Course Description:

The European world experienced seismic changes in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries. The year 1492 witnessed the entrance of an entire continent into the consciousness of European people. Only a few years later, a German friar named Martin Luther mounted a reform campaign that permanently changed Europe’s political, religious, and social landscape. For many Europeans, the Reformation raised fundamental questions about religious belief and practice. The simultaneous discovery of a new world and of a population with no knowledge of the Christian God opened the door for an opportunity to build a new, pristine Church, better than the one in Europe. While the concept of a religious mission was by no means a new one, the sixteenth century witnessed a wave of missionary zeal, directed not only to the Americas but also to the Near East, Africa, and Asia. This course takes a selection – by no means exhaustive – of readings related to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, each of which illuminates our understanding of the European effort to bring Christianity to all corners of the world. Because we examine several parts of the world from a mostly European perspective, I hope that students will use this class as a complement to others in Latin American, African, or Asian history.

In the twenty-first century, the idea of a religious mission is a foreign concept to many people. Contemporary values like the equality of religions make it a difficult task to enter into the mindset of individuals who viewed their faith as the single path to salvation and believed that their God-given task lay in preaching to others. Their efforts to supplant local religions clash with contemporary multiculturalism. In reading the texts they left behind, can we set our own values aside and understand theirs?

Required Texts Available in Bookstore:


*Forgotten Franciscans: Writings from an Inquisitional Theorist, a Heretic, and an Inquisitional Deputy*, ed. Martin Nesvig (University Park: Penn State Press, 2011).

**Required Texts Available Online (Source in Parentheses):**

*The Jesuit relations*  
([http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/](http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/))

*The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*  
([http://books.google.com/books/about/The_life_and_letters_of_St_Francis_Xavier.html?id=gmsBAAAAQAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/The_life_and_letters_of_St_Francis_Xavier.html?id=gmsBAAAAQAAJ))

Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*.  
([http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/20321/pg20321.html](http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/20321/pg20321.html))

Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, *Propagation of the Gospel in the east: being an account of the success of the Danish missionaries, sent to the East-Indies, for the conversion of the heathen in Malabar*.  
([http://books.google.co.in/books?id=C-VbAAAQAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s](http://books.google.co.in/books?id=C-VbAAAQAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s))

- All required readings not listed above but listed in the schedule of readings are available on the course website
- Many (but not yet all) of the books used for the class are also available on reserve in the library

**Optional Reference Works:**


- All optional reference works listed above (with one exception – Forster) are available in the library if you have trouble consulting them, please let me know
- Should you wish to consult the Forster volumes, let me know, and I can place a request at the library
**Prerequisite:**

Because this course requires a research paper of moderate length, I recommend that students take an introductory history course prior to this one. However, particularly diligent students may enroll on a case-by-case basis.

**Grading and Requirements:**
The instructor will evaluate students’ performance based upon the following factors:

- **Attendance and Active Participation** constitute 20% of the student’s grade.
  - Attendance alone does not produce a strong grade; students are expected to attend class and participate actively; in addition to contributing in class, students can also participate through e-mail consultations and attending office hours.
  - Unexcused absences will detract from a student’s grade, as will late arrivals to class.
  - Students who demonstrate the appropriate documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter) may bring laptop computers or other necessary devices to class; otherwise, no laptop computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices are allowed in class; students will bring hard copies of the required readings to class.

- **Two Response Essays (600-750 words)** constitute 30% of the student’s grade (15% each).
  - Essays address the assigned reading for a given class. Students should spend approximately one page crafting a concise summary of one of the readings. In that space, the student should explain what s/he considers the main point or purpose of the text and what elements of the text contribute to it. The second page can address one of a number of things: 1) how the given reading offers a similar or different perspective on a theme that has arisen in a previous class, 2) how the given reading relates to the other reading for the same meeting, and/or 3) what was surprising about the given reading.
  - Due to the instructor before the class in which the given reading is assigned (either via e-mail or hard copy in person); students can choose to respond to the readings for any meeting in the semester; given the flexibility of this assignment, there will be no extensions; in order to avoid leaving these papers for the semester’s end, students will complete at least one paper before the fall break and one before Thanksgiving break; students may, of course, write both papers as early as they like.
  - Students may and are encouraged to seek the assistance of the instructor; they may submit one essay draft to the instructor (at least 72 hours before the deadline); the instructor will require many students (possibly all) to rewrite their papers and resubmit them; should the re-written essay receive a higher grade, it will replace the original grade.

