

Spring 2023 Course of Study  
COS 222: THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE II: EARLY CHURCH  
Session dates: February 17-18; March 18; April 22

**Instructor Information:**

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**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the history and theology of the Church through the first five centuries. Using primary sources, students will reflect on significant individuals, events, and the articulation of the Christian faith during this period.

Students will be able to:

1. Understand and articulate the doctrine of the Trinity, and the historical debates in the early Church around the person and nature of Christ.
2. Understand and articulate a doctrine of salvation in light of controversies within the early church.
3. Understand the history of the creeds and ecumenical councils.
4. Appropriate historical theology for pastoral ministry

**Textbooks:**

- Bondi, Roberta. *To Love as God Loves*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987 (ISBN 9780800620417)
- González, Justo. *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. 2nd ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. (ISBN 9780061855887)
- Saint Augustine. *Confessions* (Translated with an Introduction by R.S. Pine-Coffin). New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1961. (ISBN 978-0143105701)

**Reference Book:**

- Henry Bettenson & Chris Maunder, Editors. *Documents of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. Oxford University Press, 2011. (ISBN 9780199568987)

**Writing and Submission of Assignments:**

All assignments for the class should be submitted through our Moodle page in Word format. All assignments should be double-spaced, 12-point font, and margins of 1 inch on all sides. I do not need lots of header content taking up space at the beginning of an assignment either, your name and the name of the assignment is enough. Files should also be named in a similar fashion with last name, assignment title (example: "White, Creedal Statement"). References can be noted by any means of standard practice (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). I am not specific about the style of formatting as long as all references are made such to avoid plagiarism and formatting is consistent in style.

Grading will follow the Grade Policy in the "Indiana Course of Study Student Manual."

## **February 17-18**

### Topics:

- The First Century Church
- Persecution and Response in the Second Century

### Read:

- González, Chapters 1-7
- Bondi, Chapters 1-3
- Bettenson, Sections I-III (This is a reference book. Read articles that are appropriate to your interest and as needed for writing papers.)

### Write:

#### **Assignment #1, part A - Creedal Statement (3 pages) – Due February 15**

1. After you have completed the assigned reading from the textbook, type a one page statement of your personal beliefs about either: 1) the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or, 2) the relationship between the divine and the human in Jesus Christ. Your textbook and traditions should inform this statement but avoid explicit citation/quotation of printed sources in this personal statement of your own belief. You may cite the Bible by book, chapter and verse as a reference, **but avoid lengthy quotations from it.**
2. Think of one or more objections to a specific part of your creedal statement. Describe and then explain the objection(s) in 1 page, beginning with the following phrase: “It may be argued that . . .”
3. Finally, defend and reaffirm your initial statement of belief against the argument(s) that you have raised (1 page). Give at least one persuasive reason for your audience to believe your creedal statement in the face of the objection(s) that you have described.

#### **Assignment #1, part B (2pages) – Due February 15**

1. Read *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* (PDF supplied by instructor.)
2. Give three reasons, with explanation, why this writing would have fit well into the New Testament cannon. Give three reasons, with explanation, why it would not.

## **March 18**

### Topics:

- Early Theologies and Teachers in the Third Century
- Persecution and Response in the Third Century
- The Imperial Church
- Persecution and Response in the Imperial Church

### Read:

- González, Chapters 8-18
- Bondi, Chapters 4-6
- Bettenson, Sections IV-VI

Write:

**Assignment #2, part A - Sermon on Loving as God Loves in the Early Church (4 pages) – Due March 15**

Read all of Roberta Bondi's book, *To Love as God Loves*. Bondi states that "being a Christian means learning to love as God loves and that this is what all that we have talked about up until this point has been about." (107). With a focus of learning from the early Church to love as God loves, write a sermon that proposes to provide information and inspiration to your audience to love with the type of love taught and lived by the early Christian monastics described by Bondi.

You may use other sources in sermon, including the Bible, but it must satisfy the following requirements.

1. It must be four (4) **full** pages in length, and no more than five (5) pages (double-spaced, one-inch margins, standard font type and size – see above).
2. As part of the focus and purpose of your sermon, quote at least two of the monastic sources quoted by Bondi in her book.
3. Name the ancient monastic in your sermon.
4. Cite the original source in an endnote or footnote (see abbreviations and bibliography of sources cited on pp. 110-11 of Bondi's book), and also cite the page in Bondi where the ancient monastic is quoted and cited. Also include a bibliography at the end of your sermon (this is NOT part of the 4 page count). The Bible does not need to be included in your bibliography, although you may cite it in your sermon, but avoid lengthy quotations from it.

**Assignment #2, part B – Due March 15 (2 pages)**

In addition to the four-page sermon, provide a specific and detailed (at least one paragraph in length for each of these terms) discussion of the importance of the following terms and ideas for Christian love as described by Bondi and the early monastics:

- a. Love
- b. Humility
- c. The Passions
- d. Prayer
- e. God

**April 22**

Topics:

- Pillars of the Faith in the Empire
- Augustine
- The End of an Era

Read:

- González, Chapters 19-26
- Augustine, *Confessions*
- Bettenson, Sections VII-X

Write:

**Assignment #3, part A – Book Review of Augustine’s *Confessions* (4 pages) – Due April 24**

Your book review should have the following components:

1. Introduction (one or two paragraphs)
  - Brief overview of the theme, purpose and your evaluation
2. Summary of the content (about two pages)
  - Brief summary of the key points of each chapter or group of chapters
  - Paraphrase the information, but use a short quote when appropriate
3. Evaluation and conclusion (about one page)
  - Give your opinion about the book. Is the book easy to read or confusing? Is the book interesting, inspiring, instructive? Does the author support his arguments well? What are the book’s greatest strengths and weaknesses? Who would you recommend the book to?

**Assignment #3, part B (2 pages) – Due April 24**

1. Create a list that addresses the following statement in ranked order with #1 being the most important (2 pages):
  - The top ten reasons that Early Church History shapes or challenges my theology are: (Include a brief explanation for each item in the list.)
2. This project will be graded based on the extent to which it accurately and specifically refers to aspects of Early Christianity (for example, a person, event, idea, teaching, or action), and explicitly describes the effects on your theology. Additional explanation and instructions will be provided during the first day of class.

Other smaller written assignments may be made during class.