



The Ancient Church

Programmed Syllabus

Richard C. Gamble, Dr.theol.
Professor of Systematic Theology
Reformed Theological Seminary

INSTITUTE OF
THEOLOGICAL
STUDIES



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Course Description

We are indebted to the Church Fathers for the lasting influence of their lives and their works. This course covers the history of the ancient church (Pentecost to AD 500) and the men and writings of that era. Following a historical progression, the course covers the development of doctrine and the main figures in the Patristic Age. Lectures focus on influential men like Irenaeus, Origen, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Augustine. Significant creeds are also analyzed for their intentions, influence, and correctness. Throughout the course, students are prompted to evaluate their own beliefs as compared to historical orthodoxy.

Course Objectives

1. To understand the historical development of doctrine and how we came to believe what we do today.
2. To know the creeds of the church and how they came to exist.
3. To understand the theological mistakes of the past so as to prevent those errors from happening today.
4. To understand the history of interpretation of the Scriptures.
5. To appreciate the roots of today's church.
6. To appreciate the relation between church and state.
7. To understand church government and its different shapes.

Course Texts

1. Required Reading

Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 5th edition. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000.

Wiles-Santer. *Documents in Early Christian Thought*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977.



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2. Recommended Reading

Chadwick, H. *The Early Church*. Revised ed. London: Penguin Books, 1993.

3. Collateral Reading

NOTE: The student should read a minimum of **1000 pages** from the following selection of books on the ancient church.

Altaner-Stuiber. Tr. H. C. Graef. *Patrology*. Freiburg: Herder, 1960.

Armstrong, A.H. *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Boer, Harry P. *A Short History of the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976.

Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo*. London: Faber, 2000.

Chadwick, H. *The Early Church*. Revised ed. London: Penguin Books, 1993.

Copleston, F. *A History of Philosophy*, Vol 1. Reprint ed. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

Davies, J. G. *The Early Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980.

Danielou, Jean. *A History of Early Christian Doctrine*, 3 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster, John Knox, 1977.

Frend, W. H. C. *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965; reprint. ed. 1981.

Homes, Dudden F. *Saint Ambrose*, 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935.

Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 5th edition. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000.



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- Kidd, B. J. *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 3 vols. New York: AMC Press, 1976.
- Latourette, Kenneth S. *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. 1. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937-45.
- Lietzmann, H. *A History of the Early Church*. Vol. 1 and 2. Cambridge: James Clarke Company, 1993.
- Pollard, T.E. *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Prestige, G. L. *God in Patristic Thought*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Quasten, J. *Patrology*, 4 vols. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1983.
- Schaff, Philip, ed. *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. 14 vols. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956, reprint ed. 1988.
- _____. *History of the Christian Church*. 3rd edition. Vols. 1-3. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.
- Vander Meer, F. *Augustine the Bishop*. trans. Lamb Battershaw. London: Sheed and Ward, 1961.
- Warfield, Benjamin B. "Augustine," *Calvin and Augustine*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990.
- Wiles-Santer. *Documents in Early Christian Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.



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COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Whether you sit in a traditional classroom or study from a distance, you will benefit from interaction, collaboration, and spiritual formation (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 10.3.3.3; 10.3.4.3). In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ITS is developing structures and resources to encourage spiritual formation and community interaction in our courses. In this course, we have included three collaborative learning features:

1. ITS Online Interactivity Forum (see course requirements) – fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion (required for all students)
2. Spiritual Formation Project (see course requirements) – fosters mentor-to-learner interaction in a mentor-guided reflection, discussion and application (required for all students)
3. Learning Community Assignments (see end of syllabus) – fosters peer-to-peer collaboration in a group approach to assignments (optional but recommended where possible)

Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ for the most up-to-date ITS resources.

Course Requirements

1. In order to receive three semester (or four quarter) hours of credit, the student must complete the course requirements within a one-year period unless the particular institution requires the completion of all the work within the framework of the semester or quarter. During this time, the student is expected to devote a minimum of 120 hours to the completion of course requirements.
2. The student must listen carefully to all of the twenty-four (24) recorded lectures by Dr. Richard C. Gamble.
3. The student must complete **all** of the required readings.

