents and historiography, and acquired knowledge of the technical tools for developing an individual research project.

***COURSE CONTENT***

*What time is the end of the world? Expectations, narratives, characters and calculation of the end of time in the Middle Ages.*

A die-hard cliché sees the period immediately preceding the year 1000 as the period of increased expectation for the end of time; the subsequent economic, social, and religious “rebirth” would then be the result of awakening from the nightmare of the end. Historiography has long shown that apocalyptic tension, although always high in the medieval millennium (and well beyond), is in fact focused on other dates and events, and certainly seems to peak between the 12th and early 14th centuries. The expectation of the resurrection of bodies, of the Last Judgment and of the New Heavens and New Earth is a fundamental element of Christian doctrine. The limited information transmitted by the Holy Scriptures was enriched in the centuries of the Middle Ages by narratives and predictions, in which stories and characters are described. First of all, the terrible figure that will appear on the horizon of the time of the end: the “Antichrist”; then the last emperos and popes, from time to time servants of the eschatological Enemy or his opponents. The role of the Jews in the final drama also changes according to the different readings. No less important is speculation about the timing of the end of the world, based on the definition of various periods and calculations which are sometimes extremely complex. All this is reinterpreted at various points, especially in times of crises and dramatic events, but also during struggles between various political and ecclesiastical figures who exchange accusations of representing the forces of the impending enemy. The course aims to provide guidance for the “breviary of the end of time” that developed in these centuries, and to consider some significant cases in which it has been used in contexts of crisis and division (e.g. the Crusades, and the struggle between the *sacerdotium* and *imperium* between the 11th and the 13th century).

***READING LIST***

Lecture notes and materials distributed or made available by the lecturer as photocopies and in electronic form. Any other reference titles will be indicated during lectures and on the personal page of the lecturer on the University website.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures. The course envisages the in-depth study of topics chosen in accordance with the students and potential talks from visiting specialists on specific topics.

In the event that the health emergency should continue, both teaching activities and any forms of learning monitoring, both in progress and final, will be provided also remotely through our University's Blackboard platform, the Microsoft Teams platform and any other tools envisaged and notified at the beginning of the course, so as to ensure the full achievement of the formative objectives set out in the study plans and, at the same time, the safety of our students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral exams: three or more questions on the topics covered in class, one of which usually covers a text or image distributed by the lecturer.

Students may choose to undertake a written exercise, on a topic agreed with the lecturer, which will be considered as part of the exam.

The final exam will assess students in terms of their specific knowledge of the material presented on the course; their ability to contextualise themes, recognise the development of processes and to link them, in various ways, to other issues, including those covered by other courses. They will also be assessed on their ability to structure a clear and coherent discourse and their use of specific terminology and language of the discipline.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students are expected to know the key developments in the medieval West between the 10th and 13th century, as presented in the History of the Church course (module 1). In any case, to rectify potential gaps in students’ knowledge, specific interventions can be agreed and arranged.

It is appropriate for students who cannot attend regular classes to clarify the situation in time and personally agree a substitute syllabus with the lecturer.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.