



# Birmingham Theological Seminary

*Early & Medieval Church History*

*HT 4528*

Time: Thursday, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Room: A-202, Briarwood Presbyterian Church

Instructor: Dr. Edward Waldron

## Course Description:

The course will *survey* the history of Christianity from approximately ~300 A.D. up to, but not including, the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. We will *survey* the major movements, doctrines, persons, and institutions that arose within the church and affected its development during this time. Our emphasis will be the development of doctrinal understanding in the church as well as careful study of selected key individuals whose lives should inspire us to biblical faithfulness today.

## Textbooks

- 1.) *The History of Christian Thought: The Fascinating Story of the Great Christian Thinkers and How They Helped Shape the World As We Know It Today* by Jonathan Hill
- 2.) *History of Christian Doctrines* by Louis Berkhof

## Course Objectives

The student who completes this course will be able to:

- ❖ Have a general knowledge of the history of the church from the end of the first century through the early sixteenth century
- ❖ Have an understanding of the major theological developments in the history of the church from the end of the first century through the early sixteenth century
- ❖ Be familiar with some of the more important theological terms and concepts and thus better equipped to understand and engage intelligently in theological discussion
- ❖ Be spiritually enriched through an encounter with the work of great Christians of the past
- ❖ Be able better to struggle with the difference between truth and error through an encounter with the thought of past generations of professing Christians.

## Course Goals:

These objectives bring us to three overarching goals.

1. To become more faithful interpreters of God's Word
2. To become better servants of the Lord
3. To apply and actually, fully, and faithfully utilize the history, principles, and biographies, we learn which for the purpose of bringing the unsaved to the saving work of the Cross.

## Class Calendar

- September 10 - Introduction to Class, Policies, Goals/Aims. Review of Sources.
- September 17 - Tertullian & Justin Martyr, Irenaeus - One God, three substances, **Hill** - p. 16-38; **Berkhof** - 37-61.
- September 24 - Origen, Clement of Alexandria, **Hill** - p. 39-59, Arianism, Athanasius, & The Council of Nicea, 325 — The Trinity Defended, **Hill** - pp.60-69; **Berkhof** — pp. 62-80
- October 1 - Council of Constantinople, 381 - Against Nestorianism & Council of Ephesus (431), Council of Chalcedon (451). **Hill** - pp. 70-113 - **Berkhof** - 83-98, 203-206.
- October 8 - Augustine. **Hill** - pp. 79-91. **Berkhof** - 92f; 134-140; 169; 206 f; 227-236; 248 f; 252.
- October 15 - FALL BREAK. NO CLASS, BUT READING. Cyril of Alexandria, Importance of the Byzantine Empire - **Hill** 92 - 112; **Berkhof** 105 f.
- October 22 - The Middle Ages Intro. & The Great Schism, pp.114-144. **Berkhof**-140–146,165-181
- October 29 - The Church's intellectual horsepower - The Monastic Life, Mendicant Orders of the Church — Dominican, Augustinian, Franciscan **Hill** - 147-149.
- November 5 - The Church Learns even more, the Uni-veritas. The Rise of the Papacy, Innocent III.
- November 12 - Thomas Aquinas and *Summa Theologica* **Hill** - pp. 149-161. **Berkhof** - pp. 114 f; 177 f; 212-214.
- December 3 - William of Ockham & John Duns Scotus, Bonaventure. **Hill** - 163 -169. **Berkhof** - 176 f; 179 f; 214.
- December 10 - Medieval Mysticism **Hill** - 167-177 - Medieval Church Disciplines and what we see in these disciplines today - Jesuits, etc.
- December 11th - Final Papers due, no exceptions. Discussion.

## Grades:

1.) Class Discussion - 25% You will be assigned to lead a class discussion. Your grade will be based off of your ability to ask questions of your peers, elicit responses, usage in practical ministry.

2.) Critique of Augustine or the Monastic Life - 25% - 7 page minimum, according to BTS Paper standards. This paper will be graded according to the following: 25% for each  
Please note: The use of resources in Logos **will NOT** be allowed for this particular paper. You may use Logos to jumpstart your research.

Your grade will be calculated as follows: 25% for each of the following:

- a. Following the format as contained in the BTS Standards guide.
- b. Selection of resources
- c. Analysis of Topic
- d. The clarity of the paper's presentation. Can it be outlined?

3.) Final Paper: 50% — 15 page minimum. Written to BTS standards.

Write a Program of how you:

- a.) Plan to incorporate the disciplines of Medieval Christianity into your own personal ministry,
- b.) Plan to use this knowledge in Sermons (with practical examples marrying Scripture passages to your learning)
- c.) how you will incorporate this into the lives of your young people.

Your grade will be calculated as follows: 25% for each of the following:

- a. Following the format as contained in the BTS Standards guide.
- b. Selection of resources
- c. Analysis of Topic
- d. The clarity of the paper's presentation. Can it be outlined?

#### Other Selected Readings/Bibliography

Justo Gonzales. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation, Volume I.*

Bruce Shelly. *Church History in Plain Language*, 4th Ed.

Everett Ferguson. *Church History: From Christ to Pre-Reformation, Volume I.*

Alister McGrath. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought.*

William Rusch, ed. and trans. *The Trinitarian Controversy.*

Michael A. G. Haykin. *Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church.*

Noll, M. A. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity.*

Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 2: The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700).*

Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*