



History of Christian Thought G*201

D. Heidt
Winter 2010
3 credit hours

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to enable students to become familiar with selected important thinkers and themes in the history of Christian thought from the post-apostolic era to the present. It's the Christian faith in their particular contexts. From their experiences, both positive and negative, we learn valuable information to bring to our particular situation, so that when we try to build our own views in systematic and practical theology, we will benefit from this wealth of experience developed over two thousand years of the Christian church's existence.

Course Textbooks

Kerr, Hugh T., ed. *Readings in Christian Thought*. 2d ed. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Placher, William C. *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983.

Course Objectives

Students who participate in this course will be challenged to learn the following:

Cognitive (i.e., what you should know and understand):

- Important issues and developments in the following areas: doctrine of God, Christology, anthropology, church and sacraments; and soteriology.
- The thought of several of the most important theologians, classical as well as modern, representing a variety of theological traditions.
- An elementary awareness of the state of contemporary theology, together with factors which have led to its current situation. In particular, gain an appreciation of historical and cultural relativity, and autonomy of the individual.

Affective (i.e., what you should feel and appreciate):

- The need for, and the task of, theologizing.
- The human dimension in theology, including the influences on one's own historical and cultural situations in the development of the student's theological perspectives.
- The continuity of the Christian faith in spite of theological disputes and differences.
- That one can learn from theologians with whom one does not agree on every point.

Conative (i.e., what you can do with the basic knowledge):

- State a traditionally orthodox view of God, Christ, and salvation, and state the major options in the areas of anthropology, church, and sacraments.
- Read moderately difficult primary source material in theology, gaining at least an elementary understanding of the issues involved and the positions taken.
- Begin the process of developing a theological methodology which is biblically, systematically, and existentially adequate.

Tentative Course Outline

Lectures:

Introduction

1 class

God

5 classes

1. Early Church
2. Arian Controversy
3. Post-Nicene developments
4. Contemporary developments

Christology

5 classes

1. Early church
2. Contrasting proposals
3. Chalcedon and its influence
4. The Enlightenment and contemporary developments

Anthropology

5 classes

1. Early views
2. Pelagius and Augustine
3. Middle Ages and Reformation
4. Modern and contemporary views

Church and Sacraments

8 classes

1. Early views of the church
2. Early views of the sacraments
3. Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anabaptist Views of the church
4. Sacraments in the Middle Ages
5. Sacraments in Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anabaptist settings
6. Contemporary developments

Soteriology

6 classes

1. Early Church
2. Middle Ages
3. Reformation and Beyond
 - a. Lutheranism
 - b. Calvinism
 - c. Roman Catholicism
4. Contemporary Developments

Seminars (selected readings in Kerr):

5 classes

1. Augustine
2. Thomas à Kempis
3. John Calvin
4. John Wesley
5. Jonathan Edwards

Course Requirements and Evaluation

All Students:

1. Placher Reading (10%)
Note: On the final exam, you will be asked to honestly answer what percentage of the reading you have completed in Placher (chapters 4-18).
2. Class Participation (15%)
Note: Students will be graded according to their preparedness and their participation in class discussions (seminars) over the course of the semester.
3. Midterm Exam (20%)
4. Final Exam (30%)
5. Essay (25%)
Compare and contrast the thought of **two** theologians, **one** of whom must have written before 1900 C.E., on **one** of the following topics: God; Christ; Holy Spirit; Anthropology; Sin; Salvation; Spirituality; Worship; Scripture; Scripture, tradition, and authority; The Church; or Sacraments.
Note: You must read at least 10 pages of **primary** source material from each of your theologians, for a minimum of 20 pages total. The essay will be typewritten and in proper style and form. The length of the essay shall be as follows:

a) Certificate: 1000 words b) Diploma: 1250 words c) Bachelor: 1500 words

Class Schedule

January 12	Course Introduction
January 19	Class
January 26	Class (Seminar Reading: Augustine)
February 2	Class
February 9	Class (Seminar Reading: Thomas à Kempis)
February 16	No Class (Spring Break—February 14-21)
February 23	Class (<i>Midterm Exam: 6:30-7:30 pm</i>)
March 2	Class
March 9	Class (Seminar Reading: John Calvin)
March 16	Class
March 23	Class (Seminar Reading: John Wesley)
March 30	Class
April 6	Class (Seminar Reading: Jonathan Edwards)
April 13	Class

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works about individual authors are too numerous to be listed here. Consult the bibliographies at the end of the dictionary and encyclopedia articles. If you need help, please see me.

GENERAL WORKS

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ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

Primary Sources

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Since most of these classics appear in many editions, I will state only the author, title, and dates of birth and death in most cases.

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A Personal Note...

I am here to help you in whatever way I can. So please do not be shy about contacting me in person, *via* email (dbheidt@sasktel.net), or by telephone (652-6308).