

**COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO
HYBRID COURSES AT UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
COURSE 222 – Theological Heritage II: Early Church Spring, 2016**

This course will begin on-campus March 11th, 2016 and continue/conclude online through April 30th, 2016.

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Course Description and Objectives:

This course reflects critically on significant individuals, decisive events, and fundamental tenets of the Christian faith as found in the early church and traveling through to medieval Christianity. Utilizing the categories of grace and faith as focusing lenses, the student appropriates the Christian heritage and enters into the church's ongoing task of interpreting, articulating, and enacting the gospel for contemporary life. There is some use of primary sources.

Objectives:

1. Examination of an emerging Christian orthodoxy in dialogue and debate with Gnosticism, Montanism, Marcionism, and Hellenistic philosophy.
2. Study of major theologians and church leaders whose writings focus on key doctrinal issues, ie: John of Damascus, Augustine, Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, etc.
3. Engagement with pivotal theological concerns in their historical context.
4. Exploration of major theological developments in early/medieval Christianity.
5. Appreciation and appropriation of the relevance of historical theology for pastoral ministry.

Required Textbooks:

Carter Lindberg, *A Brief History of Christianity* (Blackwell Publishing, 2006) ISBN 978-1-4051-1047-1

Recommended Texts:

Justo González, *Essential Theological Terms*. (WJKPress, 2005) ISBN 978-0664228101

Course Schedule:

This course is a "hybrid" course. What this means is that roughly one-half of the course will be delivered online. The online work for this course will be completed over the six weeks after our scheduled on campus time. We will begin our course with our gathering weekend where we will engage in a series of lectures, discussions, and activities, to set the framework for the semester. You will need to read the assigned texts prior to each module or lecture. You do not need to memorise each text, by any means, but a familiarity with the works is essential to a smooth progression through the course.

Once we move into the fully online portion of the class, each online module contains three elements:

- 1) **Read** – you should read the textbook and the primary source supplemental readings **before doing anything else for each module.**
- 2) **Watch** – after completing the readings, you should view the lecture for that module
- 3) **Engage** --Each Online Module, has a discussion question related to the reading

assignments. Participants are expected to post primary and secondary responses to all discussion questions so everyone can read through the responses and respond online. Each participant must respond to at least one classmate's comments for each discussion question. The purpose is to get your thoughts on the readings onto paper so that our corporate discussion will be effective and productive for all of us. You should not write a summary of the assigned readings. I am assuming that students will read. These are not designed to ensure your reading and so I do not want a summary. I want your reaction to the assigned readings. (i.e.: Don't tell me what the Christological controversies were, or even why they were important, tell me what **YOU** think of them and **WHY** you think that. Then be prepared to explain or clarify your answer to your course mates as they pose questions.)

On Campus Weekend: March 11th-12th, 2016.

The On-Campus Weekend will begin at 2:30 on Friday and end by 2:30pm on Saturday. Friday class is 2:30 pm to 8:30 pm, with a dinner break at 5:00 pm; Saturday resumes at 8:30 am, with chapel at 11:15 am, lunch at noon, and class concludes at 2:30.

MODULE 1: Underpinning our Foundations. 2:30 – 5pm

Introduction and Overview of the Course

"Why do we study this and where did we come from?"

Required Readings: Lindbeck, Chapter 1 and 2

Recommended:

This website provides a very good primer for Hellenistic philosophy. It might be VERY helpful for you to bookmark the page and refer to it as necessary during this section.

http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/WeirdWildWeb/courses/wphil/lectures/wphil_theme04.htm

MODULE 2: Proto-Bible and Early Christian Writings. 6-8:30pm

"What Started the Trend Towards a Canon of Scripture?"

Required Readings:

The Didache (Available at: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html>)

(READ THE DIDACHE BEFORE COMING TO CLASS!)

Tertullian: "The Rule of Faith"

Martyrdom of Polycarp

MODULE 3: The Need for Unity and the Age of the Councils. 8:30–11am

"Evolving Thoughts and the Creation of Heresy."

Required Readings:Lindbeck, Chapter 3

Gnosticism

Marcionism

Montanism

(These three will be the texts for your first paper and will be available on the course website by our weekend gathering!)

MODULE 4: Councils Continued.1-2:30pm

"Establishing the Boundaries and Creating the Guidelines"

Readings:

Nicene Creed
Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed
Confession of Chalcedon

ONLINE MODULES:

MODULE 5: Developing Theologies: Augustine, Pelagius, and the Refinement of Theology

Lecture: Augustine v. Pelagius.

Readings:

Lindbeck: Chapter 4

Pelagius, Letter to Demetrias

Augustine: On the Spirit and the Letter

Discuss: Pelagius and Augustine understood the human condition in very different ways. What do you see as the important differences? Whom do you believe most accurately portrays the human condition in light of scripture(s)? Why?

MODULE 6: Western Monasticism

Lecture: Life in a Monastery

Readings:

Lindbeck: Chapter 5

St. Benedict's Rule for Monasteries (Selections).

Life of St. Cuthbert.

