

## Comprehensive Short Essay Prompts

IST2002 - Christianity in Western Europe in the Middle Ages

Winter 2014

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**DUE DATE: Saturday, March 15, 2014 at 11:59 p.m. (MST).** Please submit your essays on Canvas.

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### Instructions:

- Choose and respond to two (2) of the required essay prompts. Please discuss and develop each response separately. Make sure to respond to all parts of each prompt.
  - Essays should draw from all pertinent course materials including lectures, required readings, and collaborative group project presentations. To receive full credit you **MUST** draw from **ALL** of these materials. While you do not need to refer to materials under “Other Things You Might Be Interested In” or outside sources, these are not unwelcome.
  - The length of your responses should total twelve to fifteen (12-15) pages of double-spaced text in eleven or twelve-point font (about 4,000 words), with approximately equal space given to each essay.
  - Use your own voice and your own writing style. Do not use lengthy quotations. I am interested in *your* critical response to the prompts in conversation with the course materials.
  - Please read your essays for grammar, spelling and syntax errors before posting them. Take advantage of Iliff’s Writing Lab whenever possible.
  - There is no need to provide a bibliography for course readings. Simply cite the author and the page number of the course reading in the body of your essay. For example: (Ozment 1981, 127). However, if you use other sources, please do cite them according to Turabian (Chicago).
  - Essays turned in LATE will result in a deduction of TEN POINTS (that is, 4% of your total grade for the class), regardless of the reason(s).
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1. Historical knowledge is often as much about the present as it is about the past. While historical knowledge could never serve as a substitute for one’s faith, religious leaders, ministers, and pastoral caregivers have often found inspiration in the lessons of previous eras. Discuss how you envision using insights from the history of Christianity in the Middle Ages to enrich or inform your practice of ministry or vocational calling. Provide at least 3 examples from the theological topics and/or themes covered in this course.
2. Historians have identified at least three major “revivals of learning” in the period from 800 CE to 1500 CE, which they have often labeled renaissance movements (the Carolingian, the 12th century, and the Florentine/Italian). Identify and briefly describe the causes of two of these

movements and their influence on development of Christianity in the Middle Ages. Consider also the differences and similarities between the renaissance movements you have chosen.

3. What were the major issues in the Western (Latin) Church which led to the various reform movements of the medieval era? Discuss the major intellectual and institutional factors that contributed to reform. Looking back from our historical moment, do *you* think the medieval reformers and their various reformations succeeded? Be sure to be clear on the criteria you are using to describe success or failure.
4. It has been suggested that women played limited roles in medieval church and society. Discuss the validity of this claim, considering the historical realities of medieval women's lives in the areas of rule, trade, learning, and the church, citing specific examples.
5. Discuss the role of the medieval Western Church as a preserver of Christian learning, diplomatic peacemaker, and provider of social services. How did these vital aspects of medieval Christian pastoral service and leadership contribute to the power and influence the Western (Latin) Church had accumulated by 1300? How do these inform the ways in which contemporary Christian churches and denominations provide social services and/or exert power and influence in society?
6. Aristotle's works were reintroduced into Western Europe around 1130 and became widely known by the mid-thirteenth century. Discuss the issues raised by the reception of Aristotle's works and its influence on medieval theology.
7. Christianity in the Middle Ages expressed itself in a variety of ways: through 1) monastic and mystical impulses, 2) ecclesial institutions including clerics, councils, and popes, 3) theological and intellectual activity, as well as 4) popular and heretical religious movements. Discuss the similarities and differences among two of these expressions of medieval Christianity, with a particular focus on their origins, their functions in society, and their changing relationship with civil society.