

Wesley Theological Seminary  
Course of Study School  
Spring Weekend / Online: 12-13 March & 16-17 April 2021

CS-222: Theological Heritage 2: The Early Church  
Faculty: Dr. Charles Harrell  
Email: [charrell@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:charrell@wesleyseminary.edu)

Please read this study guide *carefully*. **Everyone will have Discussion Board assignments due via Blackboard in March, and one assignment due the first day of class in April, also submitted via Blackboard.**

Please schedule time each week to work on your pre-course work. This will make the learning process both more enjoyable and more fruitful for you.

**Objective:**

This course focuses on the history and theology of the Church through the first five centuries. Using primary sources, students will reflect on significant individuals, events, and the articulation of the Christian faith during this period.

**Goals:**

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

**Required Texts:**

Gonzalez, Justo. *The Story of Christianity, Vol. I.* (Main Text)  
ISBN: 978-0061855887  
*Students are responsible for reading the entire text.*

Coakley & Sterk. *Readings in World Christian History, Vol. I.* (Reader)  
ISBN: 978-1570755200  
*The entire text is recommended; however, required reading is as follows:*  
*Part One (Readings 1-17)*  
*Part Two (Readings 18-44)*  
*Part Three, Readings 45-47, 48-50, 55, 57, 58*  
*Part Four, Readings 59-68, 69, 71, 74*

Bondi, Roberta. *To Love as God Loves: Conversations with the Early Church*  
ISBN: 978-0800620417  
*Students are responsible for reading the entire text.*

Bettenson, Henry & Chris Maunder.. *Documents of the Christian Church*. 4th edition  
ISBN: 978-0199568987

*The entire text is recommended; however, students are responsible for Part I and Part II (Sections I-VII).*

Harrell, Charles. Lectures and Outlines 10 – 100. Lectures 10-50 will be available by 1 February on BlackBoard; Lectures 60–100 will be available by 1 March. Lectures should be reviewed by the April ZOOM meeting.

*Note that the Lectures are for the most part numbered in sequences of 10 (10, 20, 30, etc.). Most lectures have more than one part. My recommendation is that you plan to review them at the rate of one lecture per week.*

### **Instructions:**

Discussion Board posts should be typed directly into Blackboard, or cut/pasted directly into the Discussion Board.

Paper submissions should be in Microsoft Word, using 12 point font, into Blackboard. You are allowed one attempt to post each assignment.

### **Written Assignments:**

#### **I. Online, during February - March**

##### **Part One: (10% of total grade)**

Write a reflection based on Roberta Bondi's book, *To Love as God Loves*. Pick one of the defining categories she lists ("Love", "Humility", "Compassion", "Prayer", "God"), and discuss in approximately 500 words (= about 2 pages of text) *why* it is a defining category for the theology of the early Church, and whether / how it continues to be important in the modern context.

This discussion should be posted to the Discussion Board on Blackboard by **11:59 p.m. Friday, 5 March 2021**.

##### **Part Two: (30% of total grade)**

From the following lists, choose two persons (list 1), two events or places (list 2), and two movements or heresies (list 3) on which to write a Discussion Board post of approximately 500 words (= about 2 pages of text). Your essay should indicate the following:

- (A) When (and if appropriate, where) was this person, event, or movement?

- (B) What was its significance at the time?
- (C) What is its significance in the wider scope of the history of Christianity, and why does it matter (if it matters) for the Church today?
- (D) Name at least two significant documents that deal with the event or movement (or, in the case of a person, that s/he wrote or in which s/he is a significant reference) ?

These posts are due on Blackboard by **11:59 p.m. Wednesday, 10 March 2021.**

In addition, on the movements or heresies (only), write one response post to another student's post. (Your response does *not* have to be on a heresy/movement you wrote on; however, you will have to post your discussion posts before you can respond to others'.)

