

CH5056 The History of Doctrine I:

The Apostolic Fathers through the Council of Chalcedon

Summer Quarter 2016 (20 June – 1 July)
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Mequon, Wisconsin

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of the history of early Christian thought. We consider the diverse historical and cultural settings of the early church, but focus on the theological and doctrinal development that occupied the Christian Church from the Post-Apostolic period through the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). This course is intended to help the student reflect systematically and critically upon the historical development of major themes within early Christianity.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

1. The student will explore the historical development of the major doctrines of Christian theology in the early Church, noting the formulation and modification of each teaching as individuals wrestled with how best to explain scriptural truth.
2. The student will gain insight into the historical course and issues in the formulation of doctrine so as to be able not only to know how theological conceptions changed, but most importantly, why they changed.
3. The student will gain appreciation for the major formulation of Systematic Theology.
4. The student will synthesize the historical trends that have emerged in areas of theology.
5. The student will develop the tools to evaluate the various aspects of historical doctrines.
6. That the student will begin to develop a familiarity with available bibliographic and original source materials.

III. KEY THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- The extent of the New Testament canon
- The role of tradition
- The relation of Christian theology and secular culture
- The fixing of the ecumenical creeds
- The two natures of Jesus Christ
- The doctrine of the Trinity
- The doctrine of the church
- The doctrine of grace
- The sacraments
- Eschatology

IV. COURSE MATERIALS

1. All required materials will be provided in printed form. They will also be available digitally via Seminary Online.
2. Supplementary materials will found on the Library Reserve Shelf, as well as in the Library stacks.

V. ASSIGNMENTS

- The daily reading assignments are the most important part of the course's assignments, as class discussion will consider the required reading for that day.
- The students will have the opportunity to express themselves in a final written assignment in place of a final exam. The paper will give allow them to reflect on the value of the early church, especially as it pertains to Christian doctrine.
 1. The paper should be no more than 6 pages long. It should be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font.
 2. The paper should have a 1" border on the top, on the bottom, and on the sides.
 3. The paper may be turned in as a hard copy or digitally, using the instructor's email address.
 4. The paper is due on July 1, if provided as a hard copy or July 8, if submitted digitally.

VI. GRADING

Grades will be determined on the basis of regular participation in classroom discussion and by the final written assignment.

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