

Wesley Theological Seminary
Course of Study School
Summer Intensive Hybrid Online 2021:
24 May – 30 June (Online, Asynchronous)
& 12-16 July (Online, via ZOOM)

CS-222: Theological Heritage 2: The Early Church

Faculty: Dr. Charles Harrell

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

Objective:

This course focuses on the history and theology of the Church through the first five centuries and captures significant events and movements from the medieval period (before 1517). 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)

Coakley & Sterk. *Readings in World Christian History, Vol. 1.* (Reader)

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

Bettenson, Henry & Chris Maunder.. *Documents of the Christian Church.* 4th

*Note: the germane sections in Bettenson & Maunder are Part I and Part II (Sections I-VII).

Harrell, Charles. Lectures and Outlines 10 - 50, available by 24 May on Blackboard. (These will be helpful in completing Part I, Section Two of the pre-course assignment; but at all events should be completed before coming to the “On-campus” / ZOOM sessions in July.)

ZOOM Sessions:

We will meet Monday – Friday, 12-16 July 2021, between 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., via ZOOM.

Attendance at all sessions is required, except for emergencies only by prearrangement with the Instructor.

Guidelines for Reading

(Note: This is to help you; if it works better to do the reading differently, that is your option.)

1. Start with the Bondi book, as this is for the first assignment.
2. Read Gonzalez, vol. I for background. It is best to read the whole, but definitely Parts I and II (through chapter 26 / page 262)
3. Read Coakley & Sterk. Key portions before July are Parts One and Two (through Reading 44 [Patrick] / page 228).
4. Read Bettenson & Maunder.

Instructions for Posting Assignments:

Discussion Board posts should be typed directly into Blackboard, or cut/pasted directly into the Discussion Board. You are allowed one attempt to post each assignment.

Written Assignments:

Part I. Online, June - July

Section One: (5% 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, 25 June 2021**.

Section Two: (25% 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, 30 June 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, 3 July 2021.**

List One: People

Alopen*
Ambrose of Milan
Antony*
Athanasius of Alexandria
Augustine of Hippo
Basil of Caesarea
Constantine I (the Great)
Cyprian
Gregory of Nyssa
Ignatius of Antioch
Jerome
John Chrysostom
Justinian
Monica*
Origen
Pachomius*
Perpetua & Felicitas*
Pliny the Younger
Polycarp
Tertullian
Theodora (Empress)*
Theodore of Mopsuestia
Theodore the Studite
Valens*

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

List Two: Events / Places

Council of Chalcedon
(First) Council of Nicea
Egeria's Travels
Fall of Western Roman Empire
Haghia Sophia
Nicomedia

List Three: Movements / Heresies

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

Part II. During On-campus Session (July)

ANSWER IN ESSAY FORM (A) and (B), approximately 5 pages each.
Due **11:59 p.m. Thursday, 15 July 2021.**

A. Choose One (20% 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.

Part III. Final Exam

Each student will be required to complete the online Final Exam following the end of the on-campus portion of the course. It will be available via Blackboard, and is due by **11:59 p.m. Friday, 16 July 2021.** The Final Exam is worth 20% of the total grade.

Failure to complete an attempt on the Final Exam will result in a failing grade for the course.

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

I. Online Assignments:	30%
Section One:	5%
Section Two:	25%
II. “On-Campus” (ZOOM) Week Assignment:	40%
Section A:	20%
Section B:	20%
III. Final Exam:	20%
Attendance / Participation:	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL:	100%

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 all assignments submitted after the time they are due, 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 members 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.

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 forms of plagiarism or dishonesty:

- Copying from another student's 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.