

Independent Study

HIST 4399-061 – Fall 2026

3 Credit Hours

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Office Hours:

Tuesdays, 11:00-1:00

Wednesdays, 11:00-1:00

Or by appointment

Description

Independent study in specific areas of history not covered by organized undergraduate courses. A maximum of six credit hours for independent study courses may be applied toward an undergraduate degree.

Objectives

This class explores the Global History of Christian Architecture to position Church architecture and its role in World History the Medieval Era to the Enlightenment in Europe and Latin America. Through visual analysis, secondary scholarship, and other sources, this course will meet weekly to examine, analyze, and discuss the evolution and transmission of political and cultural messages through architecture while also exploring the transformation of architectural styles as cultural expressions. You will demonstrate your learning through three differing forms of analytical approaches: weekly discussions (25%); professional reviews of scholarship (25%); and a final paper (50%). Through these assignments, you will:

- develop a familiarity with the basic history of Christianity in Europe in the Medieval Era;
- identify, describe, and differentiate key components of Christian architecture and culture in the period and locations covered;
- identify and analyze the ways architecture has served to project cultural and political messages;
- identify and analyze the ways in which politics and culture have shaped religion and its architecture;
- contextualize forms of architecture and their religious messaging and implications in a variety of settings temporally and spatially; and
- recognize, apply, examine, and assess the types of conceptual frameworks, narrative methods, and theoretical tools available to historians of religion and apply them to your own understanding of historical analysis and of religion.

Required Readings

There are no books required for purchase for this course. The student and the professor will collaborate on a list of readings available appropriate to the subject matter on a weekly basis.

Course Requirements:

I. Attendance and Participation (25%) – We will meet regularly to trace the general history of Christianity and its art and architecture, provide narrative details and scholarly approaches to selected case studies, and discuss the readings. Given the breadth of knowledge covered, attendance is required; in the event something occurs that prevents you from meeting, we will

work to reschedule promptly so as to not fall behind. Attendance and Participation are worth **25% of your final grade.**

II. Written assignments (75%) – Given our heavy reliance on secondary scholarship alongside primary sources (largely in the form of photographs, floor plans, and other visual culture), you will be responsible for writing a short (800-word) professional style book review of the readings we identify for the course. These reviews will help you refine your ability to synthesize and analyze original scholarship. These reviews will collectively be worth 25% of your final grade.

Additionally, you will write a longer (3500-4000 word) research paper that provides your own analysis of, comparison of, and narrative of the transformations in the Church and Christian architecture in Europe and Latin America and their broader importance as studied throughout the semester. This final paper will be worth 50% of your final grade.

Writing Assignment Deadlines: Life happens. If illness, extenuating circumstances or special learning needs prevent submission of written work on time, please speak to me in advance of the due date. Unexcused late submissions will result in a deduction of one letter grade (10%) per day late. Papers more than one week late will receive an **automatic zero (0) for the assignment** and will not be graded.

Grades

Based on the assignments outlined above, students' grades will be determined on the traditional grading scale (A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: 0-59%) and will break down as follows:

Attendance and Participation	25%
Weekly written reflections/analyses	25%
3500-4000 word research paper	50%
TOTAL	100%

Academic Integrity

In line with university policies and procedures, **any and all cases of plagiarism or collusion will result in an automatic 0 (zero) for the assignment.** Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit. Collusion includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. For the full description of policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty at UT Tyler, see <https://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8-student-conduct-discipline-final.pdf>.

Course Policies on Artificial Intelligence

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

While AI has utility in some types of work, for the purposes of the types of analytical work we will be engaging in this Independent Study, **AI is not permitted in this course at all.** I expect all work you submit for this course to be your own. The purpose of these assignments is to provide your own original analysis while engaging with the process of producing knowledge through your own analysis. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in engaging with the human past and in developing skills that machines cannot replicate. For this course, I expressly forbid using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values and will result in an automatic 0 (zero) for the assignment with no chance for resubmission and with referral to Student Affairs for academic dishonesty.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (August 24-30) – Introduction

Week 2 (August 31-September 6) – Medieval Christianity in Europe
Book Review 1 due

Week 3 (September 7-13) – Medieval Christianity in Europe

Week 4 (September 14-20) – Medieval Christianity in Europe
Book Review 2 due

Week 5 (September 21-27) – Medieval Christianity in Europe

Week 6 (September 28-October 4) – Christianity in Reformation Europe
Book Review 3 due

Week 7 (October 5-11) – Christianity in Reformation Europe

Week 8 (October 12-18) – Christianity and the Colonization of Latin America

Book Review 4 due

Week 9 (October 19-25) – Christianity and the Colonization of Latin America

Week 10 (October 26-November 1) – Christianity and Colonial Latin America
Book Review 5 due

Week 11 (November 2-November 8) – Christianity and Colonial Latin America

Week 12 (November 9-15) – Christianity and Colonial Latin America
Book Review 6 due

Week 13 (November 16-22) – Christianity and Colonial Latin America

Week 14 (November 23-29) – Thanksgiving Break – No Class

Week 15 (November 30-December 6) – Christianity and Colonial Latin America

Finals Week (December 7-11) – Final Paper Due