1-1-2006

CH 702 Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers

William P. Haugaard

Follow this and additional works at: http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi

Recommended Citation

http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/277

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the eCommons at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. For more information, please contact thad.horner@asburyseminary.edu.
The purpose of this course is to enable the student to become familiar with the developing understandings of God and of Jesus Christ in the growing Christian community from the post-apostolic age to the fifth century. As evangelists responded to those to whom they preached the gospel, they were challenged to develop the implications of the apostolic witness as they might be understood by the diverse peoples of Mediterranean world and beyond. Disagreements were integral to the process of developing common understandings. The polemical writings of church leaders, the debates at councils, and the creeds that emerged from those councils provide us with the story of the emergence of the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines that were to guide the church in the centuries to come. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to relate the materials of those early Christian centuries to the issues and problems of today as Christians attempt to understand for themselves and to proclaim to others the God whom they have come to know in Christ Jesus.

The course will be divided into two parts:

Part I: The emergence of the Trinitarian doctrine of God: from the post-apostolic age to the decisions of the Council of Constantinople (381) and Augustine’s theological explorations (399 - 419) [September 16 to October 28].

Part II: The related debates concerning the relation of divinity and humanity in the incarnate Jesus Christ through the Council of Chalcedon (451) [November 4 to December 16].

Required texts:

Source readings:

J. Stevenson & W. H. C. Frend, ed., *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*, SPCK


History of Christian thought:

Other histories of Christian thought in the Patristic age:
Students may wish to employ one of more of these alongside Hall; substitutions for assigned sections of Hall may be made in consultation with the instructor):

Justo L. González, *A History of Christian Thought* (revised edition), vol. 1: *From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*  
*Historia del Pensamiento Cristiano*, t. 1, *Desde los orígenes hasta el Concilio de Calcedonia*  
J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*  
vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*  
Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, editor, *A History of Christian Doctrine*

Requirements:

1. Completion of assigned reading for each part of the course in the two required texts by Kelly and Hall (or approved substitutions).

2. Completion of all weekly source readings as assigned for class discussion. Students will be assigned one or several of these selections for which they will be prepared to point out to the class:
   a) What specific texts do you find in this [these] source reading[s] that illustrate the particular concerns of the author[s] for the church’s understanding of God and/or Christ?  
   b) What is the larger context of the within which the author was writing?

3. Participation in discussions at all class sessions.

4. Two 75-minute exams, one after the completion of each part of the course (26 October and 30 November).

5. A paper of 3,000 to 4,000 words describing the contributions of one of the major participants in the development of the doctrines of God and of Christ from the first to the fifth centuries. For preparation of the paper, students will have been expected to read and draw upon at least one major writing of the theologian selected in addition to whatever may have appeared in the assigned source readings. Topic for paper will be due on November 16th. Progress and problems in developing paper to be discussed in class on November 30th after 2nd exam. Paper to be submitted to Instructor and distributed to Class Members by e-mail before 11:59 p.m., 11 December.

6. Reading of student papers (or assigned portion of them) before final class on December 14th.

Grading:

The final grade will be based on presentations and general participation in class discussions (35%), each examination (15%) , and paper (30%).
Part I: The emergence of the Trinitarian doctrine of God

Background reading [chapters in brackets contain materials that only indirectly concern course topics; they are not required reading for the course]:


Note that the following pages in these assigned chapters contain sections assigned in part II of the course, and, consequently, may be ignored here: pp. 63-64 in chapter 6, p. 73 in chapter 7, pp.107-109 in chapter 11, pp. 154-156 and 159-160 in chapter 14, and pp. 163-164 in chapter 16.

Note that the author provides references to both of the Stevenson/Frend source books (*NE & CCC*) by page numbers; assigned readings below in these books are listed by item numbers.

Weekly topics and source reading for discussion:

September 7 - Implicit understandings of God in the first 150 years of the Christian community and the challenges of Gnosticism, Montanism, and Marcion

* A New Eusebius: ‘s 10, 31, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42-80, 83, 84, and 89 [to be read for further discussion on September 23]

September 14 – The theological explorations of Irenæus and Tertullian

* A New Eusebius: ‘s 93, 96, 98, 102, 138, and 142-147

September 21 - Developing concepts of the God in the third century

* A New Eusebius: ‘s 110, 111,121-124, 126, 127, 160, 162-166, 175, 180-182, 225, 226, and 230

September 28 – Arius and the Council of Nicea

* A New Eusebius: ‘s 280-296

October 5 – Towards Constantinople: the aftermath of Nicea and Athanasius’ defense of ἕομούσιος

* A New Eusebius: ‘s 301 and 304
* Creeds, Councils and Controversies: ‘s 1, 4-11, 16-36, 40, 45-47, 63, and 143

October 12 - Towards Constantinople: the Holy Spirit and the contributions of the Cappadocians

* Creeds, Councils and Controversies: ‘s 64-68, 74(2), 79-86, 90-92, 96-98, 106, 112, 114, and 115
October 19 – The *de Trinitate* of Augustine of Hippo and western tradition

*Creeds, Councils and Controversies:* # 162

Selections from *de Trinitate* to be assigned
[available at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npcf103.i.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npcf103.i.html)

October 26 (First 75 minutes) – Exam #1.

**Part II: Divinity and humanity in the incarnate and risen Jesus Christ**

**Background reading** [chapters in brackets contain materials that only indirectly concern course topics of this part of the course; they are not required reading at this time]:

Stuart G. Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church*:

Note that the author provides references to both of the Stevenson/Frend source books (NE & CCC) by page numbers; assigned readings below in these books are listed by item numbers.

**Weekly topics and source reading for discussion:**

October 26 (Final 75 minutes) – The first three centuries

*A New Eusebius:* #’s 12, 27, 229

November 2 – Apollinarianism and the Council of Constantinople

*Creeds, Councils and Controversies:* #’s 68-74(1), 87, 93,

November 9 – Cyril, Nestorius and the Council of Ephesus

*Creeds, Councils and Controversies:* #’s 215-225

November 16 – The Formula of Reunion, Monophysitism, and the Council of Chalcedon

*Creeds, Councils and Controversies:* #’s 226-228, 237-246, 249, 250, 252

[Topics for papers to be submitteed to Instructor]

November 30 (First 75 minutes) - Exam #2

November 30 (Final 75 minutes) – Discussion of plans and progress for student papers.
December 7 - The legacy of Chalcedon and a glance at the second and third councils of Constantinople

*Creeds, Councils and Controversies:* # 229
Readings to be made available from Hardy, *Christology of the Later Fathers,* pp. 375-385 and Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (pp. 89-91).

Monday, December 11: Papers to be submitted to Instructor and distributed to class members via e-mail before 11:59 p.m.

December 14 - Discussion of student papers