Discussion posts and response posts are not just reactions or “sermonettes”; they are to be critical thinking reflecting on the texts, and on other students' posts. Response posts should be approximately 200 words (about ½ to 2/3 page) in length, and are both due by **11:59 p.m. Saturday, 13 March 2021.**

List One: People

Alopen\*  
 Ambrose of Milan  
 Anselm of Canterbury  
 Antony\*  
 Athanasius of Alexandria  
 Augustine of Hippo  
 Basil of Caesarea  
 Bede the Venerable\*  
 Constantine I (the Great)  
 Cyprian  
 Gregory of Nyssa  
 Ignatius of Antioch  
 Jerome  
 John Chrysostom  
 Julian of Norwich\*  
 Justinian  
 Monica\*  
 Origen  
 Pachomius\*  
 Perpetua & Felicitas\*  
 Pliny the Younger  
 Polycarp  
 Tertullian  
 Theodora (Empress)\*

Theodore of Mopsuestia  
Theodore the Studite  
Thomas Aquinas  
Valens\*

\*Note: You need mention only ONE document for this person.

List Two: Events / Places

Battle of Manzikert  
Battle of Tours (Poitiers)  
Council of Chalcedon  
(First) Council of Nicea  
Crowning of Charlemagne  
Egeria's Travels  
Fall of Western Roman Empire  
Great Schism  
Haghia Sophia  
Nicomedia

List Three: Movements / Heresies

Apollinarianism  
Apophatic theology  
Crusades  
Docetism  
Donatism  
Gnosticism  
Iconoclasm  
Manicheanism  
Monasticism  
Nestorianism  
Pelagianism  
Pillar saints (Stylites)  
Scholasticism  
Trilingualism

## II. Before April ZOOM Session

ANSWER IN ESSAY FORM (A) and (B), approximately 2-3 pages each

### A. Choose One (30% of total grade)

1. Much of early Christian theological development is taken up with christology: the doctrine concerning the Person and nature(s) of Christ. Trace an overview of christological discussions from the early days through the Council of Chalcedon, commenting on significant movements, heresies, councils and persons.
2. What was the significance of the iconoclastic controversy? Besides the obvious reference to figural art, what was this controversy really about, and how did it touch on Christian understandings of the nature of God incarnate?
3. Discuss the development of the understanding of the Eucharist. At a minimum, refer to: the *Didache*, Irenaeus, Radbertus & Ratramnus, and Thomas Aquinas.
4. While Christianity is today thought of as a “Western” religion, in the early days it was much more “Eastern” in its orientation and outreach. Discuss some of the early missionary efforts, with particular focus on Asia, Africa, and Britain.
5. Write about the rise of Islam and its implications for Christianity. Be sure to touch on the Crusades, iconoclasm, the Inquisition / Reconquista, and North Africa.

### B. Mandatory Question (20% of total grade)

Pick a topic that interests you, and develop a good, trenchant question to which you would like to have the answer. Research the question and develop an answer as an essay. Be sure to state why you think the question is important. You will be evaluated on how good the question is (33%) and the quality of the response (67%). The question and answer must lie principally in the period between AD 50 and AD 1517.

**Both “A” and “B” are due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, 16 April 2021.**

### ZOOM Session:

**This class will have two ZOOM sessions.** The first will be on **Saturday, 12 March 2021 at 10:00 a.m.**, and will be about one hour in length. It will be to review the reading (mainly González) and address your questions. The second will be on **Saturday, 17 April 2021 at 10:00 a.m.** Plan for this session to be 2 hours in length. We will discuss key topical issues, and again address any questions that you might have.

Information for logging into the ZOOM session will be sent out about 1 week in advance.

**FINAL NOTE: Class participation makes up 10% of the total grade. The grade breakdown is therefore as follows:**

<b>February – March Online Assignments:</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Between Sessions Assignment:</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Attendance / Participation:</b>	<b><u>10%</u></b>
<b>TOTAL;</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Grading:**

The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a “B” grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

A “B” means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.

A “B+” means the assignment is also well crafted.

An “A-“ means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.

An “A” means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student’s prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student’s imagination at work; it has a creative edge.

A “C+” means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer’s opinions than the results of the writer’s analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.

A “C” means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.

A “C-“ means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

An “F” means the individual needs to see me immediately.

**Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for assignments handed in after the start of class, and up to a full letter grade per day for any assignments 24 hours past due.**

### **Inclusive Language**

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and

God expresses values and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

### **Academic Policies**

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty member have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of grade or loss of credit for the course.

Note: Since this is an online course, attendance is required at the ZOOM sessions, and review of the lecture material also counts as attendance.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:

- Copying from another students paper
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
- Using unauthorized material during an examination
- Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.