

## TS5110 Pre-Reformation Christian Thought Providence Theological Seminary

Meeting Times: Monday-Friday, Nov. 14-18, 2011

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### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the development of Christian thought during the Patristic and Medieval periods. Particular attention will be given to the ecumenical creeds, the development of classical christological and trinitarian thought, the work of major theologians, and the impact of the church's witness in the world.

### II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through lectures, class discussions, readings, and written assignments, the student will:

- Gain an understanding of the history of Pre-Reformation Christian thought through study of secondary and primary source works with a view to how this material shapes Christian thought and witness today;
- Acquire an awareness of the contextual factors (philosophy, language, geography etc.) that influence the church's formulation of its teaching at a given point in its history so as to become more aware of the "traditioned" character of the church's existence at any point in its history;
- Develop a nuanced sense of the ways in which the Spirit has led the people of God in the formation and reading of Scripture and in their articulation of Scripture's basic teachings;
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the theological complexities inherent in what has become known as "Orthodoxy;"
- Become more adept at describing your own theological tradition through critical interaction with other theologians and Christian traditions;
- Gain an appreciation of how so many contemporary theological debates mirror those of the past.

### III. REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The following texts *must* be purchased:

Evans, G. R., ed. *The First Christian Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Church*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

Evans, G. R., ed. *The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to the Medieval Period*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

Davies, Brian, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. Clarendon Paperbacks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Wilken, Robert Louis. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

The following text is *highly* recommended for purchase. All texts are available for purchase in the bookstore.

McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

##### A. Attendance & Participation

“Regular class attendance is required. Absences of 20% for any reason will be reflected in the grading up to and including a failing mark. Excessive absences may prevent a student from enrolling in future courses.” (*Student Handbook*, p. 17) Furthermore, students are expected to do the readings carefully and to participate in class discussions. It is also expected that the student will bring the readings to class as well as a Bible.

##### B. Assignments:

1. Pre-Course Work: Due: Start of Class, Nov 14. Value: 15% each

Each student will submit a *personal reflection* on the Wilken text. The reflection should take a position on the following position-sentence. “The theological work of the first Christian theologians is of abiding value for theological reflection and pastoral ministry in the modern world.” The reflection should demonstrate engagement with Wilken’s material and draw conclusions based on personal professional or pastoral work. The assignment will be graded not on having found the “right answer” (i.e., it is possible to opine for or against the position-sentence and do well), but on the quality of the argument and depth of reflection in the presentation. The assignment will be 1500-2000 words in length, properly formatted, and conform to SBL/Turabian style standards.

Each student will read the Davies text in its entirety and submit a *précis* and critical interaction with 1 chapter (excluding chapter 1). A *précis* is a close summary of the text, without any evaluation. Simply state, as concisely as you can, the contents of the chapter. St. Thomas wrote his theology to serve his order, the Dominicans (or Order of Preachers), an order dedicated to teaching Christians and evangelizing others. Your critical interaction will take this into account as it answers this question. How does your chapter impinge upon the teaching and preaching of Christian faith? The *précis* will be not more than 300 words in length and the reflection between 1200 and 1800 words in length, properly formatted and conform to SBL/Turabian style standards.

2. Course-Work: Due: Start of Class, Nov. 18. Value: 10%

Each student will choose 1 theologian or theological school from each of the Evans texts and prepare a 1 page, single-spaced, précis of the essay which discusses him/her/it. (i.e., 2 pages total). Students are advised to take resource availability (libraries, electronic databases, journal articles, etc.) into account in making their selection. Don't, for example, pick William of St. Thierry if you do not have access to sufficient resources to write a proper paper on him!

3. Post-Course Work: Due: Jan 13 (electronic submissions, please) Value: 30% each

Each student will prepare a 4000 word paper, properly formatted and conforming to SBL/Turabian style standards on each of the theologians or theological schools chosen in the Course-Work assignment (i.e., 2 4000 word papers). The paper is **not biographical or historical**, but a critical examination of **one** of your subject's contributions to Christian theological reflection. For example "The Doctrine of the Atonement in Athanasius of Alexandria" or "The Sacraments in St. Thomas' Aquinas," are perfectly appropriate potential topics. "Did St. Cyril Orchestrate the Murder of Hyapatia?" is not. The papers will be graded on interaction with key primary and secondary source material, quality of argument, and presentation (grammar, etc.). As a critical examination, the papers are not merely restatements of your subject's thought, but must contain evaluative elements. Value for contemporary challenges in ministry, for example, may well be one facet you may wish to comment.

## V. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

### 1. Matters of Style

Your critical book review and written assignments must be written, as mentioned previously, in a style consistent with the model set out by Kate L. Turabian in her work *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations: Seventh Edition*. Though there are many formatting/style guides, Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* is the *only* formatting system allowed for use in this class. Should you require tips and illustrations as to what Turabian formatting looks like, please consult Michael Gilmour's "What do I have to do to get an 'A' on my Paper?: Paper Writing Tips and an Illustration of Turabian Formatting." It is available in this reserve section of the library and online at: <http://prov.ca/library/turabppr.pdf>

Written work ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. It is expected that written work will be submitted in a clear, straight-forward style of academic prose. For accuracy in all things grammatical, please consult John Seely, *Everyday Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and for clarity in expressing one's ideas in one's writing, please consult William Strunk, Jr., *The Elements of Style*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999) or other similar guides.

