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## CH 701 Ante-Nicene Patristic Literature

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## **CH 701 ANTE-NICENE PATRISTIC LITERATURE**

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3 credit hour units, Fall 2003  
Class: Wednesdays 1:00-3:45 pm  
Office Hours: Wed 3:45-4:45 pm, Thu 12:30-2:30 pm

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will explore the theology of the Patristic writings from the post-apostolic period (Apostolic Fathers) to Origen of Alexandria in terms of the Christian apology, the doctrine of God, the Word of God, Christology (the identity of Jesus Christ), and Trinity. We will do so in a manner that will enhance critical thinking as we discuss possible meanings of selected texts. This process, intense in many ways, should enhance the ability of students not only to understand the thought of Patristic study in greater depth, but also to think historically and critically. Beyond this, the course will be attentive to the relevance of the Ante-Nicene Christian literature for theology and ministry today.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Identify the major doctrinal themes in the early Christian theology.
2. Develop an awareness of the differing types of early Christian writings, how they functioned in the early Christian communities.
3. Learn historiographical concerns in the interpretation of patristic literature, especially within the Christian communities of the first three centuries.
4. Explore the interplay between religion and culture (church and society) especially in terms of the theological formation of the first three centuries as reflected in patristic literature.
5. Display an extensive knowledge of the theological distinctions and nuances employed by Ante-Nicene Fathers, especially the Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, and first Theologians in the development of the doctrine of God, the Word of God, Christology, and Trinity.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the continuing significance of the Ante-Nicene theology.
7. Articulate the relevance of the early Christian resources for effective ministry today.

### **REQUIRED BOOKS**

1. Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999).
2. Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).
3. John Behr, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons, On the Apostolic Preaching* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).
4. S. L. Greenslade, ed., *Early Latin Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1956).
5. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2 (Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).
6. Rowan A. Greer, *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer and Selected Works* (Paulist Press, 1979).

7. Use internet and produce your own copy:
  - a. Early Church Fathers: [www.ccel.org/fathers2/](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/)
  - b. New Advent: [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/)

### **COLLATERAL BOOKS**

#### **In ATS Bookstore and on Library Reserve:**

1. Phillip Schaff, ed., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.
2. John Behr, *Formation of Christian Theology, vol. 1: The Way to Nicea* (St. Vladimir Seminary's Press, 2001).

#### **On Library Reserve:**

3. Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology 1*. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1983.
4. Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology 2*. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1986.
5. Burns, J. Patout, ed. *Theological Anthropology*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.
6. Froehlich, Karlfried, ed. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
7. Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1978.
8. McKechnie, Paul. *The First Christian Centuries: Perspectives on the Early Church*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
9. Norris, Richard A., ed. *The Christological Controversy*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
10. Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition, vol. 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971.
11. Rusch, William G., ed. *The Trinitarian Controversy*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
12. Simonetti, Manlio, ed. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Matthew 1-13*, general ed. Thomas Oden. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
13. Tanner, Kenneth and Christopher A. Hall, eds. *Ancient and Postmodern Christianity: Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Essays in Honor of Thomas C. Oden)*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Attendance (5%) and Reading Assignments for Interaction (20%)**
  - a. You must complete all assigned readings prior to each class session (see 'the Course Schedule and Outline'). See "How to Read Academic Texts Critically."
  - b. Prepare a summary paper, highlighting major points of interest, for interaction (approximately 300-500 words, single spaced, with a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman, one inch margins, and in-text notes).
2. **Research/Presentation Essay Papers (40%)**
  - a. Choose two main texts from the selected texts (Please decide by the second class period).
  - b. Prepare a 5-to-6-page research paper each time. Papers are to be accompanied by **footnotes/endnotes/in-text notes and bibliographies** appropriately.
  - c. Make a 20-minute presentation during the assigned class time.

### Structure of Essays:

- 1) Define the problem posed by the text.
- 2) Briefly describe the state of research on the problem.
- 3) Evaluate the sources.
- 4) Analyze the sources in interaction with previous writers and your personal judgments and perspectives.
- 5) Summarize your conclusions.

### **3. Final Paper (35%)**

- a. Develop one of your research/presentation papers to a 15-20 page final paper (See "Criteria for Grading Research Papers").
- b. Turn it in by **Dec 10**, 1:00 pm.

