

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HIS 541 Christian Tradition I

Gary B. McGee

Fall 2001

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An integrated survey of the doctrinal and theological history of Christianity, spirituality, schools of biblical interpretation, and issues of faith and reason in the Western and Eastern churches from the period of the ancient church to the fifteenth century.

OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce the student to the history of Christianity in its cultural settings to 1500.
2. To introduce the student to key figures, movements, and theological issues (e.g., church\state, christological controversies, faith and reason, missions) during the period under study.
3. To help the student gain an appreciation for the richness and diversity of the Christian tradition.
4. To enable students to relate their own stories to the larger story.
5. To discern patterns for personal and corporate renewal today.

TEXTBOOKS

Ellingsen, Mark. *Reclaiming Our Roots: An Inclusive Introduction to Church History, Vol. 1: The Late First Century to the Eve of the Reformation*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press, International, 1999.

Olson, Roger E. *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Placher, William C., ed. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology, Vol. 1: From Its Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988.

METHODOLOGY

Lectures, discussions, debates, video presentations

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation in class sessions. Absences should be taken only as needed and must not exceed the number permitted in the seminary catalog if credit is to be given. Students should not plan ministry activities during the semester either in the U.S. or overseas that will cause them to miss more classes than allowed by the seminary policy.
2. Completion of all assigned reading.
3. Successful completion of two examinations: mid-term and final; both are unit examinations. They will contain both multiple-choice and essay questions. **NOTE:** Students with a reading (e.g., dyslexia) or writing challenge may ask the instructor for extended time to finish the examination or an alternative means of examination.
4. Preparation of a fifteen-page research paper (exclusive of endnotes and bibliography) that focuses on the development of Christianity in a particular country or region in the period before 1500: Armenia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Egypt, England, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Mesopotamia, Moravia, Netherlands, North Africa, Persia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scandinavia, Scotland, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine. **DUE: NOVEMBER 16, 2001.**
5. Students who choose to be involved in a classroom debate may opt out of one examination. The grade for the presentation will substitute for the grade of the examination.

Debates

Arius vs. Antony of the Desert

(Jesus as the Son of God)

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite vs. Julian of Norwich

(the nature of prayer and understanding of God)

Radbertus vs. Ratramnus

(on the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist)

Abelard vs. Bernard of Clairvaux

(faith and reason in relation to Christian theology)

6. Cautions:
 - A. Late work will be penalized.
 - B. Incompletes will be given only in the event of extreme circumstances.

GRADING

Mid-term examination	20%
Final examination	20%
Research paper	40%
Reading evaluation	20%

COPURSE OUTLINE, READING, AND EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

Key: E—Ellingsen; O—Olson; P—Placher

Aug	31	Introduction to the course Character of Latin, Greek, and Non-Chalcedonian Christianity
Sep	5	Changing church order in the late 1 st Century Apostolic Fathers O—Part I
Sep	7	Apologists E—Intro., 3
Sep	12	Early heresies E—4, 5, 6
Sep	14	<u>Discussion</u> P—Chapter 1
Sep	19	Early Christian worship
Sep	21	<u>Discussion</u> P—Chapter 2
Sep	26	3 rd -Century Tensions and Transformations O—Part II
Sep	28	Council of Nicea O—Part III
Oct	3	<u>Debate</u> : Arius vs. Antony of the Desert E—7, 8
Oct	5	<u>Discussion</u> P—Chapter 3

Oct	10	Nestorian controversy; <u>film</u> : "Nestorians and Syrians, Primitive Christian Churches"
Oct	12	Ephrem the Syrian
Oct	17	Mid-term examination
Oct	19	Conflict over the Person of Christ O—Part IV
Oct	24	Schools of Antioch and Alexandria E—9, 10
Oct	26	Augustine O—Part V
Oct	31	<u>Discussion</u> P—Chapter 5
Nov	2	<u>Debate</u> : Pseudo-Dionysius vs. Julian of Norwich P—Chapter 4; Chapter 8: reading by Julian of Norwich only
Nov	7	<u>Film</u> : "Where God Walked on Earth: The Monastery of Mt. Sinai" E—11
Nov	9	<u>Film</u> : "Holy Image/Holy Space" E—12
Nov	14	Theology in art; the Iconoclastic Controversy
Nov	16	<u>Debate</u> : Radbertus vs. Ratramnus P—Chapter 6: readings by Radbertus and Ratramnus only RESEARCH PAPER DUE
Nov	21	<u>Debate</u> : Abelard vs. Bernard O—Part VI
Nov	28	Scholasticism E—13
Nov	30	<u>Discussion</u> Placher—Chapter 7
Dec	5	Christendom, missions, and the fate of non-Christians

Dec 7 14th and 15th-Century developments
E—14, 15

Dec 10-14 Examination week

RESOURCES

Suggested sources for primary and secondary materials will be discussed in class.

Prepared by Gary B. McGee, August 21, 2001.