



CH461: Introduction to Historical Theology Fall 2016



United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
Online Hybrid Class

Intensive On-Site Face-to-Face Meetings: October 27-29

Instructor: Paul E. Capetz

pcapetz@unitedseminary.edu

Teaching Assistant: Brian Braskich

bbraskich@unitedseminary.edu

Course Description

This course introduces students to the history of Christian theology from the beginnings of the patristic period (c. 100 CE) to the eve of the Enlightenment (c. 1750). We will survey the historical development of the three main branches of Christianity (i.e., Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and the varieties of classical Protestantism), studying several of the major theological figures associated with each of them. One main purpose of our class is to identify certain perennial issues within Christian theology. Another purpose is to understand how these classical theologians adapted inherited Christian beliefs to new understandings and cultural situations, thereby striving to balance fidelity to the past with responsible theological creativity. Understanding this will enable us to account for the dynamism and diversity of historical Christian theology as well as give us insight into how we might become critically reflective theologians in our own right who are able to balance critical deference to the past with responsiveness to our own contexts.

Class Format

Since this is an introductory survey course, no prior knowledge of the history of Christian theology is presupposed. Nonetheless, it is crucial for you to gain a solid knowledge of each figure and historical period studied before moving on to the next figure and historical period.

This is a hybrid class, i.e., it combines online learning with 3 days of intensive face-to-face class time with the instructor and your fellow students.

As in any online class, it is your responsibility to keep up with the weekly reading assignments, listen to the lectures and view the power point presentations, write and submit the papers on time, participate in the discussion forums and other tasks, and thereby gradually to prepare yourself for the final exam.

There is also a “study guide” containing a list of questions about the readings and the contents of the course; you should be able to answer **all** of these questions before the end of the semester! A good way to make sure you are learning what you are supposed to learn is to check your own understanding of the texts and the contents of the course by seeing how well you can answer these questions and can point to the various places in our texts where these questions are answered.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will

1. understand and be able to articulate the major theological emphases of the three main traditions of classical Christianity: Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism (including the varieties of Protestantism);
2. understand and be able to articulate the theological thought of some of the major figures within each of these traditions (e.g. Athanasius, Augustine, Luther);
3. be able to read classical theological texts of the Christian tradition intelligently and to locate them in their respective historical contexts;
4. understand the various factors that were influential in the formulation, adoption, and evolution of major Christian doctrines; and
5. be able to reflect theologically on the central questions and issues that are raised in the classic texts being studied in this class (e.g. the nature of sin and salvation, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Trinity, justification and sanctification, etc.).

By achieving these course outcomes, students will in turn work toward fulfilling multiple degree and concentration outcomes, including (but not limited to)

1. broad, basic acquaintance with the academic discipline of theology and a particular branch within it;
2. broad, basic acquaintance with significant portions of the biblical origins and subsequent major lines of development of the Christian tradition up to modern times;
3. the ability to engage critically and constructively with the theological, cultural, and historical expressions of one's tradition;
4. the ability, at a basic level, to analyze and evaluate faith traditions in relation to their contexts and one's own context(s); and
5. mastery of the tools of academic research and writing assumed at the graduate level of theological inquiry.

All of these learning outcomes will be accomplished by

1. completing the assigned readings and learning their contents thoroughly;
2. “attending class” regularly (i.e., setting aside time each week to do your assignments in the online classroom), paying attention to lectures, and actively participating in online discussions;
3. writing three short exegetical-analytical papers that interpret the major theological arguments of selected texts; and
4. completing an open-book final exam comprised of identification of technical theological terms and two essay questions (you’ll have 24 hours to complete this assignment).

Criteria for Evaluation and Grading Scale

Participation	10%
Three Short Papers	60% (20% each)
Final Exam	30%

93-100 = A	80-82 = B-	67-69 = D+
90-92 = A-	77-79 = C+	63-66 = D
87-89 = B+	73-76 = C	60-62 = D-
83-86 = B	70-72 = C-	59-0 = F

Course Assignments

1. Attendance, Participation, and Preparation

Precisely because this is an online course, your weekly “attendance” is essential. It takes a great deal of discipline to complete an online course successfully so you should plan to make time each week to listen to the lectures, view the power point presentations, do the assigned readings, and participate in the threaded discussions.

2. Three Short Papers

Students will write three short (3 double-spaced pages) exegetical-analytical papers interpreting the major theological arguments in selected texts. These papers will be written on topics to be assigned beforehand. Their purpose is to indicate the extent to which students understand the primary texts and are able to articulate their central ideas coherently and succinctly.

