

ACTS Seminars

OF TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

ACTS Seminars

**THS/HIS 673, *Patristics: Theology in the First Five Centuries*
Fall Term, 2010**

Course Syllabus: Subject to some change until the first day of class!

Instructor: Dr. Archie J. Spencer
(TA to be announced)
Fall 2010
Credit: 3 hours
Prerequisites: Some background in history needed, HIS 540 or THS 571 at least.

Email: archie.spencer@twu.ca
(604)888-7592(ex.3858)
Class Dates: Sept. 14th –Dec. 7th, 2010
Time: Tuesday 2:15-4:30 pm
Location: Rm. TBA

I. Course Description

Luke, the New Testament historian, sought to write an orderly account of the early church so that he might instruct Theophilus in the historical reliability of the Christian faith. This course begins where Luke left off and provides an introduction to some of the key theological issues and personalities in the theology of the early church up to the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE), including formative issues in biblical interpretation, the development of an orthodox faith, and the seminal theology of the early church fathers.

II. Course Objectives: The instructor intends to:

- a) Introduce the students to the broad outlines of the development of Christian Theology within the first five centuries of Christian history.
- b) Aid the student in historically navigating the maze of material produced within Christianity, apart from the canon, up to and including the council of Chalcedon.
- c) Equip the student with the necessary tools and information for conducting further research in the Patristic period with a view to further nurturing of the church.
- d) Help the student understand the fundamental importance of the development of cardinal doctrines such as the Trinity, the two natures doctrine, and grace, as expressed in the literature of the first five centuries and as summarized in the creedal formulas of the Apostles, the Council of Nicaea and the Council of Chalcedon.
- e) Encourage the student to bring forward the best and most positive features of the theology of the first five centuries in order that the church of today might be reminded of her faith, built up and encouraged.

III. Required Texts

Either, Gonzales, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I: From the Beginnings of Christianity to the Council of Chalcedon*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987.

Or, Wilkens, Robert L. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

And

Drobner, Hubertus R. *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Peabody Ma: Hendrickson Pres, 2007

A course pack of primary source readings will be available well ahead of the course start date. Short primary source readings from these readings will be required throughout the course. We will discuss these readings in class.

Highly Recommended Reading

Hall, Christopher A. *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002. A great primer for the study of the Church Fathers.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Still the best standard treatment of the period, but very detailed.

Berardino A. & Studer B, (Eds.) *History of Theology I: The Patristic Period*, Collegevill, Min. The Liturgical Press, 1997, 609 pages.

IV. Course Content and Schedule

Section 1 (2 weeks)

- Jewish and Greco-Roman Christianity; The Theology of the Apostolic Fathers
- The Greek Apologists (Read Drobner, pg. 9-103,) (Primary source readings will also be set for each week of class: See course pack)

Section 2 (2 Weeks)

- Early “Heresies”: Challenge and Response (Gnostics; Marcion; Montanus)
- Irenaeus and Tertullian as Biblical Theologians (Athens and Jerusalem?) (Read Drobner, pg. 104-127)

Section 3 (3 weeks)

- The Alexandrian School: Clement, Origen and Platonic traditions
- Third Century Theology in the Western Tradition; Eastern Theological Tradition and the Origenist Controversy (Read Drobner, pg.126-164)

Section 4 (3 weeks)

- Arius, Christ and Eastern Christological subordinationism
- Athanasius, the Nicene Creed; The Cappadocians and the Trinity (Read Drobner, pg. 164-206)

Section 5 (2 weeks)

- The Christological Controversies; Monophysitism, Nestorius
- The Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon (Read Drobner, pg. 207- 351; 461-489)

Note: The preceding is only a broad outline of topics to be covered, and may not be dealt with in the order listed. ***Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis.***

V. Course Requirements

*****NOTE WELL: NOTAE BENE I. Pre-course Assignment**

Read and write a review of either Wilken, *Early Christian Thought* or Gonzales, *History of Christian Thought Vol. I*. You will read one of these book as preparation for more in-depth study when class begins. The review should be 4-6 pages, typed, double spaced with a 12 point Times New Roman font. Pagination is a must. It should consist of about 2/3 summary with a further 1/3 of the review given to significant interaction and critique.

