

Syllabus for COS 212, Our Theological Heritage: The Early and Medieval Church
February 10-11; March 9-10, 2012
Hiwassee College, Madisonville, Tennessee
Instructor: Robert A. Ratcliff
216 Jennette Place
Franklin, TN 37064
615-838-7042 (cell)
robert.ratcliff@yahoo.com

Course Goals:

- To give students a deeper understanding of such central Christian doctrines as the Trinity, the Incarnation, salvation by grace, and the Atonement.
- To introduce the major ideas, movements, and leaders in the church's history in the period A.D. 100-1500
- To prepare students to preach, teach, and lead more effectively by examining issues and questions that have confronted Christian leaders throughout the ages.

Course web site:

Lecture outlines, suggestions for further reading, and links to early Christian art and medieval architecture can be found by [clicking here for the course web site](#).

Required Reading:

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, Second Revised Edition (Harper & Row, 2010)

William C. Placher, *Readings in the History of Christian Theology*, vol. 1 (Westminster/John Knox, 1988)

Note Regarding Assignments: Failure to submit the pre-course assignment, the mid-course assignment, or the final examination will result, not simply in a "0" for that assignment, but *for the class as a whole*.

Pre-Course Assignment (due by the beginning of class, Friday, Feb. 10):

1. Read González, Chapters 1-29; Placher, Chapters 1-5
2. Write a presentation you would make to a new member class in your congregation. The presentation would look at one of the two following subjects:

Who decided what books would go in the Bible, and why? (Formation of the canon)
Why do we believe in one God in three persons? (Doctrine of the Trinity)

The presentation should discuss the history of these issues in the early church, and their importance for today's Christians. It must be no less than 1,000 and no more than 1,500 words in length (this roughly equals 3-5 double-spaced pages in Times New Roman 12 point font with 1" margins) **If possible, please e-mail your assignment to the instructor at the e-mail address listed at the top of this syllabus. If you don't have the ability to send your assignment by e-mail, please print it and bring it to the first weekend class.**

Mid-Course Assignment (due by the beginning of class, Friday, March 9):

1. Read Gonzalez, Chapters 30-32; Placher, Chapters 6-8
2. Write a presentation you would make to a new members class in your congregation. The presentation would look at one of the three following subjects:

You want to introduce your new members to the most important teachers of the church, and you choose to begin with Augustine. Explain his theology of grace and the church.

Many of the members of your class have heard about the Crusades, but don't know much about them. Explain to them why the Crusades happened, and why, centuries after they took place, they still affect relations between Christians and Muslims.

The presentation should discuss the history of these issues in the early church, and their importance for today's Christians. It must be no less than 1,000 and no more than 1,500 words in length (this roughly equals 3-5 double-spaced pages in Times New Roman 12 point font with 1" margins). **If possible, please e-mail your assignment to the instructor at the e-mail address listed at the top of this syllabus. If you don't have the ability to send your assignment by e-mail, please print it and bring it to the second weekend class.**

Honor Code:

The honor code of the Memphis/Tennessee/Holston Course of Study [can be found by clicking here.](#)

Please be certain to print, fill out, sign, and attach the cover sheet to each assignment. When turning in an assignment via e-mail attachment, you can fulfill this requirement by including the following statement in the body of the e-mail: "I have read the plagiarism definition on the Memphis/Tennessee/Holston Course of Study Honor Code, and I affirm that the attached assignment represents my own work, except where credit is given. I have also made copies of this assignment, and I will bring them with me to class in the event that any of my work is misplaced."

Final Examination:

The final will be handed out at the end of class on Saturday, March 10. It will be open book, and due by 9:00 p.m. CDT on Friday, March 16.

Grading:

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|------------------------|-----|
| Pre-course assignment: | 30% |
| Mid-course assignment: | 30% |
| Final Examination | 20% |
| Class participation: | 20% |

Tardiness in attendance and/or assignments will result in a reduced grade.

Additional Resources:

David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (Harper, 2001)

Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine* (Abingdon, 2006)

Clayton N. Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers: An Essential Guide* (Abingdon, 2006)

Class Schedule**Friday, Feb.10, 2012**

6:00-7:45 p.m.: Introduction to the course; Leadership and authority in the 1st and 2nd-century church, part 1

7:45-7:55 p.m.: Break

8:05-9:30 p.m.: Leadership and authority, part 2: Montanism; Gnosticism and the rise of an apostolic creed

Saturday, Feb. 11, 2012

8:00-9:55 a.m.: Formation of the canon; Christianity and culture in the 2nd and 3rd centuries; Eastern and Western Christianity;

9:55-10:05 a.m.: Break

10:05 a.m.-12:00 p.m.: Irenaeus and the doctrine of salvation.; worship and the sacraments.

12:00-1:00 p.m.: Lunch

1:00-2:15 p.m.: Early monastic spirituality; Church and state in early Christianity; Constantine

2:15-2:25 p.m.: Break

2:25-3:45 p.m.: Church and state in early Christianity; Constantine (continued)

Friday, March 9, 2012

6:00-7:45 p.m.: Trinitarian Controversy

7:45-7:55 p.m.: Break

7:55-9:30 p.m.: Christological controversy; Introduction to the Middle Ages; Augustine of Hippo's biography

Saturday, March 10, 2012

8:00-9:55 a.m.: Augustine: Theology; Rise of the papacy

9:55-10:05 a.m.: Break

10:05 a.m.-12:00 p.m.: Church and state in the Middle Ages; the investiture controversy; the theology of the Atonement

12:00-12:45 p.m.: Lunch

12:45-2:30 p.m.: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle Ages; Francis of Assisi and the mendicant orders

2:30-3:00 p.m.: Communion service

3:00-3:45 p.m.: Thomas Aquinas; the breakdown of the medieval synthesis