**COS 222 Theological Heritage II: Early Church**

## Course Goals - 222 Theological Heritage II: Early Church

This 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.Text Book List

*Unless otherwise noted, please use most recent edition.*

## Required Texts for 222 - Theological Heritage II: Early Church

* 1. Justo L. Gonzáles, The Story of Christianity, Volume 1, revised edition; Harper San Francisco, 2010 (ISBN 978-0061855887)
  2. Roberta Bondi, To Love as God Loves: Conversations with the Early Church. Fortress Press, 1987 (ISBN 978-0800620417)
  3. Primary source excerpts, posted on Moodle.

## Recommended

John W. Coakley and Andrea Sterk, Readings in World Christian History, Vol 1, 2004

(ISBN 978-1570755200)

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. **Read**. Complete assigned readings organized into 6 modules at your own pace.

**Module 1** Orientation and Jewish-Christian Identity

Read

Gonzalez: Introduction, chapters 1-5, pp. 1-48

Original Writing: *Didache,* pdf on Moodle

**Module 2** Christianity in the Roman Empire

Read

Gonzalez, chapters 6-12 pp. 49-126

Original Writing: Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas (pdf on Moodle)

**Module 3** Christology, Controversy and Council of Nicea

Read

Gonzalez, chapters 13, 14, 17, 18, 19

Original Writing: Letters of Arius and Alexander, Nicene Creed (pdf on Moodle)

Optional: Canons of Council of Nicea (link on Moodle)

**Module 4** Africa, Augustine and Human Nature

Read

Gonzalez, chapters 16, 22, 23, 24

Original Writing: Pelagius, To Demetrias (pdf on Moodle)

**Module 5** Monasticism, Desert Christians and Protest

Read

Bondi, chapters 1, 2

Gonzalez, chap 25-26, pp. 253-262

Original Writing: The Rule of Benedict (link on Moodle)

**Module 6** Eastern Christianity

Read

Gonzalez, chapter 20

Bondi, chapters 3, 4, 5, 6

1. **Watch.** Watch posted video lectures in each Module on Moodle.

#### **Post in 4 Discussion Forums July 11-15 and 18-22.** You will post in 2 Discussion Forums each week. You must make 1 initial post of 250-300 words by 10pm Wednesday (July 13 and 20) and 2 response posts to peers of 50-100 words by 10pm Friday (July 15 and 22)) in each forum. See Moodle. Grading will be:

#### 4 initial and response posts on time = A 2 initial and response posts on time = C 0 post on time = F

#### 3 initial and response posts on time = B 1 initial and response posts on time = D

1. **10 page paper over Readings.** Follow this format:

3 pages: From readings in Modules 1 and 2, select 5 key events, people, movements or documents that you think are most important for the history of Christianity. Address each item in ½ page by giving a brief description, including dates (if known) and place, followed by a brief explanation of why you think it’s important.

3 pages: From readings in Modules 3 and 4, select 5 key events, people, movements or documents that you think are most important for the history of Christianity. Address each item in ½ page by giving a brief description, including dates (if known) and place, followed by a brief explanation of why you think it’s important.

3 pages: From readings in Modules 5 and 6, select 4 key events, people, movements or documents that you think are most important for the history of Christianity. Address each item in ½ page by giving a brief description, including dates (if known) and place, followed by a brief explanation of why you think it’s important.

1 page: In 1 page conclusion, reflect on any connection you see between early Christianity as portrayed in the readings and Christianity today.

10 pages total due 11:59pm Tuesday, August 2, 2022.

1. **5 page Reflection on Ministry Paper through So What? Essays**. Due 11:59pm, Tuesday, August 2, 2022. Write 4 short “So What?” essays. You will select 4 questions from the 6 possible questions below and write 4 essays. Each essay must be 1-1 ½ pages double-spaced. Upload all 4 essays on Moodle by 11:59pm Tuesday, August 2, 2022.

Module 1 So What? Question: How Jewish are Christians? Does it make a difference to your ministry to take seriously the roots of Jesus’ ministry in Jewish life and faith? Why does or doesn’t it make a difference to you?

Module 2 So What? Question: Early Christians had to struggle with what it means to be Christian, first in a Jewish context and then in a Roman context. What are the challenges of being Christian in your own cultural context today? What other identities in your life (parent, pastor, soccer coach, employee, daughter/son, etc) compete with your Christian identity?

Module 3 So What? Question: Does it matter to you what the church teaches about the relatedness of God the Father and God the Son, specifically the Nicene teaching that Father and Son are “of one substance”? Or would you describe that relationship differently? Or are you still thinking it through?

