

HT5100 History of Christianity 1
Dr. Michael Allen
Thursday 9:00-12:00

Catalog Description

This general introduction to Christianity in the early and medieval periods focuses on key Christian doctrines and great leaders from Justin Martyr to Martin Luther who made contributions of lasting significance to the Christian Church.

Course Objectives

The students will grow in their ability to

- analyze texts, ideas, and debates in their historical contexts;
- appreciate the interplay between culture and ministry in various times and places;
- gain familiarity with major theologians from the ancient and medieval eras (Irenaeus, Origen, the Cappadocians, Augustine, Anselm, Thomas, and so forth);
- understand and assess the development of Christian doctrine through the centuries;
- read primary sources from a variety of centuries, genres, and styles (including confessions of faith, doctrinal treatises, controversial tracts, etc.).

Instructor

Michael Allen, Ph.D.

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Feel free to contact me whenever needed (preferably via email). When in doubt about protocol or anything regarding class material, write and ask. Also, feel free to stop by my office whenever the door is open.

Textbooks

The following books are required reading:

1. Irenaeus, *On the Apostolic Preaching* (trans. John Behr; Popular Patristics Series 17; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997). ISBN # 9780881411744. Approx. 60 pages.
2. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (trans. John Behr; Popular Patristics Series 44b; Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011). ISBN #9780881414271. Approx. 60 pages.
3. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ* (trans. Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams; Popular Patristics Series 23; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002). ISBN #9780881412406. Approx. 124 pages.

4. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses* (trans. Abraham Malherbe and Everett Ferguson; Classics of Western Spirituality; New York: Paulist, 1978). ISBN #9780809121120. Approx. 115 pages.

A number of other required readings will be posted in PDF format on Canvas. Students are required to check Canvas every week to find assigned readings as well as lecture outlines. Occasional, recommended (non-required) readings will also be posted. You are advised to download them for future reference.

Requirements

1. Reading

Reading must be completed before the class in which it is to be discussed. Class discussions will focus on readings, so you must be prepared to talk.

Theology is an activity done largely through the process of good reading. Read carefully. Read charitably. Read with others. Read with the expectation that you will learn from others, even when you disagree with their main point. Read even when a text is dense and difficult, for you will learn perseverance and fortitude here. Read that which seems trite and obvious, asking how others might object or criticize. Most importantly, read because God was willing to reveal himself in written words, and because we can best witness to God's grace with corresponding words. Read because words matter in God's economy of grace.

This class is a reading course. The bulk of your work circles around careful reading. I have avoided assigning overly lengthy texts for each week, so that you can focus and follow the text carefully and engage actively by thinking and writing in response (see #2). Focus your time and efforts on reading and budget your schedule accordingly.

2. Reading Briefs

Students are expected to prepare a brief on each text read. The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument of that text, as well as to state one's own analysis of it (in the form of questions, confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may include quotations from various points in the text (so long as page numbers are referenced).

Briefs should be no more than 350 words. They should be written in complete sentences and paragraphs and should be edited carefully.

Students are to upload their brief to Canvas. On some weeks they will also be asked to bring a hard copy to class.

3. Final Paper

Students will write a 1500-2000 word analysis of a theme in Gregory of Nyssa's *The Life of Moses* and its relationship to other texts, figures, and movements studied throughout this term. The paper will show clear understanding of his arguments (their aims, presuppositions, evidence, argument, and implications) as well as discerning wisdom in critically appropriating this argument today. Further, the essay will address ways in which this treatise relates to broader movements in classical Christian theology: exegesis, doctrine, spirituality, asceticism, virtue, liturgy, and/or ethics.

All papers are to be uploaded to Canvas.

The Grading Structure

Grades will be assessed as follows:

Reading Briefs	50%
Final Paper	50%

The grading scale can be found in the Academic Catalog. As laid out in the catalog, a “B” is the work normally expected of a student. An “A” is given for someone who consistently outperforms expectations, and a “C” is given for persons who only minimally and occasionally meet expectations. Read the Academic Catalog to see what grades reflect.

