

HSTH 332 – CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY

Fall Quarter, 2006; MWF, 8:00-8:50am (A), 9:00-9:50am (B); Room 14?W

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The history of the Christian Reformed Church in the United States and Canada, with a preliminary review of the developments in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands from the Reformation through the Dutch Secession of 1834.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce major developments, issues, movements, and persons in the history of the CRC.
2. To develop a narrative framework for and interpretation of the data of CRC history.
3. To help instill or nurture a sense of denominational identity.
4. To cultivate an appreciation of the importance of CRC history for CRC ministry.

TEXTBOOKS

1. James C. Schaap, *Our Family Album: The Unfinished Story of the CRC* (CRC Pubs., 1998).
2. Scott Hoezee and Christopher Meehan, *Flourishing in the Land: A Hundred-Year History of Christian Reformed Missions in North America* (Eerdmans, 1996)—free copy available!
3. Tymen E. Hofman, *The Canadian Story of the CRC: Its First Century* (Guardian, 2004).
4. “Readings in CRC History” (photocopied reprints).
5. *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (CRC Pubs., 1988).
6. *Our World Belongs to God: Study Version* (CRC Pubs., 1987).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Textbook readings (see p. 2 of the syllabus for assignments).
2. Reading and class discussion of additional materials (see p. 3 of the syllabus for additional readings and the discussion questions).
3. Two class “field trips.” (For Sunday visit to Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation, go to www.hnrc.org, click on “Click here for directions” at the bottom right of the page, then click on the map for a more detailed map. Ch. services at 9:15 a.m., 2:15 p.m., and 6:00 p.m.)
4. Two papers (2000 words each, double-spaced, 12-pt. font, word count & mailbox number on front) responding to two of the five sets of discussion questions on the additional readings. One of these papers must be on either 1-A or 1-B; the second must be on either 2-A, 2-B, or 2-C. **Papers are due at class time** on the day of the discussion; **no late papers accepted.** (Note: an **alternative** to the two papers—one research paper on any student-chosen, professor-approved topic in CRC history; 3000 words, word count & mailbox number on front, thesis statement & outline on p. 1; bibliography at back; **due no later than class time Oct. 30.**)
5. A final exam.
6. Workload: Class time (24 hrs.) + Field Trips (3 hrs.) + Final Exam (12 hrs.) + Reading (32 hrs.) + Papers (18 hrs.) = 89 hrs. (out of 93 hrs. maximum allowed).
7. Final course grade = Papers 1 & 2 together OR the Research Paper alone (40%) + Class Participation (10%) + Course Reading (15%) + Final Exam (30%).

8. Calvin Theological Seminary will make reasonable academic accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the VPAA if they have a documented disability. They will be directed to June DeBoer at Student Academic Services at Calvin College who, in turn, will provide the seminary with recommendations. Students with disabilities should meet with their instructors during the first two weeks of class to discuss academic accommodations.

1 CLASS SCHEDULE

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| Sept. | 6 | Introduction to the course |
| | 8 | Introduction to Heritage Hall and online resources: Dr. Richard Harms |
| | 10 | <u>Sunday (!) "Field Trip"</u> : Visit to NRC service—or September 17 or 24 |
| | 11 | Introduction to CRC History: Importance & Overview (S, 10-23) |
| | 13 | The Reformation in the Netherlands (S, 44-48) |
| | 15 | Discussion/Paper 1-A : The Belgic Confession (see syllabus, p. 3) |
| | 18 | Discussion/Paper 1-B : The Canons of Dort (see syllabus, p. 3) |
| | 20 | The Arminian Controversy and the Synod of Dort (S, 48-55) |
| | 22 | Antecedents to the Afscheiding, 1619-1834 (S, 55-86) |
| | 25 | The Afscheiding, 1834; discussion of church service (S, 86-104) |
| | 27 | Immigration and Union with the RCA, 1850 (S, 106-143) |
| | 29 | OFF (b/c of visit to the NRC service on a previous Sunday) |
| Oct. | 2 | The Founding of the CRC, 1857 (S, 144-63) |
| | 4 | Struggle and Growth, 1857-1890 (S, 164-99) |
| | 6 | Americanization, 1890-1918: Dr. Henry Zwaanstra (S, 199-233) |
| | 9 | OFF (Canadian Thanksgiving) |
| | 11 | OFF (b/c of upcoming field trip to "De Kolonie") |
| | 13 | Discussion/Paper 2-A : First Mission Efforts (see p. 3)
+ <u>Afternoon Field Trip</u> : Bus Tour of "De Kolonie" |
| | 16 | The Turbulent Twenties (S, 234-67) |
| | 18 | The 1930s and 40s: Dr. James De Jong (S, 268-307) |
| | 20 | Discussion/Paper 2-B : Post-WWII: The Growth of the Canadian CRC (see p. 3) |
| | 23 | Post-WWII: Theology, Culture, & the 3 Minds (H/M, 147-67; S, 322-56) |
| | 25 | Post-WWII: Contemporary Testimony (<i>Our World Belongs to God: Study Vers.</i>) |
| | 27 | OFF (b/c of recent visit to "De Kolonie") (S, 358-82) |
| | 30 | Discussion/Paper 2-C : Post-WWII: CRC Ecumenism (see p. 3) |
| Nov. | 1 | Post-WWII: CRC Ecumenism (Hofman, 139-75) |
| | 3 | Future of CRC: Rev. Jerry Dykstra (S, 392-414) |
| | 6 | Video: <i>Our Family Album</i> , parts. 2 & 3 (H/M, 113-41, 168-84) |
| | 8 | Wrap-Up: exam preview, questions on course notes |