- **One Research Prospectus** constitutes 10% of the student’s grade
  - The two-page prospectus explains the primary source(s) to be used in the research project; the student will have identified the questions that arise from the
source(s) and what arguments s/he anticipates making; students will also include a bibliography of secondary sources to be consulted
  o Due to the instructor before class Oct. 15; students may and are encouraged to submit a prospectus at an earlier date

- **One Draft of the Research Paper** constitutes 10% of the student’s grade
  o Half of the class will submit a draft by Oct. 29 and will receive feedback from the instructor and classmates during class on Nov. 5; the other half will submit a draft by Nov. 5 and will receive feedback from the instructor and classmates during class on Nov. 12

- **One Research Paper (c. 6,000-8,000 words)** constitutes 30% of the student’s grade
  o Research papers ask a specific question of one primary source or collection of primary sources; in consultation with the instructor, students may choose to examine in depth one of the primary sources assigned for a class meeting or they may select another primary source
    ▪ Extra credit: If the majority of the primary sources in a student’s paper are in a foreign language, the student will receive an extra 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., a B+ paper will be recorded as an A-).
  o Students will meet with the instructor over the course of the semester to develop their projects; prior to Oct. 1, each student must meet with the instructor to discuss her/his project
  o Students may and are encouraged to seek the assistance of the instructor beyond the one required meeting; in addition to the required draft, they may also submit another draft to the instructor (at least one week before the deadline)

**Schedule of Classes:**

Reading selections average 150 pages per week for much of the semester. They will be reduced in the final weeks, as students complete research papers. I expect that everyone will continue to come to class prepared to participate in discussion. The class meetings will rotate between lectures and discussions. In most weeks, we will have a lecture (offering an introduction to the history and scholarship related to a given area of Christian evangelization) and a discussion (focusing on the primary source listed below). If students wish to have additional background, I encourage them to begin by consulting the preliminary list of reference works listed above.

Sept. 10: Introduction & Missions before 1500

  - Ramon Llull, Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men (BB)

Sept. 17: Reformation Europe

  - More, Utopia (BB)
  - Loyola, Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (*Jesuit Writings*)
- Meet with instructor to discuss possible paper topics

Sept. 24: Dominicans and the Spanish Presence in the Americas

- Las Casas, A Short Account (BB)
- Vitoria, On the Evangelization of Unbelievers (BB)
- Meet with instructor to discuss possible paper topics

Oct. 1: Franciscans in Mexico

- Nesvig, Forgotten Franciscans
- Begin to work on research prospectus

Oct. 8: Session with Ms. Jennifer Starkey at Mudd Library

- Come to class with concrete ideas for your paper
- Continue to work on research prospectus

Oct. 15: Jesuits in Japan

- Xavier, Letters (Jesuit Writings)
- Submit research prospectus

Oct. 22-26: Fall Break

Oct. 29: China

- Ricci, True meaning of the Lord of heaven (Jesuit Writings)
- First group submits drafts

Nov. 5: Peru

- Discussion of drafts
- Second group submits drafts
- Hyland, Gods of the Andes

Nov. 12: Africans in the Americas

- Discussion of drafts
- Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*

Nov. 19: French Canada
- Selection from *Jesuit Relations*

Nov. 26: Lutherans in India
- Ziegenbalg, *Propagation of the Gospel in the East*

Dec. 3: Presbyterians from Oberlin
- Special assignment

Dec. 10: **Submission of final papers**