Discuss: Benedict believed, and Cuthbert embodied, that the best Christians withdrew from the world, what do you see as benefits or drawbacks to such an understanding of Christian community?

MODULE 7: Icons and Iconoclasms

Lecture: How then do we Worship? John of Damascus and the Role of Icons

Readings:

John of Damascus: Apologia Against Those Who Decry the Holy Icons

Iconoclastic Council of 754

Discuss: John of Damascus was a controversial figure in his time. What do you make of his distinction between worship and veneration? Do you think this is something which is feasible? Do you think he was simply splitting hairs too thinly and was thus off the mark? Why or why not?

MODULE 8: The Rise of Scholasticism

Lecture: The Rise of the Scholastics

Readings:

Lindbeck: Chapter 6

Anselm: Cur Deus Homo, Book I Ch. 11-12; 19-25 (*Text for Paper #2)

Abelard: Preface to Sic et Non.

Discuss: What do you make of Abelard's Sic et Non? (Yes and No) Abelard, places forward a very questionable and questioning method of engaging texts and history in his preface. What do you make of this? Do you think this method might prevent us from ever understanding "truth?" (Might that even be Abelard's point.) Is this more helpful to theology than the previously dominant systems of thought (where right and wrong might be very well sorted) or do you think otherwise? Why or why not?

MODULE 9: The Medieval Period

Lecture: From a Solid Foundation to a Cry for Reformation

Readings:

Lindbeck: Chapter 7

Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologica I-II Q2

Julian of Norwich: Showings (Showings)

Discuss: Thomas Aquinas and Julian of Norwich are two of the greatest thinkers of the Medieval church age. What do you make of their writings? Do you find in them any hint of the upheaval which the church would soon face within the reformation? Why or why not?

ACHIEVING GRADES:

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION:

For the community of learning to be most effective, we all need to be engaged. When we are together in person, ask questions and make comments. We're on this journey together. If one of us is lagging, then all of us will never truly get to our destination! Engagement for the online portion of the class is explained below. Absences are, frankly, not possible for this class. You have one week for each module. Modules are designed to be at an introductory level and not too time intensive. Additionally, though online lectures contain visual aids, you are not required to view these and thus might be listened to at your leisure or discretion. (Though, I would recommend you take notes during lectures.) In sum: You **must** find time during each module to participate in the online portion of the class.

2. ONLINE READING RESPONSES:

Each week, beginning with Module 5, our class will engage in a group discussion. You will find the question to be discussed in the syllabus and also on Virtual United. You are not to summarize the reading. You are simply asked to engage the question based on the reading. These are not meant to be mighty tomes, but thoughtful reflections. A good response will be about 2-3 paragraphs. You are required to read these pages. I would recommend, however, that you do not try to run through these readings in one sitting. Take your time, take notes, and take breaks in your reading as necessary. This is deep theological reflection. It is not casual reading.

3. PAPERS:

Paper #1 - Due on Monday, March 21st 2016 by 11:59pm EST (2-3 pages)

In your readings, you have been introduced to Gnosticism, Marcionism, and Montanism. History, as they say, is bound to repeat itself in many instances; the church is no exception! Now that you have read about these ancient terms and concepts, I want you to think about the modern church and the things we hear within it. What do you notice - thoughts,

themes, or acts—which seem to be similar to the ancient heresies we have examined? In not too many words, explain to me:

- * what do you see and how do you see that being similar to Gnosticism, etc?
- * what do you think that says about the continuity of the church?
- * how do you think these concepts, which were called heresy, were able to reappear in the church? (You don't have to go into extreme detail on this, just give me your thoughts.)

Paper #2 - Due on Saturday, April 30th, 2016 by 11:59pm EST (5 pages)

An ability to closely read and understand texts is an essential task for pastors.

I would like you to read and analyse St. Anselm's classic treatise on the atonement: *Cur Deus Homo*. Please follow these steps carefully, please be sure to address all the questions asked!

*First read Anselm. You are only required to read the sections noted previously.

(I have put the entire work on VirtualUnited because you may want to read more of it.)

*Next read Romans 3, focus especially on vv. 25 – 26. Look at different translations! (hint: look for the differences with "propitiate/sacrifice").

*Now, consider these questions:

1. *Cur Deus Homo* is a lengthy examination of Romans 3; do you think Anselm was faithful to Paul?
2. What do you see as the strengths of Anselm's argument? Are there inherent weaknesses?
3. Finally, do you agree with him? Why or why not? Be sure to include biblical, logical, and pastoral aspects in your answer.

FINAL METHOD OF DETERMINING GRADES:

The grade will be calculated in the following way:

In-Class Participation: 15pts.

On-line Discussion Participation: 40pts. (8 per week)

Paper 1: 20pts

Paper 2: 25pts.

Total: 100pts.

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling academic requirements must be the original work of the student. Violations of academic honour include any action by a student indicating lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorised release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the published or unpublished words or ideas of another [including online resources] as if it were one's own work. A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism. A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor policy, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions:

- (1) warning
- (2) probation
- (3) suspension for the remainder of the course

- (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio
- (5) failing grade for the course.