

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

COURSE INFORMATION

PMP 2018-2019

Course OVERVIEW

This two credit course is designed to survey the history of the church from the time of the apostles up to the time of Gregory the Great, ca. AD 600. Besides the study of historical developments such as the rise of persecution, monasticism, and church councils, the contributions of the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, and the leading heretics and theologians of the period will be studied.

Course OBJECTIVES

1. The student will be able to outline the growth and main developments of the early church, including major periods of persecution, the monastic movement, the conciliar movement, the missionary impetus, and the beginnings of the papacy;
2. The student will be familiar with the key Christian and heretical writings of the early church;
3. The student will know the leading theologians and their teachings, as well as the main controversies of the first four church councils;
4. The student will be able to trace the beginnings and fallacies of the papacy.

Course OUTCOMES

1. Students will gain confidence that the early church continued in the teachings of the apostolic church, as opposed to the modern notion that early heretics had a legitimate claim to Jesus; further, students will see that today's churches that follow the apostles' doctrine are in the same stream flowing out of the early church.
2. Students will come to expect that most of today's heterodox teachings are not new but may be discovered in the heresies of the early church period.
3. Students will appreciate the simple tenets of the early church that emphasize worship "in spirit and in truth," faithfulness in prayer, and advance of the church through covenant succession and the Great Commission; at the same time, students will be able to relate the weaknesses of monasticism and forms of Christian mysticism.
4. Students will be able to define orthodox doctrines and understand why orthodoxy must be defended.

Reading assignments

- Due November 30 Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*, pp. 1-155 (Ancient Church section)
- December 31 Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, Part I (pp. 1-95)
- Due March 31 One of the following Primary Sources:
 - 1) *The Apostolic Fathers*, edited by J.B. Lightfoot -OR-
 - 2) *The Confessions of St. Augustine* -OR-
 - 3) *Ecclesiastical History* by Eusebius

Book Reviews

1. Write a three page synopsis of the "primary source" book you chose. Highlight the importance of the early work besides giving its substance. Due April 12.
2. Choose a book outside of your original source readings, either that surveys the entire period of the early church (Boer's *Short History of the Early Church* is recommended) or one that develops an idea, trend, person, or event of the era. The book should be at least 200 pages and the review should be at least three typed pages (double spaced). This assignment is exclusive of primary source reading. Due May 31.

Exams

- Mid-term Exam through Emperor Diocletian (Study Question 33) due February 15
- Final Exam due July 1

Grading

Exams	55%	Readings	25%
Book Reviews	10%	Class Participation/Review	10%