I cannot evaluate ideas which are not clearly communicated in writing. I therefore encourage you to make sure you have proofread your papers before turning them in. Do not assume that because

an idea is clear to you, you have communicated it clearly in writing. Make use of the tutors Prov *provides*—they are available for help and consultation at no cost in the library on a regular basis. If your paper is not communicating your ideas clearly, I will return it to you without a grade. You will then have *one week* to fix the mechanics of the paper without penalty. Should you take longer than a week, the usual late grade penalties shall apply.

## 2. Plagiarism and Honesty

Plagiarism is a common problem in higher education. Note that Providence College & Seminary's *Student Handbook* defines plagiarism as "taking and using the thoughts, ideas, and writings, and other creative works of another person, persons, and passing them off as one's own. A scholar who does so is intellectually dishonest. Scholars should give credit to give credit explicitly and clearly to ideas, thoughts, and writings of another." See pg. 16f of *The Student Handbook*. Penalties for plagiarism may include repeating the assignment, failing the assignment, or failing the course.

## 3. Title Page and Documentation

The title page for all written work ought to include the following:

The title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, your name and Campus mailbox number.

## 4. Late Assignments

Assignments are to be completed on time. Permissions for late extensions must be received from the instructor at least two days prior to the due date of a paper. Permission *may* be granted on the basis of an illness or an emergency. If a student does not submit his/her assignment on time, that is at the beginning of class on the day that the assignment is due, and has not obtained an extension, he/she will receive a penalty of a 1/3 of a letter grade per working day up to a maximum of two whole letter grades. *In order to pass the course all assignments must be handed in by the last day of class.*

## 5. Inclusive Language

It is expected that the student will use inclusive language when referring to other people: for example, "humankind" instead of "mankind," "brothers and sisters" instead of "brothers," "he/she" instead of "he."

## VI. GRADE GUIDE

The following is an explanation of the letter grading system:

Excellent (90-100%) A

Good (80-89%) B  
Fair (70-79%) C  
Passing (60-69%) D  
Failure (0-59%) F

Marking is always difficult. Marks represent an evaluation of actual work—not good intentions, inherent ability, intelligence, personal or moral or spiritual qualities. I am *always* willing to discuss a grade on a paper or project. Please note that your paper will only receive a number grade, not a letter grade.

## VII. EVALUATION

Pre-Course Work:	15% each
Course Work:	10%
Post-Course Work:	<u>30% each</u>
Total:	100%

## VIII. COURSE OUTLINE

Nov 14

AM Syllabus; World of Early Christianity  
PM Apostolic Fathers and Early Heretics

Nov 15

AM Trinity and Christology  
PM Trinity and Christology

Nov 16

AM Augustine  
PM Augustine

Nov 17

AM Early Middle Ages  
PM High Medieval Theology

Nov 18

AM High Medieval Theology  
PM Late Medieval Theology

## IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ayres, Lewis. *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Bauerschmidt, Frederick Christian. *Holy Teaching: Introducing the Summa Theologiae*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005.

- Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *Historical Theology: an Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Brown, Harold O.J. *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Early Church*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993.
- Cooper, Stephen. *Augustine for Armchair Theologians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
- Drobner, Hubertus R. *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Translated by Siegfried S. Shatzmann. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008.
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- Miles, Margaret R. *The Word Made Flesh: A History of Christian Thought*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.
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- William, D.H., ed. *Tradition, Scripture, and Interpretation: A Sourcebook of the Ancient Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Williams, Rowan. *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Young, Francis M. *The Making of the Creeds*. London: SCM Press, 2002.

## X. HOW TO WRITE A PRÉCIS

A *précis* is a concise summary of a text. The following are some guidelines and suggestions for writing a good *précis*.

- a. Put yourself in the author's place. Your job is entirely descriptive, not critical. Imagine that you are the author and must say the same thing but in far fewer words. (A *précis* is one form of writing in which originality is *not* a virtue.)
- b. The author's name should not appear within the *précis*, since you are speaking *for*, not *about*, the author. Likewise, quotation marks never appear in a *précis*, since by definition the entire content is paraphrase, or indirect quotation. A *précis* is therefore one genre in which plagiarism is impossible (unless you crib someone else's *précis*!). A good *précis* is nevertheless a *paraphrase in one's own words*, not a pastiche of quotations.
- c. The *précis* should be a miniature version of the original. It should therefore have the same *structure*, though in a greatly compressed form. A good rule of thumb is to try reducing each section of original text to a paragraph of *précis*, and each original paragraph to a sentence of two in the *précis*. (If the resulting *précis* is too long, however, you will need to compress even further.) Section numbers or subtitles may be included in the *précis*; this practice aids the reader in comparing the *précis* to the original. (But if there are *too* many of them, they become distracting; use good judgment!)
- d. At each point in the original text ask yourself what the author's main point is. Then state it briefly and directly, shorn of elaboration, examples, and supporting arguments. Go directly to the next major point, making clear the transition between them.
- e. Your *précis* should be readable and make sense to someone unfamiliar with the original. Aim for a flowing and coherent summary rather than a list of unrelated statements.