The position of the Papacy came under attack in the 15th century following the double papal election of 1378. Europe was uncertain who was the true Pope and a long schism followed. When Europeans became aware that there were no immediate prospects of reuniting the church there were persistence demands to recover unity, but how to do so was not obvious. As the schism deepened desire also arose for a reform of the whole church, in head and members. The schism was healed, the church reunited and reforms begun through the theological and political work of the Councils of Constance (1414-18) and Basel (1431-1449) and was confirmed at Florence (1438). Reform required more than correction of old abuses, however, since conditions of church and society had changed. Nation states were being formed, there were new developments in banking, the use of credit and money. The relations between the Papacy and General Councils had generated a notion of collegial government. Ecclesiastics and civil leaders had to listen carefully to find formulae that would draw the factions of the church together and at the same time would be acceptable to the piety and social currents of the 15th century. This course will cover ecclesiastical renewal, collegiality, the reform of the church in head and members and the currents developed at Constance, Basle and Florence which found echoes to Vatican I & II.

Method:
During the first weeks a lecture method will be used to set the scene. After the week 3 or 4 the seminar method will be employed and students will read and discuss the theories of governance and church reform developed at Constance, Basel and later Florence. After Reading Week the class will focus on the various notions of shared governance. The seminar will conclude with an assessment of the influence of these medieval Councils had on Vatican I and on Vatican II.

Expectations
Students will take an active part in the discussions, paying special attention the issues of church polity at Constance, Basel and Vatican II (20%) Students will review a book and make a short presentation of their review at one of the sessions (20%) An overview of the proposal for the final paper will be discussed in class and a final paper (20-25 pgs.) with proper bibliography (60%).
Bibliography
HS 5131


Oakley, F., Council Over Pope, Herder and Herder, 1969, esp.


Double starred books* are obviously too large to be read for this course, they are texts to be consulted from time to time.

Requirements

Reading

1. Each week there will be a reading assigned which should be read before class.
   A student will be asked to write a short reflection paper (3-4 pgs max) on the text to be read in class to facilitate discussion. (10%)
2. The review of a book (the book approved beforehand) 20% of final grade

3. A final paper on an approved topic that will be discussed in class 70% of grade.

**Written Work**

1. Short reflection paper on assigned reading to be read in class. (10%)

2. The book Review 6-8 pages (20%)

3. A Final Paper 20 pages. A written proposal for the final paper will be presented in class 4-6 weeks before the end of term for discussion, criticism and support. (70%)

**Purpose, Outcomes and Grading rubrics for the course.**

**Course Goals**

The goal of this course is to enable students to examine the work of an Ecumenical Council and to read selected conciliar documents. The students will be expected to know the reasons for calling Councils, membership (both traditional and non-traditional), voting procedures and publication of results. Students will learn of successes and failures of Constance, Basel and Florence in the light of the needs of the Christian community at the time. They will also see the importance and significance of them for Vatican I & Vatican II.

1. To achieve an understanding of political and ecclesiastical problems using their biweekly papers and the book review as evidence of an **intellectual integration** of the material

2. Promote a realization by students that the Christian community dealt with problems (schism and unity) that are still with us and so help the students acquire an **intellectual humility** as they look into the past.

3. The weekly papers, the book review and the final paper will encourage students to look beyond reporting from particular text books but to see the success and failures of significant thinkers and develop a sense of **self-direction**.

4. No paper should be written by a student entirely on their own. The discussion of papers at the beginning of class and particularly the discussion of the proposal for their final paper in the presence of friendly classmates is designed to foster a sense of **intellectual collaboration**.
5. The three medieval councils and the later Vatican Councils all faced major challenges about collegiality in their own day. Students will be encouraged to find some answers to the prophetic challenge of finding church unity in our time.

Course outcomes

1. The ability to read conciliar texts with a critical understanding of what they meant at the time what it might mean for us now.

2. To communicate the fruits of their reading with scholarly writing.

3. The ability to see a medieval text as offering solutions, or a least values for contemporary ecclesiastical problems.

4. To examine the relation of ideas, like collegiality, subsidiarity to contemporary ecclesiastical concerns.

5. To remind students that the Eastern Churches can have much to say about the non-Christian religions of the Eastern Mediterranean world.

Grading Rubrics

“A” Shows ability to read council texts, to know about the “committee work” that went into their construction. To have an understanding of the history of Constance, Basel and Florence and an appreciation of Vatican II. To follow the development of a theological theme (e.g., collegiality, subsidiarity) from Council to Council. To be aware of how Councils influence one another. To show some evidence of independent research, for example, into one of the figures at a council, or a theological text or tract that became important. To use some secondary literature.

Faithfulness to class discussion and the biweekly papers. The ability to write a clear and concise final paper on the topic chosen and to prepare a proper bibliography.

“A-“ Shows ability to read a council text. To know how such texts were formed. To have an understanding of the history of Constance, Basel and Florence and Vatican II. To be aware of how one Council could influence another. To be aware of some secondary literature and recognize the contemporary political problems.

Faithfulness to class discussion and biweekly papers. The ability to write a clear and concise final paper on the topic chosen and to prepare a proper bibliography.

“B+” Lack of clarity about the use and meaning of important council texts. A few gaps in an understanding of the history of the period. To recognize that while one Council did influence others, a general failure to see the real connections. To overlook secondary literature
Lack of faithfulness to class discussion and biweekly papers. The final paper lacking a clear statement of the problem chosen for discussion. Few clear conclusions to the paper.

“B”  Lacking of understanding of the council texts we have been reading. Notable gaps and mistakes about the whole 15th century. Too much discussion in terms of present day concerns with no corresponding awareness of the medieval milieu or else, a narrow medieval discussion and with no awareness of present day conditions.

Lack of faithfulness to class discussion and biweekly papers. The final paper not on the topic we had agreed on. A paper that was largely journalism, or an exchange of unsupported opinions without an awareness of the issues involved.

A “B” in the first semester indicates the student shows some promise, but needs to see his/her advisor for basic instructions about what is expected.

“C”  You will get three credits for this course on your transcript, but the work is below graduate level. It fails to meet the standards set above for A and B.

Plagiarism

This is taking credit for the work of another without giving credit to your source. Sometimes this is unintentional, but you will have to prove that, you will be assumed to be guilty. Plagiarism includes, paraphrasing texts, lifting ideas from another without citing where you got them. The academic penalties for plagiarism are severe. An F, a O for the grade is not uncommon.

Remember if you quote the full name of the author and the title of the work you are not committing plagiarism. Your paper may have a long string of quotes and little more, but at the end all you can be accused of is not being very original.