### CRITERIA FOR GRADING PAPERS

1. Grasp of basic historical and theological information.
2. Appropriate use of primary and relevant secondary sources.
3. Attention to lessons the modern/postmodern Church can learn from the subject
4. Depth and creativity in handling subject.
5. Appropriate use of **Inclusive Language**: The seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is a mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary *2001-03 Catalog* stands as an example of recommended usage.
6. **Form of Written Work**: The use of Turabian **correctly** is of paramount importance (see Kate L. **Turabian's** *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*). All written work must be turned in **on time**. Late papers will be marked down one full letter grade unless you get permission for extension in the case of an extremely difficult situation. Papers are to be accompanied by **footnotes/endnotes/in-text notes** and **bibliographies** appropriately. See Handout 2 ("Turabian Style").
7. **Plagiarism**: Any student who commits plagiarism is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal.

### GRADING

A letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done:

- A** (95-100), **A-** (90-94)  
**B+** (87-89), **B** (83-86), **B-** (80-82)  
**C+** (77-79), **C** (73-76), **C-** (70-72)  
**D** (60-69), **F** (less than 60)

From the Seminary *2001-03 Catalog*, 28:

- A** Exceptional work: surpassing or outstanding achievement of course objectives  
**B Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives**  
**C** Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives  
**D** Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives  
**F** Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

**COURSE SCHEDULE & OUTLINE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignments</b>
<b>Sep 3</b>	Introduction	
	Overview	
<b>Sep 10</b>	On Patristic Studies	
	Heresies	Gnosticism, Ebionism, Marcionism, Montanism, Adoptionism, Sabellianism
<b>Sep 17</b>	<b>Apostolic Fathers</b> Letters	Clement of Rome (30-100), "I Clement," <i>AF</i> , 29-101 (37 p)
		Ignatius of Antioch (98-117), "Letters," <i>AF</i> , 136-201 (33 p)
<b>Sep 24</b>	Judaism and Christianity	"The Epistle of Barnabas," <i>AF</i> , 270-327 (29 p) (Interpretation of the Scripture)
	Community Manuals	"The Didache," <i>AF</i> , 246-69 (12 p)
<b>Oct 1</b>	Apocalyptic (post-baptismal sin and repentance)	"The Shepherd of Hermas," <i>AF</i> , 328-527 (100 p)
	Scripture and Canon	"The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians," <i>AF</i> , 202-21 (8 p)
<b>Oct 8</b>	Persecution and Martyrdom	The Martyrdom of Polycarp, <i>AF</i> , 222-45 (20 p)
		"An Exhortation to Martyrdom," <i>Origen</i> , 41-79 (39 p)
<b>Oct 15</b>	<b>Apologists</b> Anti-Judaic	"The Epistle to Diognetus," <i>AF</i> , 528-55 (14 p)
		Justin Martyr, "First Apology," <i>ANF I</i> , 159-93 (35 p-on reserve) Cf. Justin, "Dialogue with Tripho," <i>ANF I</i> , 194-270 (77 p)
<b>Oct 22</b>	Pagans	Tatian, "Address to the Greeks," <i>ANF II</i> , 59-83 (22 p-on reserve)
		Athenagoras, "A Plea for the Christians," <i>ANF II</i> , 123-48 (23 p-on reserve)
<b>Oct 29</b>	<b>Against Heresy</b> Irenaeus (120-200)	"Against Heresies (On the Detection and Refutation of the Knowledge Falsely So Called)," <i>Irenaeus of Lyons</i> , Robert M. Grant, 55-186 (131 p)
		"Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching," <i>St. Irenaeus of Lyons: On the Apostolic Preaching</i> , 39-100 (62 p)

