



LTWL 158C

### Topics in Other Christianities: Christianity, Empire, and Revolution

This course introduces and explores a paradox that cuts across the many cultures of Christianity throughout history: its alliance with projects that promote a universal world order under one emperor or king (the empire); and the understanding of the Christian gospel as a manifesto of radical freedom from any and all politically established authority. Beginning with a reading of Christianity's early growth, we will explore the philosophies and social movements that emerged through the establishment of an official Church, its relationship to the Roman Empire and Latin Christendom, and the secularization of Christian concepts in the modern world. At the center of this reading lie a set of Christian concepts that stubbornly refuse to remain a subject of theology, and take on political and social meanings throughout history: these include divine revelation, the relationship between divine grace and human agency, the (im)possibility of representing the divinity, the legal authority of the Pope, and the accommodation of Christian theology to non-Christian cultures on the colonial frontier.

This course fulfills the requirement of historical breadth for Literature majors. Requirements include: attendance, midterm exam, three essays / blogs.