Due: Sept. 21, 2010: Please hand in on line at or before the **beginning** of class. **-15%.**

Book Review Instructions for all Reviews:

Your goal in all the book reviews is to provide a brief summary and careful evaluation of the book that assesses its usefulness to you and other students.

Therefore, a good book review should include the following components:

- 1) Provide the basic bibliographical data including author(s), title, publisher, date, and number of pages at the *beginning* of the review.
- 2) Identify the author(s) and give her/his credentials for writing the book.
- 3) Identify the subject of the book as well as the author's purpose and intended audience.

- 4) *Briefly* explain some of the main points or recurring themes of the book. Explain how the book is developed in terms of issues or problems addressed (chapter headings help with this), and the author's perspective on these issues (look for summing up at the end of the chapter).
- 5) Evaluate the clarity and organization of the book. Why did you find it easy/hard to read? Give examples from the book to illustrate your evaluation.
- 6) Evaluate whether this book has provided insight into the subject and achieved its stated purpose. Ask the following:
 - Does the author(s) satisfy your curiosity about the subject with the questions raised and the answers given to them?
 - Has the author done good research and drawn valid conclusions for her/his research? Does he/she use primary sources or rely on other's interpretations?
 - Is the author consistent and logical? Do biases creep in and influence conclusions? (Be sure to realize that you, the reader, also have biases!)
 - Again, be sure to illustrate your critical comments with specific examples from the book!
- 7) Do you recommend the book? Why or why not?

2. Class Assignments

Review of Drobner, Hubertus R. *The Fathers of the Church*. **Please follow the instructions above. Due: December 7th 2010, 15%**

Please submit in the on-line box on the first day of class. There will also be two short (no more than 5-10 pages), primary source readings per class for the discussion sessions.

Major Research Project (45%) Due: Nov 16th

Students will produce a research paper of not less than 15 and not more than 20 pages in length. It is to be typed using 10-12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced. All supporting documentation and bibliography should be done in accordance with K. L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 7th edition, 2006. All versions of Microsoft Word use this as a template for theses and term papers, so I recommend this software to you. The paper should demonstrate a clear understanding of the doctrinal development of the issue under discussion. It should also seek to establish, by weight of evidence from the Scriptures and secondary sources, a thesis statement in relation to the doctrine under discussion. Please refer to the *Syllabus Supplement* (handed out on the first day of class) for expectations on the shape and format of a research paper. There you will find a list of possible subjects and bibliographic resources to get you started. You can request further guidance from me if you require it. MTh students must read all texts and write a 30-35 page paper on a topic worked out in consultation with the professor in such a way that the assignment clearly satisfies the requirements of the student's program.

Annotated Bibliography (25%) Due November 30th ,

Students are expected to develop an annotated bibliography that will serve as a future reference list of “must read” books for scholarly and pastoral practice. It should include, ***exclusively***, only the best available secondary sources for the study of the patristic period up to and including the fifth century. Along with the proper formatting style for bibliographies, students will also briefly describe the contents of the book with suggestions as to how it will help them in further scholarly and/or pastoral practice. At the end of this list students should also offer ***a reading list of 10 primary sources*** from the Patristic period. Full bibliographic citation, and description of where the source may be found is required, and annotation is needed for this section. Begin the bibliography with a heading for ***secondary sources*** and then one for ***primary sources***. Only secondary sources need annotation. You will want to avoid duplication with your research paper bibliography, though some overlap is acceptable. Please hand in on-line.

Assignment Guidelines:

- All assignments should be completed according to the Seminary format guidelines. Part of grading will be based on format. Papers must be of the required length (no longer or shorter) using 10-12-point type.
- ***Electronic assignment submissions only will be accepted. Assignments must be received before midnight on the due date unless specified for the beginning of class. Please submit them on the mycourses web site in the drop box provided.***
- There will be no extensions for course work except under extenuating circumstances.
- Extensions for course work are available by written application, submitted at least one day before the syllabus assignment due date, for a fee.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

See my *Syllabus Supplement* for information on special situations, extensions and school closure policies.

Important Academic Notes

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called "I forgot my password." When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

Paper Formatting: *Students need to adhere to Turabian format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used.*

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to "clean up" most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/.

Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 6th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Academic Honesty

A fundamental expectation, grounded in biblical ethics, for anyone involved in academic work at ACTS is that he/she practice academic honesty. Students must become familiar with, and adhere to, the principles and requirements associated with academic honesty. Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.