Module 4 So What? Question: In your view, what is the danger of not taking our own moral abilities (works) seriously as Christians? What is the danger of not taking God’s grace seriously? How do you hold both together in ministry?

Module 5 So What? Question: Does it matter what Christianity’s position in society is? That is, whether Christianity is the center of the culture with power and privilege? Or whether Christianity stands at the margins of the culture, without status? Or somewhere in between? Why does it matter for ministry?

Module 6 So What? Question: After Bondi, what 3 insights struck you as helpful for your own life or for the church today?

#### **5 page Ministry Tool.** From your 10 page paper describing 14 items from early church history, create a ministry tool – a sermon, group study, activity or worship resource to share what you want other Christians to know about our history. We will discuss this assignment during our July 5 class meeting on Zoom.

#### **July 5 and July 26 Assignments**

**Attend.** You are required to attend class synchronously on Zoom Tuesday, July 5, 6-8 pm CST and Tuesday, July 26, 8am-12pm and 1-5pm CST. Your presence is essential to our learning in this class. You bring experiences and gifts that contribute to course content and enhance the learning of all. Two or more hours of absence from synchronous sessions will result in failing the course.

##### **Participate.** The Holy Spirit is at work in our learning together, renewing our minds toward Christlikeness and transforming our lives toward the reign of God. Each reading, discussion and assignment is an opportunity to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. Therefore, learning happens most fully in *ecclesia*, the gathered community. We count on each of us to fully “show up” to participate in class learning through being prepared, listening, speaking, curiosity about material and each other.

#### **FINAL GRADE CALCULATION**

Attendance Credit/No Credit

10 page paper over Readings 25%

5 page paper So What Essays 25%

5 page Ministry Tool 25%

Moodle Discussion Forums 25%

**Course Policies:**

In this course, we have multiple accountabilities. First, we are accountable to the Triune God and the Christian life and work to which we are called. Second, we are accountable to the Church and to the believers who make up the COS community. Third, we (instructor and students) are accountable to the Course of Study Policies and Guidelines, which help us to be faithful to our calls, the Church, and each other. I refer you to the GBHEM COS Policies but will highlight a few important expectations in this course.

*Class Attendance*

“A student is expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing twenty percent (20%) or more of the classroom (and/or zoom) work shall not receive credit for those classes. Online work shall be included in the attendance policy.” [GBHEM COS Policies and Guidelines, page 5]

*Academic Integrity Statement/Plagiarism*

All students are expected to document the sources they use in their written work properly. All words from the source should be quoted and cited even if only one unique word, a phrase, or model and typology headings. The use of a concept, idea, or fact must also be given recognition.

Any violation of COS’s policy on may result in a zero for the assignment, course, and disciplinary action against the student may be taken, including, but not limited to, dismissal.

Note from the instructor: To avoid plagiarism, which is taking someone else’s ideas or words/phrases/sentences and representing them as your own. In this course, **be sure** to use quotation marks to indicate when you’re quoting an author. Use footnotes to cite the places where anyone can find the quoted material or ideas. I recommend using Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers.* See the folder posted in Moodle to learn the style expected. A quick reference guide is found at: [*https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/turabian-notes-and-bibliography-citation-quick-guide.html*](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/turabian-notes-and-bibliography-citation-quick-guide.html)

See/contact the instructor whenever you need writing support or advice.

*Sexual Harassment and Racial Harassment*

Note from the instructor: The two policies are too lengthy to quote here, but I refer you to the texts in the GBHEM COS Policies and Guidelines, pages 19-23. Needless to say, the expected practice in our classroom will be to encourage, respect, and support each other in our work. The classroom is not a competitive or contentious place, but a collaborative and mutually responsible setting.

*Learning Accommodation*

As part of its commitment to equal opportunity, the Seminary is committed to providing qualified individuals with disabilities with reasonable accommodation. Students seeking accommodation should contact Margaretta Narcisse, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, at [margaretta.narcisse@spst.edu](mailto:margaretta.narcisse@spst.edu).

This office maintains the forms necessary for medical documentation of disabilities required before any accommodation can be considered. Following receipt of medical documentation from the student, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs will determine reasonable accommodations for specified needs, including identifying persons to whom this information will be released.

GBHEM POLICY:

[***https://www.spst.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/COS-Policies-and-Guidelines-v.2021.pdf***](https://www.spst.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/COS-Policies-and-Guidelines-v.2021.pdf)