

IST 2008-1 Christianity in Antiquity
Iliff School of Theology
Fall 2014

Instructor: Eric C. Smith, Ph.D.

Meeting Day and Time: Tuesday 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Office Hours: Iliff Hall 202-A, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30-11, or via

Skype/Google+/FaceTime/whatever

Email: ecsmith@iliff.edu (the “c” is crucial; otherwise you will reach a Methodist district superintendent who finished his DMin at Iliff 8 years ago)

Course Description:

This course will provide an introduction to the social, institutional, and intellectual history of Christianity in antiquity from the beginnings of the Jesus movement in the first century CE through the sixth century CE. Topics include: context and origins of early Christianity, Christian thought and Greek philosophy, structures of worship and ministry in the early church, persecution and martyrdom, unity and diversity in early Christianity, orthodoxy and heresy, the rise of Constantine the Great, the Council of Nicaea and the Arian controversy, and the thought of Augustine.

Course Goals:

- (1) To gain knowledge of the cultural, religious, and political history of the Hellenistic-Roman and Jewish worlds out of which the Christian movement emerged during the first century CE;
- (2) To develop basic theological fluency with early Christian concepts of ecclesiology and the rise of the monarchical episcopacy, Christology, revelation, pedagogy, and philosophy;
- (3) To appreciate the unity and diversity within early Christianities, both orthodox and heterodox;
- (4) To understand the role of gender and sexuality in the context of the early Christian movement;
- (5) To recognize the impact of Constantine the Great, the Council of Nicaea and the Christological controversies on the subsequent development of Christian thought;
- (6) To engage in the thought of St. Augustine and understand the place he holds theologically, philosophically, and pedagogically in the history of Christian thought.

Required Texts:

St. Augustine. *On Christian Teaching (On Christian Doctrine)*. Oxford World Classics. Translated by R.P.H. Green. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. (\$7.85 in paperback from Amazon, or \$6.15 from Amazon in Kindle Edition)

Lynch, Joseph H. *Early Christianity: A Brief History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. (\$34.02 in paperback from Amazon)

Pohlsander, Hans A. *The Emperor Constantine*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 2004. (\$29.02 in paperback from Amazon, or \$11.19 to buy in Kindle Edition from Amazon, or \$3.90 to rent from Amazon in Kindle Edition)

Recommended Texts:

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Vol. I: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010. (\$21.65 in paperback or \$18.99 in a Kindle Edition from Amazon)

McGuckin, John A. *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

Norris, Richard (Editor). *The Christological Controversy*. Sources of Early Christian Thought. Fortress Press, 1980.

Library Reserves (Available from Taylor Library):

All required and recommended texts, plus:

Brown, Peter. *Society & The Holy in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1982.

Brown, Peter. *Authority & The Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Course Requirements:

Participation (10%) The student is expected to come to each class. In addition it is expected that the student will have completed the assigned reading and be prepared to participate in class/group discussions.

In Class Midterm Exam (30%): Each student will complete an examination at midterm. The student will be accountable for information covered in both the lectures and in the weekly readings. The format of the exam will be that of short identification, short answer, and essay.

Take Home Final Exam (60%) The final exam will be a take home exam in which the student will write two essays from a list of possible essay questions. **Alternatively**, in place of the final exam, the student may petition the instructor to write a research paper dealing with a topic associated with the subject material of the class. Such a petition must be made in writing (email is fine) by the sixth week of the quarter.

ADA Accommodations:

Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs. Students are encouraged to contact their assigned adviser to initiate the process of requesting accommodations. The advising center can be contacted at advising@iliff.edu or by phone at 303.765.1146.

Course Outline and Schedule of Readings:

Week One: Course Introduction, Historiography, Political Backgrounds, and the Jesus Movement in the 1st Century

Required Reading: Lynch, pp. 13-23 Lynch, pp. 37-50

Recommended Reading: Ferguson, pp. 1-47

In class: *From Jesus to Christ*, parts 1 and 2

Week Two: Greco-Roman Religious Backgrounds; Greek Philosophy

Required Reading: Lynch, 24-36; Tertullian, *On Prescription Against the Heretics* (Chapter 7 Online); Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen* (Chapters 5 and 6, Online)

Tertullian: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.v.iii.vii.html>

Clement of Alexandria: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02.vi.ii.v.html>

Recommended Reading: Ferguson, pp. 148-318; 319-393

Week Three: Christianity and the Body: Martyrdom, Gender and Sexuality

Required Reading: Lynch, pp. 79-90; Torjesen, pp. 9-87, 155-176; *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* (Entire, Online); *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas* (Entire, Online)

Martyrdom of Polycarp:

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/martyrdompoly carp-lightfoot.html>

Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas:

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/tertullian24.html>

Recommended Reading: Ferguson, pp.48-147; 592-620

Week Four: Christianities: Orthodoxy and Heresy

Required Reading: Lynch, pp. 51-78, 91-120; *The Gospel of Truth* (Entire, Online); Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (Book III chs. 1-5)

Gospel of Truth: <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gostruth.html>

Irenaeus: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.ii.html>

Recommended Reading: Ferguson, pp. 300-318

Week Five: MID-TERM EXAM and Film

From Jesus to Christ, parts 3 and 4

Week Six: The Church in the Age of Constantine

Required Reading: Lynch, pp. 121-130, 144-169; Pohlsander, pp. 1-87; Athanasius *Orations against the Arians* (Selections .pdf on Canvas)

Week Seven: The Theodosian Church and Asceticism

Required Reading: Lynch, pp.131-143, 179-211; Brown, *Society & The Holy in Late Antiquity*, pp. 103-152 (.pdf on Canvas); *Authority and the Sacred*, 57-78 (.pdf on Canvas).

Recommended Reading: McGuckin, “Asceticism”, “Desert”, “Antony the Great”, “Symeon Stylites.”

Week Eight: Christology and the Ecumenical Councils

Required Reading: Lynch, pp. 170-176; Norris, *The Christological Controversy* pp. 123-160 (.pdf on Canvas)

Recommended Reading: McGuckin, “Council of Constantinople I”, “Council of Ephesus”, “Council of Chalcedon”

Week Nine: Augustine: Controversy with Pelagius and *De Doctrina Christiana*

Required Reading: Lynch, pp. 212-222 Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (entire)

Week Ten: The Rise of the Papacy and the End of Antiquity

Required Reading: Lynch, 223-251; Gregory the Great, *Letters* (Letters 1-7, 9-12, 16-21, 25-29, 33-36, online); Jenkins

Philip Jenkins, *Leaving Nineveh*, on the contemporary destruction of Christianity in Mosul: <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2014-07/leaving-nineveh>

Gregory the Great: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf212.iii.v.i.i.html>

FINAL EXAM DUE: Tuesday, NOV. 18