Course Description

A survey of important themes (e.g., Bibliology, Theology proper [especially Trinitarian thought], Christology, and epistemology) in Patristic literature from the post-Apostolic era to Chalcedon (AD 451). Selections from major church fathers will be studied which reflect the significance of their work for the historical development of Christian doctrine.

Course Objectives

To introduce the student to the vast treasury bequeathed to us by the fathers of the church, and assist him in obtaining a knowledge of the background and historical development of early Christian theology. To strengthen the student’s commitment to historic Christian theology and to assist in preparing the student to deal with unbiblical systems of theology in their various contemporary manifestations. To move the student to obedience and worship of the God who preserves His church, and Who created and redeemed him.

Contact Information

Campus Office: Dean Center, Phone 601.923.1689 (extension 689 if dialed internally)
Church Office: First Presbyterian Church
1390 North State Street
Jackson, MS 39202
Phone 601.973.9104
Executive Assistant Jan Hyde: jhyde@fpcjackson.org

If you would like discuss matters related to this course or future ministry, please contact my assistant to set up an appointment.

TAs: Sean Morris and Kevin Phipps
Email: seanm@fpcjackson.org and kevinp@fpcjackson.org

Course Procedure

The course will entail lectures, class discussion based on assigned reading, and brief class presentations by the students. Punctual reading of assigned literature and preparedness for interaction are essential.

Course Requirements

Required Texts:
(Primary source readings may be found free online at reputable sights such as Christian Classics Ethereal Library)
Geoffrey Bromiley, “Promise of Patristic Studies” (will be distributed on the first day of class)


Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, First and Second Apologies*

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (selections), *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*

Tertullian, *Against Heresies, Apology & Against Praxeas*

Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*

Hilary, *On the Trinity*

Augustine, *Confessions*

Augustine, *On Nature and Grace & On the Predestination of the Saints*

Class Attendance:

Class attendance is essential for successful completion of this course. If any student needs to be absent from a class, then the instructor and TA should be informed. Unexcused absences will be frowned upon.

Evaluation:

1. **Weekly Reading, Quizzes, and Discussion/Participation** (50%) There will be six scheduled quizzes and weekly class discussion on the various assigned readings. Every student will be expected to be well-prepared and to participate. The instructor will evaluate this participation.

   On days when quizzes are scheduled, the quizzes will be administered promptly at 8:00 AM and finish promptly at 8:10 AM. Tardiness on the part of the student does not warrant “extra time” to take the quiz. Unexcused absence or tardiness beyond 8:10 AM will warrant a 0% quiz score for the day. There are no make-up quizzes. Anticipated absences/delays, or unavoidable providential hindrances must be discussed with the TA and work must turned in ahead of time.

2. **Topical Précis’ and Presentation** (50%) The student will prepare three 3-5 page précis’ on a church father’s views and work on a particular theological topic. (i.e. Augustine on Predestination, Athanasius on the Incarnation, etc.) Each student will present one of their précis in class on a date that they select (Select author and topic from list in syllabus).
For the précis which the student selects to present in class, that précis will be due the week before it is scheduled to be presented (in order that the presentation material can be distributed and so that the instructor and the student’s classmates have sufficient time to read the work and to prepare for discussion the following week). Hence, each student will have one précis due on a rolling basis. The other 2 précis’ will be due on the dates indicated on the class schedule.

The 3-5 page Précis’ must use 1 inch margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and must include appropriate citations and bibliography. Bibliography is not included in the overall page count.

Academic Integrity:

All work submitted must be the student’s own. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will warrant a 0% grade for the assignment. Students who do not fulfill assignments with requisite academic integrity will be referred to the Academic Dean with a recommendation for discipline (the student should also consult pp. 33-34 of the RTS Student Handbook for further details).

In-Class Computer Use:

Computers (notebooks, tablets, iPads, Kindles, etc.) are not permitted in this course. Cell phones must be set to silent and stowed. If for some extraordinary reason you need to take a call, you may either wait until the break or leave the classroom. International students desiring to use a laptop for note-taking must request permission from the instructor to do so.

Disclaimer:

This syllabus is intended to reflect the learning objectives, instructional format, and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. However, during the course of the semester, the instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary during the course of the semester.
Class Schedule:

1. Monday, August 26th — Introduction, Overview, and Lecture
2. Monday, September 2nd — LABOR DAY; NO CLASS
3. Monday, September 9th — Lecture
4. Monday, September 16th — Quiz #1, Lecture
5. Monday, September 23rd — Discussion and Seminar Presentation
6. Monday, September 30th — Quiz #2, Discussion and Seminar Presentation; Précis #1 due
7. Monday, October 7th — READING WEEK; NO CLASS
8. Monday, October 14th — Discussion, and Seminar Presentation
9. Monday, October 21st — Quiz #3, Discussion, and Seminar Presentation
10. Monday, October 28th — Discussion, and Seminar Presentation
11. Monday, November 4th — Quiz #4, Discussion, and Seminar Presentation
12. Monday, November 11th — Discussion, and Seminar Presentation
13. Monday, November 18th — Quiz #5, Discussion and Seminar Presentation
14. Monday, November 25th — Discussion and Seminar Presentation; Précis #2 due
15. Monday, December 2nd — Quiz #6, Discussion and Seminar Presentation
Assigned Reading

1) Geoffrey Bromiley, “Promise of Patristic Studies”
   This article should be read by Monday, Sept. 9

   Pages 1-129 should be read by Monday, Sept. 16
   Pages 130-223 and 356-371 by Monday, Sept. 23
   Pages 224-322 by Monday, Sept. 30

3) Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, First and Second Apologies
   Should be read by Monday, Oct. 14.