DISCUSSION/PAPER READINGS & QUESTIONS

1-A. **Read:** The Belgic Confession (*ECRC*, 78-120).

Questions:

- (1) Where does the text of the BC give evidence of its historical context, i.e., the Calvinist Reformation in the Netherlands during the time of Spanish Catholic rule?
- (2) What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the BC?
- (3) Some in the CRC have called for the replacement of the BC with a newer Reformed confession. How well does/can the BC function in the life of the CRC today?

1-B. **Read:** The Canons of Dort (*ECRC*, 122-45).

Questions:

- (1) How does the CD compare with the Belgic Confession on such things as time and place of origin, authorship, political and religious context, purposes, and content?
- (2) What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the CD?
- (3) Some in the CRC have called for the replacement of the CD with a newer Reformed confession. How well does/can the CD function in the life of the CRC today?

2-A. **Read:** H/M, *Flourishing in the Land: A 100-Year History of CR Missions in NA*, 1-66.

Questions:

- (1) What similarities and differences do you find in the two histories of CRC evangelistic efforts among the Navajos/Zunis and the American Jews?
- (2) What do these early mission efforts tell us about the nature, the strengths, and the weaknesses of the CRC at that time in history (and perhaps still today)?

2-B. **Read:** Tymen E. Hofman, *The Canadian Story of the CRC: Its First Century*, pp. 31-79, 95-116; Schaap, 308-22.

Questions:

- (1) What similarities and differences do you notice between the immigration and settlement of the Dutch Reformed in the USA (1847ff.) and in Canada (1947ff.)?
- (2) According to Hofman and Schaap, what impact has the Canadian branch of the CRC had on the denomination? How noticeable is this impact still today?
- (3) What do you think of the desire of some (especially some Canadians) that the CRC be divided into regional synods or even two denominations along national lines?

2-C. **Read:** *Acts of Synod 1944*, pp. 339-61; "Ecumenical Charter of the CRC."

Questions:

- (1) What similarities and differences do you find between the CRC's approaches to ecumenism in 1944 and 2006?
- (2) What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the latest version of the ecumenical charter? Should the CRC's ecumenical guidelines be changed in any way?
- (3) How do you see yourself functioning ecumenically in your future ministry?

COURSE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Importance of the Subject
- B. Overview of CRC History

II. BACKGROUND IN THE NETHERLANDS

- A. The Reformation in the Netherlands
- B. The Arminian Controversy and the Synod of Dort
- C. Antecedents to the Afscheiding (1619-1834)
- D. The Afscheiding (1834)

III. NORTH AMERICA

- A. Immigration and Union with the RCA (1850)
- B. The Founding of the CRC (1857)
- C. Struggle and Growth (1857-1890)
- D. Americanization (1890-1918)
- E. First Mission Efforts (1890s ff.)
- F. The Turbulent Twenties
- G. The 1930s and 40s
- H. Post-World War II
 - 1. Growth of the Canadian CRC
 - 2. Theology, Culture, and the “Three Minds”
 - 3. The Contemporary Testimony
 - 4. CRC Ecumenism
- J. Future of the CRC