

COURSE OF STUDY 222

Theological Heritage: The Early Church

Instructor: Chuck Yrigoyen

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Objective: This course focuses on the history and theology of the Christian Church through its first five centuries. Using primary and secondary sources, students will reflect on important individuals and events, and the understanding of the Christian faith during this important period in this period.

Goals:

1. To understand and articulate the doctrine of the Trinity and the historical debates in the early Church around the nature and person of Christ.
2. To understand and articulate a doctrine of salvation in light of controversies in the early Church.
3. To understand the history and significance of the ecumenical councils and creeds.
4. To appropriate historical theology of early Church theology for pastoral ministry.

Texts:

Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Volume 1, HarperOne, paperback.

Roberta Bondi, *To Love as God Loves: Conversations with the Early Church*, Fortress Press, paperback.

See pre-course reading (New Testament Book of Acts) in preparation for the first session of the class.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Deviation from this policy may result in a reduction of the grade or complete loss of credit for the course.

Class sessions are as follows:

April 1-2 Retreat Session at Comfort Suites and Red Robin Restaurant, Exton, PA

April 16 Local Church to be announced at first class session, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

April 30 Local Church to be announced at first class session, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Written work (due date announced at the first session of the class session):

(1) Choose *one* of the main themes of the book (love, humility, the passions, prayer, God) and write a short paper on that theme (2-3 pages) indicating why you think it is important and how it is significant in the context of where you are serving in ministry. This assignment is worth 25% of the final grade. (2) Choose *two* of the topics listed below and write a four-page essay briefly stating the following: (a) What is the historical background of the issue you choose?; (b) What is the key issue in ?; (c) Who are key persons in the issue and what position did they take in it?; (d) What is the importance of the issue in our time? This assignment is worth 75% of the final grade.

Topics:

1. Persecution and martyrdom in the Early Church.
2. The Apologists.
3. Imperial Church of Constantine and his successors.
4. Development of the scriptural canon.
5. Seven Ecumenical Councils.
6. Monasticism.
7. Missionary efforts.
8. Development of Christian worship.
9. Inquisition.
10. Understanding and practice of the sacraments.
11. Scholasticism.
12. Heretical movements regarding Christ (Arianism, Gnosticism, Apollinarianism).

If the student borrows information from a source (textbook, internet, or another), proper credit must be given (in a footnote or end note) indicating that source.

Pre-course reading to prepare for the first session (April 1-2).

READ THE BOOK OF ACTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND BE READY TO DISCUSS ITS CONTENT.

