

Theological Heritage II: Early Church

COS 222

Fall 2021

Spring Heights 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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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	20%
Paper Two	20%
Paper Three	50%
Classroom Participation	10%

Course Grading:

The standard 4-point system will be used to calculate your final grade:

A	4 points	Excellent Work
B	3 points	Good Work
C	2 points	Satisfactory Work
D	1 point	Below Average Work
F	0 points	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, classroom discussion, and personal and professional experience. Classroom participation will be assessed on the ability of the student to engage with others in helpful discussion about the topics reviewed. The Instructor fully understands that introverted persons will participate in those discussions in a manner consistent with their personality type.

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 sessions during the two intensive weekends.

Assignments:

Reading: Chapters 1-14 of *The Story of Christianity* by Justo Gonzalez should be read before the first intensive weekend commences on September 17, 2021. Chapters 15-28 should be read before the second intensive weekend commences on November 19, 2021. *To Love as God Loves* by Roberta Bondi should be read before the end of the second intensive weekend.

Paper One: 6-8 pages, not including your bibliography. Due on the first day of the first intensive weekend, September 17, 2021. This paper should focus 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 notable persons involved in the conversation and what did they say and/or write about it?

Paper Two: 6-8 pages, not including your bibliography. Due on the first day of the second intensive weekend, November 19, 2021. Please provide a self-addressed

stamped envelope through which your work can be returned to you. This paper should focus the doctrines of Sin, Salvation, and Sacraments, 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 notable persons involved in the conversation and what did they say and/or write about it?

Paper Three: 6-8 pages, not including your bibliography. Due on November 29, 2021. Please send a hard copy to the Instructor at the USPS address provided above. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope through which your work can be returned to you. With attention to the reading and writing assignments done in preparation for the two intensive weekends, to the dialogue conducted on those weekends, 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 day to day 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? Having reviewed models of congregational life in other eras, how do you assess the model that we currently employ? How might it be changed or improved?

This is the most highly weighted assignment of this course. Integration of classroom experience into the practice of ministry is the most important dynamic of the educational journey.