Academic Honesty (adapted from Dr. Timothy Phillips of Wheaton College)

1. The assignments are designed to extend and deepen your comprehension and appreciation of Christian theology and to increase your facility with theological method. The processes of defining a topic, researching the results of others' studies, critiquing those studies, and organizing your conclusions in a clear and cogent presentation provides valuable skills for your various leadership ministries. The use of sources is an essential step in appropriating the learning of the Church's tradition in its relationship to cultures to help us understand and faithfully practice Scripture.
2. Using information obtained from a source without indicating it (whether by footnote, parentheses, or bibliography or some other appropriate reference, depending on the type of assignment) is plagiarism (intellectual thievery and lying). This applies to **any** information that you gain from someone that is not “common knowledge.” It does **not** apply **only** to exact quotations or precise verbal allusions. Altering the wording does **not** remove the obligation to acknowledge the source.

3. Cheating is the presentation of someone else's work, which the student ought to have done personally. This includes submitting answers to test questions derived by some means other than that intended by the instructor. It also includes turning in written assignments composed in whole or in part by someone else.
4. Cheating or plagiarism results, at minimum, in the disqualification of that unit of the course affected. A student caught plagiarizing or cheating will forfeit that project. A second offense will result in the forfeiture of the course. Punishments may be more severe than the minimum depending upon the specific situation.

Computer Policy (Modified from Dr. Alan Jacobs of Baylor University)

Computers, tablets, and smart-phones are not allowed in class. Think I'm over-reacting? Think you're a master of multitasking? [You are not](#). No, [I really mean it](#). [How many times do I have to tell you?](#) Notes taken by hand are almost always more useful than typed notes, because more thoughtful selectivity goes into them; plus there are multiple cognitive benefits to [writing by hand](#). And people who use laptops in class [see their grades decline](#) — and even contribute to lowering the grades of *other people*. Also, as often as possible you should annotate your books.

The Schedule

August 27

On Historical Theology; The Early Christians
Read "The Didache" (PDF on Canvas)

September 3

Origen, Irenaeus, and the Gnostic Challenge
Read Irenaeus, *On the Apostolic Preaching*

September 10

Conversion and Martyrdom
Read Chrysostom, "First Baptismal Instruction"; and excerpts from Brian Litfin (ed.), *Early Christian Martyr Stories* (PDFs on Canvas)

September 17

Trinity and Christology (1)
Read Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*

September 24

Trinity and Christology (2)
Read Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ* (only pages 25-149)

October 1

Asceticism

Read Basil “Exhortation on the Renunciation of the World” and Gregory of Nyssa’s “On Virginity” (PDFs on Canvas)

October 8

Augustine (1)

Read Augustine, “*Enchiridion*” (PDF on Canvas)

October 15

Reading Week: No Class

October 22

Augustine (2)

Read Augustine, excerpts from *Homilies on the First Epistle of John* and *Homilies on the Psalms* (PDFs on Canvas)

October 29

Medieval Scholastic Theology: Peter Lombard

Read Peter Lombard, excerpts from *The Sentences* (PDFs on Canvas)

November 5

Medieval Spiritual Theology

Read Anselm, “Why Did God Become Man?” (PDF on Canvas).

Bring Meister Eckhart’s “Sermon on the Contemplative and the Active Life”; Hugh of St. Victor’s “God’s Dwelling in the Soul through Knowledge and Love” and “The Soul’s Deepest Desire” (PDFs on Canvas) to class.

Bring excerpt on Thomas Aquinas and fear to class (PDF on Canvas)

November 12

Thomas Aquinas (2)

Read Thomas Aquinas, excerpts from *The Summa Theologiae* (PDFs on Canvas)

November 19

NO CLASS: Academic Conferences

Read Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses* (1-51)

November 26

NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Day

December 3

Conclusions Regarding Spirituality and Exegesis

Read Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses* (51-137)

December 9: Final Paper Due by 11:00 a.m.



Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: History of Christianity 1
 Professor: Allen
 Campus: Orlando
 Date: Fall 2020

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		Rubric	Mini-Justification
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Reading briefs and final paper test ability to communicate in written form.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Lectures and readings focus upon biblical exegesis as shaping the history of Christian thought in its various literary genres.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Historical analysis of precursors to the Reformed church frequently turns to note occasions of later development.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimum	Regular reading of classic devotional/spiritual literature.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Readings, lectures, and final paper address the construction of principles and a moral imagination that is

			conformed to Holy Scripture as its final authority and informed by the Christian witness of the past.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Readings and lectures address instruction of Christians from beyond the Reformed world.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	Readings, lectures, and final paper address issues which inform pastoral counsel