<b>Nov 5</b> Ryan Lectures	Hippolytus (170-236)	"Refutation of All Heresies," <i>ANF V</i> , 9-153 (144 p-copy is on reserve)
	<b>Early Latin Theology</b> Tertullian (155-240)	"The Prescriptions Against the Heretics," <i>Early Latin Theology</i> , Greenslade, 25-82 (58 p) (contribution to the doctrine of the Trinity)
<b>Nov 12</b>	Cyprian (200-58)	"The Unity of the Catholic Church," <i>Early Latin Theology</i> , Greenslade, 119-42 (24 p)
		"The Problem of the Lapsed," <i>Early Latin Theology</i> , Greenslade, 143-46 (4 p) "The Baptismal Controversy," <i>Early Latin Theology</i> , Greenslade, 147-72 (26 p)
<b>Nov 19</b>	<b>Alexandrian Theology</b> Clement of Alexandria ( -215)	<i>Stromateis</i> (Miscellanies), <i>ANF II</i> , 299-567 "On Marriage (Miscellanies, Book III)," <i>Alexandrian Christianity</i> edited by Henry Chadwick, 40-92 (on reserve)
		"On Spiritual Perfection (Miscellanies, Book VII)," <i>ANF II</i> , 523-57
<b>Nov 26</b>	<b>READING WEEK</b>	
<b>Dec 3</b>	Origen (185-254)	Cf. Origen, "Against Celsus," <i>ANF IV</i> , 395-669 "De Principiis (On First Principles: Book IV)," <i>Origen</i> , 171-216 (45 p)
	On Patristic Studies	"The Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs," <i>Origen</i> , 217-44 (28 p)
<b>Dec 10</b>	Final Paper Due	

**Exploratory Topics/Questions** (adopted from CH711 taught by Steven O'Malley)

1. Assess the concept of “miracle” and how it was handled in early Christian writings.
2. With whom and for what reasons does the faith come to be defined in ethical and legal terms and how did this complicate the struggle to define the faith? (the problem of moralism, assess in light of one of the Apostolic Fathers).
3. What were the forces that influenced Christian speech in the age of the Apostolic Fathers and how do we evaluate their results? (sub-theme: What makes a statement Gnostic and what prevents it from being Gnostic?)
4. What is the difference between “rational” and “poetic” types of Christian speech? Are they reconcilable, and which is more suitable for Christian faith?
5. What was the role of prophecy and the prophets in the Apologists (see the Shepherd of Hermas Or Justin’s Apology)?
6. What was the understanding of martyrdom reflected in The Martyrdom of Polycarp?
7. What are the differences between the understanding of ethics in the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache (the “Two Ways”)?
8. How do the threats of schisms lead to a new understanding of authority in the church? Is this new understanding adequately rooted in Scripture (in your view)? (see Ignatius)
9. How does Irenaeus try to prevent surrendering the argument for God to non-Christian philosophy and to moralism?
10. Explain the relation between Irenaeus’ concept or recapitulation and salvation history.
11. What is the relation between the “institutional” and the “charismatic” aspects of the church of the Apostolic Fathers, Irenaeus or Tertullian, and how does the struggle between these aspects play a part in defining heresy and orthodoxy?
12. What issues were at stake in the quest for a canon of Scripture, and how did the canon address them? (see “R” symbol, or Muratorian fragment).
13. What was Tertullian’s position on church-state relations?
14. What was Tertullian’s understanding of sin?
15. Explain the interpretation of a specific biblical text in a writer or a group of writers (ex: Gen. 1-3, Isa. 6, Luke 2:52, or. . . )
16. How does the way the community of Christian speech is defined influence the message it proclaims? (assess in light of Irenaeus, Origen, or Tertullian)
17. “When a church does not come to terms with the language of the gospel, it will die by conforming to the world, and by losing the power to speak.” (LF). Assess in light of one heretical group from the first three centuries.
18. It may be said that twin dangers in the heresy/orthodoxy struggle involving syncretism and simple fideism are “eccentricity” and “sterility.” Select two contrasting faith stances in the second or third centuries to test this suggestion.
19. What brought about the shift to “cosmological” thinking in the early church, and with what results? (assess in light of Clement or Origen).
20. Explain the position of Clement of Alexandria or Tertullian on baptism.
21. What were the motives for the rise of allegorical exegesis in the patristic era and how did this complicate the struggle to define the faith? (assess in light of Clement or Origen).
22. What was the teaching of Clement of Alexandria?
24. Explain Origen’s approach to interpreting the Song of Songs.
25. What theological issues were at stake in the struggle between Origen and Celsus? Contra Celsum).