The papers are due by 11:59 p.m. on the following dates:

Paper 1: October 2

Paper 2: November 6

Paper 3: December 4

Papers will be graded according to the following rubrics:

- A (Excellent): A paper meriting the grade of “A” is about as good as a paper can possibly be. With respect to understanding the subject matter of the text(s) assigned, an excellent paper reflects a careful and nuanced grasp of the main issues and positions of the author(s). Moreover, such a paper is well organized and elegantly written, using proper grammar and syntax as well as the appropriate forms of citation (preferably Turabian or MLA) expected of academic writing.
- B (Good): A paper meriting the grade of “B” is a solid paper. It shows a firm grasp of the main issues and positions of the author(s), though usually with some problems in understanding needing to be

remedied by further study. A good paper may also stand in need of a little more work regarding style of writing, grammar, citation methods, etc.

- C (Satisfactory): A paper receiving a grade of “C” is passing. It shows indication of having grasped something of importance in the text(s) assigned, but clearly there is still much to learn regarding the theological content under examination. Such a paper likely has minor grammatical, syntactical, mechanical, and/or stylistic problems (i.e. ones that do not interfere with comprehension).
- D (Poor): A paper receiving a grade of “D” is barely passing. It shows very little sign of having grasped the key issues. D papers usually have severe grammatical, syntactical, mechanical, and/or stylistic problems (i.e. ones that interfere with comprehension).
- F (Failing): A paper receiving a grade of “F” is a failing paper. It does not follow the paper guidelines, misinterprets or distorts the sources, and completely violates the conventions of academic writing.

The indicators + (plus) and – (minus) indicate where a student is within the range of each of these letter grades.

3. Final Exam

On the last day of class (), students will take an open-book final exam, in which they will answer two essay questions as well as identify and define a number of technical theological terms. The final exam will test your mastery of the content of the course and your ability to interpret it.

The “CH461 Study Guide” is designed to help you prepare for the final exam. It consists of questions asked of each of the assigned readings and topics under consideration. Since it is not possible to address all of these questions during the lectures and discussions, your reading of the assigned texts with the CH461 Study Guide in hand is the only way to master the material of this course. Students will be responsible for knowing the meaning of any technical terms (including foreign words) referred to in this set of questions. **There will be nothing on the final exam that is not already included in the CH461 Study Guide.** However, students should make sure that they comprehend and can answer each question posed there.

Required Texts

Books Available for Purchase on Amazon.com (and On Reserve in the Spencer Library)

Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (Touchstone, 1997).

Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*, Second Ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

William C. Placher, *Readings in the History of Christian Theology, Volume 1: From Its Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation* (Westminster John Knox, 1988).

John H. Leith, ed. *Creeds of the Churches* (John Knox, 1982).

Saint Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. John Behr (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011).

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Penguin, 1961).

Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Elizabeth Spearing (Penguin 1998).

Martin Luther, *Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (Anchor, 1962).

Readings on Moodle = (M)

John Calvin, *Selections from Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In *The Protestant Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Harper Perennial, 2009).

Albert C. Outler, ed. *John Wesley* (Oxford, 1964).

David B. Parke, *The Epic of Unitarianism* (Starr King, 1957).

List of Online Recorded Lectures:

- Lecture 1a: "What is Historical Theology and Why is It Important?"
- Lecture 1b: "What is Christianity?"
- Lecture 2a: "Orthodoxy versus Heresy: Beyond Adoptionism and Docetism"
- Lecture 2b: "The Development of an Apostolic Tradition"
- Lecture 3a: "The Arian Controversy, Athanasius, and the Nicene Creed"
- Lecture 3b: "Debating the Personhood of Christ: The Chalcedonian Compromise"
- Lecture 4a: "The Doctrine of the Trinity"
- Lecture 4b: "Augustine: His Many Conversions and His Incomparable Legacy"
- Lecture 5a: "Augustine's Doctrine of the Church: The Donatist Controversy"
- Lecture 5b: "Augustine's Doctrine of Grace: The Pelagian Controversy"
- Lecture 6a: "Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, and Scholastic Theology"
- Lecture 6b: "The Middle Ages and the Monastic Ideal"
- Lecture 7a: "Julian of Norwich and Late Medieval Catholic Spirituality"
- Lecture 7b: "From Reforms to Reformation: Protestantism in Context"
- Lecture 8a: "Martin Luther: Justification by Faith Alone"
- Lecture 8b: "Humanism: Huldrych Zwingli and the Reformed Tradition"
- Lecture 9a: "Word and Sacrament: The Eucharistic Debate"
- Lecture 9b: "The Reformation in Medieval and Modern Perspective"
- Lecture 10a: "Gospel and Law: The Theology of John Calvin"
- Lecture 10b: "Scripture and Tradition: Conflicts of Authority in the Reformation Era"
- Lecture 11a: "Anabaptism, Unitarianism, and the Radical Reformation"
- Lecture 11b: "The English Reformation and the Rise of Puritanism"
- Lecture 12: "John Wesley and the Arminian Challenge to Calvinism"

Course Calendar

(Before the first week of class officially begins, PRINT OUT THE SYLLABUS and READ IT from start to finish so that you know what to expect in this class; also take time to FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF with the MOODLE PAGE for this class.)

