

PATRISTICS

Course Description

This course is a study of Patristic texts, from both Eastern and Western Church Fathers. It will introduce the student to some of the theological writings that reflect the formative period of the Church's history. Students will examine some of the following theological themes in the Early Church Fathers: Trinity, Christology, soteriology, theological anthropology, ecclesiology, Patristic exegesis, and sacramental theology. The goal of the course is not only to introduce students to some of the foundational reflections in each of these areas, but to help them understand how the Church Fathers thought about the faith, and to help them understand the importance of the questions the Church Fathers were seeking to answer.

Course Goals and Objectives

Theological

Goal: Students will understand and appreciate the perennial importance of the Early Church Fathers in the life of the Church.

Objectives: Students will...

1. understand and appreciate the foundational contributions of the Early Church Fathers to the development of Church teaching.
2. understand the challenges surrounding the development of Church teaching as evidenced in the writings of the Early Church Fathers.
3. understand the importance of the Early Church Fathers as witnesses to Tradition.
4. understand the thought world and religious and intellectual culture of the early Church, so as to continue reading in the area, and also to read medieval and modern theology with a sense of the origins of Tradition.

Professional

Goal: Students will explore the corpus of the Early Church Fathers, appreciating the vast treasure present therein.

Objectives: Students will...

1. read the Church Fathers with a discerning eye.
2. develop analytical skills as others probe their interpretations of the writings of the Early Church Fathers.

Personal

Goal: Students will grow in their faith as a result of their exposure to the writings of the Early Church Fathers.

Objectives: Students will...

1. appreciate the enduring relevance of the Early Church Fathers to contemporary theology and the life of the Church.
2. develop a critical acceptance of the strengths and weaknesses of the Early Church Fathers.
3. develop a personal solidarity with the Early Church Fathers, seeing them as friends and assimilating their spirit.

Grading Criteria

The percentage listed after each criterion represents the weighted distribution that each will have in calculating the final grade.

Weekly Online Forum and Conference Calls	30%
Responses to Guided Reading Questions	35%
Final Examination	35%

Textbooks - Required

Benedict XVI. *Church Fathers: From Clement of Rome to Augustine*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008.

Benedict XVI. *Church Fathers: From Saint Leo the Great to Peter Lombard*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010.

Robert Louis Wilken. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

In addition, other materials will be provided by the professor throughout the semester in the form of online postings.

Course Requirements

Responses to Guided Reading Questions: Students will be expected to be able to address guided reading questions that the professor distributes in association with each assigned text. As evidence that the student has read the material and has attempted to answer these questions the student will submit brief responses to the guided reading questions. Responses to the guided reading questions will be graded based upon whether the student's responses evidence an attentive reading of the text (not necessarily whether the student has the correct response, as some questions will be more obvious than others). The responses need not be long and may be in outline or bullet-point format, but the student must indicate, with brief citations, where he found the answers in the assigned texts. For answers that are inadequate points will be deducted from the total number of questions given throughout the semester.

Learning Modules

Module 1	Foundational Reflections
Module 2	Foundational Reflections
Module 3	Patristic Exegesis
Module 4	Trinity
Module 5	Trinity
Module 6	Christology
Module 7	Christology
Module 8	Ecclesiology
Module 9	Sacraments
Module 10	Sacraments
Module 11	Theological Anthropology
Module 12	Theological Anthropology

Final Examination: The final examination will cover all material covered in the class from the beginning of the semester. Questions on the examination will be based on the final exam study guide.