4) Irenaeus, Against Heresies (selections), Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching
   Should be read by Monday, Oct. 21.

5) Tertullian, Against Heresies, Apology & Against Praxeas
   Should be read by Monday, Oct. 28.

6) Athanasius, On the Incarnation
   Should be read by Monday, Nov. 4.

7) Hilary, On the Trinity
   Should be read by Monday, Nov. 11.

8) Augustine, Confessions
   Should be read by Monday, Nov. 18.

9) Augustine, On Nature and Grace & On the Predestination of the Saints
   Should be read by Monday, December 2.

Instructions for Précis Assignment

A précis is a concise abridgement of a larger treatment, or summary of a particular topic. In this exercise, the student will prepare a 3-5 page précis on the work of assigned church fathers with respect to major doctrinal loci with which they engaged (e.g., Revelation; Inspiration; Canon; Scripture; God; Trinity; Creation; Providence; Man; The Fall; and Sin, Atonement, Redemption, etc.) (see list below); These précis’ must be typed, printed, and handed to the instructor. For the précis on which the student is presenting, it must be handed in the Monday before the student’s presentation in class so that adequate time is given to distribute copies in preparation for the next week’s discussion.
Subjects for Précis Assignment

1. Clement of Rome
2. Ignatius of Antioch
3. Polycarp
4. Justin Martyr
5. Tatian
6. Appolinaris of Hierapolis
7. Athenagoras
8. Theophilus of Antioch
9. Melito of Sardis
10. Irenaeus
11. Clement of Alexandria
12. Origen
13. Tertullian
14. Minucius Felix
15. Cyprian
16. Hippolytus of Rome
17. Novatian
18. Arnobius of Sicca
19. Lactantius
20. Victorinus of Pettau
21. Commodian
22. Athanasius
23. Hilary of Poitiers
24. Eusebius of Caesarea
25. Basil of Caesarea
26. Gregory of Nyssa
27. Gregory of Nazianzus
28. Ambrose
29. Jerome
30. Augustine
31. Gregory the Great
32. Ninian
33. Montanus
34. Marcion
35. Arius
36. Pelagius
37. Nestorius
38. Eutyches

1. Concept of revelation
2. View of inspiration
3. Extent of canon (usage)
4. Authority of Scripture
5. Scripture and Tradition
6. Approach to Biblical Interpretation
7. Theology proper
8. View of the Trinity
9. View of the Deity of Christ
10. View of the Humanity of Christ
11. View of the Incarnation
12. View of the Holy Spirit
13. View of Creation (ex nihilo, etc)
14. View of Divine Providence (vs Stoic)
15. View of Predestination
16. View of Human Nature (as created)
17. View of the Soul (origin, immortal)
18. View of Human Nature (as fallen)
19. View of the Fall
20. View of Sin
21. View of Grace
22. View of work of Christ
23. View of sanctification
24. View of sacraments
25. View of baptism
26. View of Lord’s Supper
27. View of the Church (nature)
28. View of the Church (authority)
29. View of the Church (government)
30. View of eschatology (general)
31. View of eschatology (personal)
32. View of philosophy & human wisdom
33. View of Mary and the Saints
34. View of Worship
35. View of Heresy and Schism
36. Epistemology
37. Role in contemporary debate
38. Major contribution to doctrinal dev.
Recommended Reading

*Classics:*

- The Apostolic Fathers (trans. Lightfoot, Harmer, and Holmes)
- Cyprian, The Unity of the Church
- Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*
- Justin Martyr, *Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*
- Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*

*Biographies:*

- P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*
- H. Crouzel, *Origen*
- J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome*

*History (Ecclesiastical and Secular):*

- G. Bromiley, *Historical Theology*
- F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*
- W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church*
- W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*
- W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*
- I. Hazlett, ed., *Early Christianity: Origins and Evolution to AD 600*

*Philosophy:*

- C. Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought* (Vol 1)
- R. Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks*

*Theology:*

- W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (2 vols.)
- B. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*
- S.G. Hall, *Doctrinal and Practice in the Early Church*
- J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*
- G.L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics*
- B.B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*
- M. Wiles, *The Christian Fathers*

Recommended Reference Works

- B. Altaner, *Patrology*
- A.H. Armstrong, *Cambridge History of Later Greek & Early Medieval Philosophy*
- H. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*
- H. Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*
- H. Bettenson, *The Later Christian Fathers*
- J.D. Douglas, ed., *New International Dictionary of Christian Church*
- W. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*
- E. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*
- S. Ferguson & D.F. Wright, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology*
- J. Quasten, *Patrology*
- T.A. Robinson, *The Early Church: An Annotated Bibliography*