Note: The student should complete the readings assigned in conjunction with a particular lecture **before** listening to that lecture.

4. The student must complete at least **1000 pages** of reading outside of the assigned required and recommended textbooks. These can be taken from the Bibliography under **Collateral Reading**. The student must report on a separate sheet indicating the title of the book, author, publisher, date of publication, and the pages read.
5. **Study Questions:** The student is required to make careful use of the Printed Study Guide prepared by Dr. Gamble and must turn in **written answers** to the



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questions, both in the *Printed Study Guide* as well as those in this *Programmed Syllabus*, to the instructor or supervisor. This should be done in typewritten form.

6. **Research Paper:** The student must complete a written project. This paper may be a traditional research paper or an examination of a particular area of interest in the ancient church and its bearing for today.

a. Examples of the former would be:

1. "The Development of the Papacy in the Church,"
2. "Persecution in the Ancient Church,"
3. "How Philosophical Views Impacted Doctrine,"
4. "Social Implications of Christianity Having Become the State Religion."

Such a paper must be a least **twenty pages in length**. It must be typed and double-spaced, and it must contain appropriate bibliographical notations.

b. Examples of the latter would be:

1. an examination of baptismal practices then and how that affects us today,
2. an examination of church discipline then drawing implications for today,
3. modern reflections on Chalcedonian doctrine, i.e., is it coherent?
4. worship in the church then and now. The report on such a project must be at least twenty pages in length. It must be typed and double-spaced, and it must contain appropriate bibliographical notations.

c. In either of the above written projects, the student's paper must be typed following the latest edition of K.L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. Submit one copy to the instructor and keep a carbon or photocopy for reference.

7. **ITS Online Interactivity Forum:** Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ to register for and enter the ITS On-Line Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment **after** you have listened to **all** the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:



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- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
- ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
- ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

NOTE: Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

8. **Spiritual Formation Project:**

RATIONALE: Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind**, ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. *Identify your mentor early in the course*, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

- 1. Personal Reflection and Evaluation: *Reflect on the course*** – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.
 - a. Follow these steps in your reflection:
 - Step 1: What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?
 - Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?
 - Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?



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Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what *specific steps* should you take to *concretely* apply what you have learned?

- b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)
 - c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).
- 2. Community Reflection and Interaction: *Interview a mentor*** – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:
- a. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
 1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
 2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
 3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
 4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
 5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
 6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.
- NOTE: ***Identify your mentor early in the course***, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”
- b. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
 - ◆ What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
 - ◆ In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
 - ◆ What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?
- NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.
- 3. Synthesis and Application: *Draw your final conclusions*** – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:



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- a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
- b. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - ◆ What were the mentor's comments regarding your essay?
 - ◆ What advice did he/she give?
 - ◆ How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
 - ◆ Include the person's name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
- c. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
 - ◆ If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your "Personal Reflection and Evaluation", how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - ◆ Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor's insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
 - ◆ In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, *specific* changes need to occur in your life and what *concrete* steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

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7. **Examinations:** The student will be required to take a one-hour Mid-Term examination and a two-hour Final examination.

Note to the Supervisor or Instructor: As to the examinations, any professor who is supervising this course in The Ancient Church should be familiar with the material covered in the Lectures and in the Programmed Syllabus.

Course Grading

1.	Written Answers to all Questions.....	15%
2.	Written Project.....	25%
3.	Mid-Term Examination	20%
4.	ITS Online Interactivity Forum	5%
5.	Spiritual Formation Project	15%
6.	Final Examination.....	<u>20%</u>
	Total	100%

NOTE: The student must turn in, with his written project, a sheet of paper on which is written a pledge that ALL required readings and 1000 pages of recommended and collateral readings have been completed. Failure to turn in such a statement will result in the lowering of the final grade by one letter.



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Notes Regarding This Downloaded Syllabus

This downloadable syllabus is not exhaustive. It is designed to provide learners with a picture of the course, not a full outline of the course. Grader Guidelines, Appendixes, Bibliographies, Lecture Outlines, and Review Questions have been removed. The complete course syllabus is included with purchase of the course in either a digital or hard-copy format.

Likewise, individuals taking the class for credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to alter or change the syllabus as deemed necessary.