

Theological Heritage II: Early Church

COS 222

Fall 2020

WV Extension

Goals and Objectives:

According to GBHEM, the course focuses on the history and theology of the church through the first five centuries. Using primary sources, students will reflect on significant individuals, events, and the articulation of the Christian faith during this period.

Students will be able to:

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.

Instructor:

The Rev. Dr. Joseph W. Patterson III
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724-255-0817 (Mobile)

Required Textbooks:

Justo Gonzales, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1*

Roberta Biondi, *To Love as God Loves*

Henry Bettenson & Chris Maunder, *Documents of the Christian Church* (Reference)

Course Requirements:

Paper One	30%
Paper Two	30%
Paper Three	40%

Course Grading:

A	Excellent Work
B	Good Work
C	Satisfactory Work
D	Below Average Work
F	Unsatisfactory Work

Assessment:

Written work will be assessed on both form and content. In terms of form, students are expected to use proper spelling and grammar. In terms of content, written work should demonstrate an integration of reading, research, and personal and professional experience.

Turning in written work of insufficient length (described below) will result in grade reduction at the discretion of the Instructor. Turning in written work after the due date will also result in grade reduction, also at the discretion of the Instructor, unless a compelling circumstance is communicated to the Instructor in writing.

Attendance Principle and Policy:

Attendance is required for all online ZOOM sessions. Login instructions will be issued at a later date:

October 3: 9-11 am

October 17: 9-11 am

November 7: 9-11 am and 1-3 pm

November 21: 9-11 am

Assignments:

Reading: Chapters 1-14 of *The Story of Christianity* by Justo Gonzalez should be read before the online class meetings commence in October. Chapters 15-28 should be read before the online class sessions commence in November. *To Love as God Loves* by Roberta Bondi should be read in preparation for the third writing assignment.

Paper One: 6-8 pages, not including your bibliography. Due on September 28, 2020. Reflect on the origin of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Describe the process and struggle experienced by the early church as it wrestled with this crucial doctrinal matter. What were the basic issues that they faced? What was the role of power in the conversation? What was the basic nature of the Christian community and how did that nature impact the conversation? Who were the notable persons involved in the conversation and what did they say and/or write about it?

This paper is a research project. Please consult 3-4 sources in preparation, including John Wesley's sermon, "On the Trinity," (Sermon 55). That sermon is widely available

on the internet. Your sources, properly cited in your bibliography, should be reputable, theologically mainline, and preferably Wesleyan.

Paper Two: 6-8 pages, not including your bibliography. Due on November 2, 2020. This paper should focus the doctrines of Sin and Salvation, using the same questions which guided the writing of Paper One. Describe the process and struggle experienced by the early church as it wrestled with these crucial doctrinal matters. What were the basic issues that they faced? What was the role of power in the conversation? What was the basic nature of the Christian community and how did that nature impact the conversation? Who were the notable persons involved in the conversation and what did they say and/or write about it?

This paper is also a research project. Please consult 3-4 sources in preparation, including John Wesley's sermon, "Salvation by Faith," (Sermon 1). That sermon is widely available on the internet. Your sources, properly cited in your bibliography, should be reputable, theologically mainline, and preferably Wesleyan.

Paper Three: 7-9 pages, not including your bibliography. Due on November 30, 2020. With attention to the reading and writing assignments, to the dialogue conducted online, and to our text, *To Love as God Loves* by Roberta Bondi, please write a theology of ministry. How do these ancient doctrinal matters, conversations, and conflicts directly impact your pastoral ministry? How have you struggled with them? Where are we, in the twenty-first century being faithful to our ancient counterparts? Where have we wandered away from them?

While this paper is primarily a reflection project, you should still cite 3-4 sources (including the Bondi text) which have been important in your theological journey and your call to ministry. Your sources, properly cited in your bibliography, should be reputable, theologically mainline, and preferably Wesleyan.

All writing assignments should be submitted to the Instructor on or before the applicable deadline, using the email address above. Papers should be written in Microsoft **Word**.

CLASS OUTLINE

Lecture:

October 3
Nature of the Early Church and the World
Mission to the Gentiles
The Apologists
Marcion

October 17
Apostles' Creed
Persecutions
Dealing with the Lapsed
Worship and Community Life
The Council of Nicea

November 7, Session I
Monastic Reactions
Donatism
Generations
Julian the Apostate

November 7, Session II
The Cappadocians
Ambrose
John Chrysostom
Jerome

November 21
The Fall of Rome
Moving into the Middle Ages
Arab Conquests
Christological Debates
The Great Schism

Video Assignment:

Apostolic Fathers
Gnosticism and the Early Church

Constantine: Ancient Rome
Arius and Nicea

The Council of Constantinople
Augustine: A Voice for All

Council of Chalcedon

NOTE:

Additional assignments (e.g. discussion boards and/or recorded videos) will be made through email or during online sessions scheduled above.