Week 1 Introduction to the Course (9/5-11)

- Lecture 1a
- Lecture 1b
- "Six Theses on Historical Theology" (M)

Week 2 Orthodoxy, Heresy, and the Development of an Apostolic Tradition (9/12-18)

Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, pp. 49-110

Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 1-33
McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 16-35
“Non-Canonical Texts” (M)

Lecture 2a
Lecture 2b
Lecture 3a

Week 3
(9/19-25)

Church Councils, Christological Controversies, and the Doctrine of the Trinity

Placher, *Readings in the History of Christian Theology*, pp. 48-75
McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 36-62
“Five Theses on Patristic Theology” (M)

Lecture 3b
Lecture 4a

Week 4
(9/26-10/2)

The Life and Theology of Saint Augustine

Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 21-132
Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 37-45
McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 62-73

Lecture 4b
Lecture 5a
Lecture 5b

FIRST PAPER DUE (October 2 by 11:59 p.m.)

Week 5
(10/3-9)

Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, and Scholastic Theology

Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 133-205
Placher, *Readings in the History of Christian Theology*, pp. 144-151, 156-164
McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 73-84, 90-96, 98-109

Lecture 6a
Lecture 6b

Week 6
(10/10-16)

Julian of Norwich and Medieval Mysticism

Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, pp. 41-180

Lecture 7a

(10/17-23) **READING WEEK** (There are no new assignments; just catch up on your reading!)

(10/24-30) **HYBRID WEEK: On-Site Classroom Experience** (October 27-29)

Week 7 Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation

(10/31-11/6)

Luther, *Selections from His Writings*, pp. 3-96

Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 63-107

McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 84-86, 92-93, 115-123

Lecture 7b

Lecture 8a

Week 8 SECOND PAPER DUE (November 6 by 11:59 p.m.)

(11/7-13)

Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, and the Sacramental Controversy

Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 56-61

Luther, *Selections from His Writings*, pp. 249-359

McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 124-141, 164-176

Lecture 8b

Lecture 9a

Lecture 9b

Week 9 John Calvin, the Reformed Tradition, and the Nature of Authority

(11/14-20)

Calvin, *Selections from Institutes*, in Hillerbrand, *Protestant Reformation*, pp. 213-254 (M)

Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 399-442

McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 146-163

Lecture 10a

Lecture 10b

(11/21-27) **THANKSGIVING WEEK** (no new assignments, just catch up on your reading!)

Week 10 The Radical Reformation, the English Reformation, and the Rise of Puritanism

(11/28-12/4)

Parke, *The Epic of Unitarianism*, pp. 1-29 (M)

Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 281-308, 230-281, 192-230

Lecture 11a

Lecture 11b

THIRD PAPER DUE (December 4 by 11:59 p.m.)

Week 11 The Arminian Controversy and John Wesley
(12/5-11)

Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 353-385

Outler, *John Wesley*, pp. 252-298, 425-472, 492-499 (M)

Lecture 12

Week 12 Final Exam (December 15-16)
(12/12-18) The Final Exam will be uploaded to the Moodle course page on December 15 and is
due on December 16th. For more details please see Week 12 on the Moodle course page.

Policies

Academic Excellence

We affirm the academy as the place for public reason and human experience examined critically. (All work and discussion is expected to adhere to the Academic Excellence Policy in the *Masters Student Handbook*.)

Petition for Extensions

The work for this course must be completed by the end of the final class session. The performance in the course is evaluated on the basis of the work submitted by that time, unless an exception is made by the instructors. Extensions of time to complete course work beyond the end of the final class session will be approved only under **extraordinary** circumstances (e.g. a family emergency, a health crisis, etc.). If an exception is made, the instructors must agree to the extension by the end of the final class session and the student must complete the Petition for Extension form to be submitted in lieu of a grade. If the student is unable to negotiate the extension by the end of the final class session due to critical health issues, the student is responsible for seeing that the instructors are notified as soon as possible and then negotiating the extension promptly. If no petition for extension is filed, a final grade will be submitted.

Copyright Compliance

All work in this class is expected to follow the Copyright Compliance Policy in the *Masters Student Handbook*. The full Copyright Policy is at the Circulation desk in the Spencer Library.

Academic Integrity

All work in this class is expected to follow the Academic Integrity Policy in the *Masters Student Handbook*.

Inclusive Language

All work in this class is expected to follow the Inclusive Language Policy in the *Masters Student Handbook*.

Email Communications

To be in compliance with FERPA regulations, email communications from the faculty and staff of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities will be handled via UTS email only. Instructions for setting up forward or redirection of messages is available on the Student Services section on Moodle.