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Course title:	1517: Martin Luther and the Reformation
Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	72 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	6

Course description

In light of its 500th commemoration in 2017, this course explores the Protestant Reformation in Germany that was initialized by the Augustinian monk Martin Luther and its legacy. The course's main focus lies on the intellectual and religious dynamics during the era of Martin Luther and on the changes in the fields of religion, politics, economics, science, and art as a demonstrable consequence of the Reformation and its aftermath. We also discuss ambivalent aspects associated with the Reformation and its legacy, ranging from its political abuse to Luther's stance on Jews.

The course begins with a historical, theological, and literary overview of the 16th century and an exploration of the roots of Reformation ideas in England and Bohemia. Luther's biography and main theses are presented as well as the connections between the Humanist movement, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. Based on Martin Luther's writings and thoughts, the course then explores several aspects of Reformation ideas, exposing how historical transformation of society was wrought or ignited by the Reformation. Each of these sessions gives an overview of Reformation-related literature, explores the historical setting, and discusses the processes of transformation in society. Two excursions help to visualize the main issues of the course: The exhibition "Luther Effect" deals with main aspects of the Reformation and its impact on early modern societies; the trip to the city of Wittenberg offers the possibility to gain an insight into this important place of German Reformation history.

At the end of the course, participants will know the basics of Reformation history in Germany and have gained a sufficient range of knowledge to be able to explore and discuss the societal processes that began with the Reformation era and (perhaps) still shape our age.

Student profile

This course is open to students from all disciplines and levels of study.

Prerequisites

None.

Grading

Participation: 30 %
Short reports: 40 %
Presentation: 30 %

Literature

A course reader will be provided.

Course schedule

Date	Program
Tuesday, June 6, 2017	<p>Foundations I: Historical facts of the Reformation</p> <p><i>Overview of the epoch of the Reformation in the 16th century. Exploration of its historical roots in England and Bohemia as well as its political/ theological causes, e.g. in the papacy of the Renaissance and the indulgence controversy. Examination of the Catholic reaction in the so-called Counter-Reformation until the beginning of the French revolution.</i></p>
Friday, June 9, 2017	<p>Foundations II: Martin Luther and the Reformation</p> <p><i>Biography of Martin Luther and introduction into his main writings and theses concerning church reforms – including his comments on Jews and Turks. Examination of the historical process of the Reformation and the theological conflict between the papacy and the reformers. Summary of the diversity of the Reformation, concluding revolutionary tendencies.</i></p>
Tuesday, June 13, 2017	<p>Excursion I: “The Luther Effect”</p> <p><i>The exhibition of the German Historical Museum illustrates the global diversity and effective history of Protestantism and tells a global story of effect and counter-effect that begins around 1500 and continues on into the present.</i></p> <p>Short student reports</p>
Friday, June 16, 2017	<p>Foundations III: Martin Luther and Humanism</p> <p><i>Basics of Protestant and Humanist thinking and their significance for early modern times.</i></p> <p><i>Exploration of the roots of Humanism in Italy and German as represented by Philipp Melanchthon and Erasmus of Rotterdam. Examination of the relationship and conflict between Humanism and the Reformation as shown in the differences between Erasmus of Rotterdam and Martin Luther. Influences of Humanism and Reformation on school and university system reforms and the focus on compulsory education.</i></p>
Tuesday, June 20, 2017	<p>Reformation and Society I: Religion and Culture</p> <p><i>Which impact did the Reformation ideas have on the</i></p>

	<p><i>understanding of 'religion' and culture?</i></p> <p>Issues a): Observations concerning the theological changes since the 15th century - beginning with papal critique from theologians such as John Wycliffe and Jan Hus, continuing with Martin Luther's rethinking of the church and the faith and ending with the individualization of faith in modern times and the diversity of confessions as a result of the Reformation.</p> <p>Issues b): Observing cultural changes since the Reformation in the confessional biographies of Johann Sebastian Bach and Lucas Cranach and their view on the Reformation. The emancipation of philosophy from theology and the religious critique of Friedrich Nietzsche and Ludwig Feuerbach, the rational and religious surrogates.</p>
<p>Friday, June 23, 2017</p>	<p>Excursion II: The diversity of churches</p> <p><i>Influences of the Reformation on architecture – comparison between a Reformed, a Lutheran and a Catholic church building. Visit of the French Cathedral, the German Cathedral and St. Hedwig's Cathedral.</i></p> <p>Short student reports</p>
<p>Tuesday, June 27, 2017</p>	<p>Reformation and society II: Politics</p> <p><i>How did the new Reformation ideas change political thinking?</i></p> <p><i>Martin Luther's conception of a personal faith and its consequences for modern society. The prominent Protestant thesis of religious freedom and its historical roots in the Peace of Augsburg and the Peace of Westphalia. The modern constitutions and the topic of religious freedom – e.g. the United States Constitution of 1789 and the French Constitution of 1791. The historical setting and genesis of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms and its influence on the ecclesiastical subservience to state authority in modern societies. The limitation of religious freedom.</i></p>
<p>Friday, June 30, 2017</p>	<p>Reformation and society III: Economy and Science</p> <p><i>What influences did the Reformation have on economy and sciences?</i></p> <p>Issues a): Historical analysis of the estate-based society during the 16th century and Martin Luther's societal reforms, e.g. his understanding of profession. The development of the early modern society and Max Weber's thesis on the 'protestant ethic' and the Calvinist</p>

	<p><i>influences on modern capitalism.</i></p> <p>Issues b): <i>Supporting and repressing tendencies in the Reformation with regard to our modern understanding of the sciences: The Reformation's emphasis on religious sources (sola scriptura), Luther's commitment to faith (sola fide), the emancipation of the sciences from theology, and Max Weber's thesis of 'science as profession'.</i></p>
Tuesday, July 4, 2017	<p>Reformation and Europe I: Western Europe</p> <p><i>A review of relevant examples and developments, such as the Reformation traditions in Switzerland and the Netherlands, the French Revolution and its (anti-)religious connotations (the persecution of priests, the calendar-reform, and the new cult of reason), and England's Anglican Reformation (separation from Rome, the founding of the Anglican Church, and the Civil War of 1642-49). The enduring relevance of the Reformation's legacy for today's political systems in Western Europe as well as the question of (new) religious violence.</i></p>
Friday, July 7, 2017	<p>Excursion III: Wittenberg</p> <p><i>Wittenberg Old Town – one of the centers of Reformation in Europe and Martin Luther's main place of action – offers a variety of memorial events during the summer 2017: churches from across the world, as well as international institutions, organizations, initiatives and many cultural actors will present their current views on the Reformation.</i></p>
Tuesday, July 11, 2017	<p>Reformation and Europe II: Eastern Europe</p> <p><i>Pre-Reformation traditions (Jan Hus), the Unity of the Brethren, and Protestant minority Churches. The secular ideology of Communism in the "Soviet bloc" and its impact on Eastern European Christianity, with particular attention to the Protestant Church in the German Democratic Republic.</i></p>
Friday, July 14, 2017	<p>Conclusion and Outlook</p> <p><i>What relevance does the Reformation continue to have for Western secular societies?</i></p> <p>Student Presentations</p>