

History of Christian Thought and Practice I
Garrett-Evangelical Seminary 13-501
M-F, 1:00 – 4:00 pm
Room 205

Instructor:

Jim L. Papandrea, M.Div., Ph.D.
office hours by appointment

Purpose of the Course:

The purpose of this course is to survey the history of the Christian church and its doctrine, from the beginning into the middle ages, with special emphasis on the first five centuries, in which the basic doctrines and traditions of the faith developed. In most cases, the history of the church is the history of its leaders and other catalysts of change, so that the story of Christianity is very much the story of Christians, such as we know from the historical record, and others who also influenced the church. It is also the story of the struggle to interpret the sacred writings and traditions of the faith, and the doctrines and sects that emerge from that struggle. One of the important ways in which we will be learning the story of these people and their struggle is to read the original documents of the emerging church. Integrated with the history of the church, we will also explore certain aspects of the history of the Roman Empire, since the development of Christian doctrine and church practice cannot be adequately understood apart from the social and political context in which the church was born and spent its formative years.

Course Requirements:

Each class meeting will consist of lectures, group discussion, and other educational media, possibly including films. Questions and discussion during the lecture are encouraged. Reading assignments are to be done before each class meeting. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless previous arrangements are made with the instructor. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course. All work for this course must conform to accepted standards of academic ethics, including, but not limited to the understanding that plagiarism is unacceptable, and will result in an automatic grade of "F" for the assignment in question. The internet, and especially search engines, should not be used as primary research tools. This syllabus is tentative, and maybe updated or changed at the instructor's discretion.

Class participation: Attendance, reading preparation, and class discussion will affect the course grade, especially in the case of a borderline final grade. Since this class only meets for three weeks, attendance is expected at every class meeting, and unexcused absences will affect a student's final grade. Class participation counts for 10% of the final course grade.

Papers: There will be two 5-7 page essays, and a final exam. All papers for this course must be double-spaced, with standard sized margins and a font size of 10. Font must be easy to read, such as Times New Roman or Palatino. Cover sheets must include the student's name, the instructor's name (spelled correctly) and the date. All papers for this course should conform in style to a standard scholarly format. If in doubt, consult A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations by Kate Turabian, or The Chicago Manual of Style.

Essay #1: The first essay will be due at the end of the first week of class. It is designed to be written without prior knowledge in the field of Patristics, so students may feel free to write the essay before the course begins and hand it in early to get it out of the way. The assignment is to explain your understanding of Christology as it is at this point in your life. (This is why you should always date your papers – they reflect your thoughts at a certain point in your journey.) When explaining your Christology, make sure to include not only who Jesus is to you, but how you understand Him to be

related to God. Since the early church writers quoted the Christian Scriptures (both testaments) as authoritative, make sure to use Scripture to support your statements – not simply as “proof-texting,” but as exegesis. Essay #1 will count for 20% of the course grade.

Essay #2: The second essay will be due at the beginning of the third week of class. At this point you will have studied the controversies of the early church surrounding the person of Christ. The assignment is to explain the Christology of the mainstream church, as it stood after the council of Chalcedon in 451. Most of the paper should be spent on this. Include in the essay an update on whether your personal understanding of Christology changed at all from the first paper, and if so, explain why. Is your understanding of Christ the same or different from the majority of the church in the fifth century? If it is the same, defend your views from contemporary challenges to traditional Christology. If it is different, defend your views from traditional apologetics. Essay #2 will count for 30% of the course grade.

Final Exam: The final exam will be a take-home essay, also 5 – 7 pages, and will focus on synthesizing and interpreting material from the reading and lectures, specifically the main themes, events and characters, rather than the minor details of history. The final exam will count for 40% of the course grade.

Required Reading

Church History, Volume 1: From Christ to Pre-Reformation, Everett Ferguson
(Zondervan, 2005 ISBN: 0-310-20580-8)

The Trinitarian Controversy, William G. Rusch, ed.
(Fortress, 1980 ISBN: 0-8006-1410-0)

The Christological Controversy, Richard A. Norris Jr., ed.
(Fortress, 1980 ISBN: 0-8006-1411-9)

Theological Anthropology, J. Patout Burns, ed.
(Fortress, 1981 ISBN: 0-8006-1412-7)

Theological Turning Points, Donald K. McKim
(John Knox Press, 1988 ISBN: 0-8042-0702-X)

Supplemental Reading (On Reserve)

Women in the Early Church, Elizabeth Clark
Documents of the Christian Church, Henry Bettenson
Confessions, Augustine of Hippo
The Making of the Middle Ages, R. W. Southern

Note: The instructor reserves the right to add to or change the reserve list, and to add reserve reading assignments during the course of the class.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Class #1

Introductions
The Apostolic Age and the Roman Empire
The Sub-Apostolic Age and the Apologists:
Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Justin

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 27 – 45

Class #2

Emerging Orthodoxy:
Apostolic Succession, Councils & Creeds, The New Testament Canon
Heresy and Heterodoxy:
Docetists, Ebionites, Gnostics, Montanists, Manichees

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 46 - 106

Class #3

Pioneers of Christian Theology:
Irenaeus of Lyons
Clement of Alexandria & Origen
Tertullian

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 107 - 147
The Christological Controversy, pp. 49 – 82
Theological Anthropology, pp. 23 - 28

Class #4

Persecution and Politics:
Perpetua & Felicitas
Cyprian and Novatian
Persecutions of Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian
The Donatists

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 148 – 177
Women in the Early Church, pp. 97 - 106
Theological Turning Points, pp. 44 - 59

Class #5– Essay #1 Due

The Great Persecution: Diocletian and Galerius
A Christian Empire: The Rise to Power of Constantine

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 178 - 211

Class #6

The Trinitarian Controversy:
The Arian Controversy and The Council of Nicaea

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 227 - 254
The Trinitarian Controversy, pp. 29 - 130
The Christological Controversy, pp. 83 - 102
Theological Turning Points, pp. 4 - 21

Class #7

The Christological Controversy:
The Cappadocian Fathers
Apollinarius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Cyril of Alexandria

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 212 - 226
The Trinitarian Controversy, pp. 131 - 162
The Christological Controversy, pp. 103 - 106
Theological Anthropology, pp. 29 - 38
Theological Turning Points, pp. 22 - 37

Class #8

The Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 255 - 267
The Christological Controversy, pp. 123 - 160
Theological Turning Points, pp. 37 - 43

Class #9

Augustine of Hippo and Pelagius

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 268 - 285
The Trinitarian Controversy, pp. 163 - 180
Theological Anthropology, pp. 39 - 128
Confessions Book 2:4-10, Book 8:11-12

Class #10 – Essay #2 Due

Missions and Monasticism

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 286 - 352
Women in the Early Church, pp. 213 - 223

Class #11

The Rise and Fall of the Papacy
The Split Between East and West

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 353 - 399

Class #12

Medieval Spirituality
Francis of Assisi and the Crusades

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 400 – 422, 441 - 480

Class #13

The Eucharist Controversy: Radbertus and Ratramnus
Scholasticism: Anselm, Abelard, Aquinas

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 423 – 440, 481 - 500
Library of Christian Classics, Vol. 10 pp. 100 – 183, 288 - 297

Class #14

Whatever we haven't covered yet
Wrap –up and closing comments

Read: Church History, Volume 1, pp. 501 - 524