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. 100-600

- 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. I strongly recommend that you read through the lecture outlines before coming to class, as this will help familiarize you with key names and terms. Students often find it helpful to print out these outlines and bring them to class.

Required Reading:


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 (the written assignment is due by Friday, April 8. Please submit as a Microsoft Word document, and send it to the e-mail address listed above):

1. Read González, Part I (Introduction through Chapter 12); Placher, Chapters 1-2

2. In a paper of no fewer than 1,400 and no more than 1800 words, write a presentation you would make to a Sunday School class in your congregation. The presentation will introduce the class to the work of four of the following theologians:
Ignatius of Antioch
Irenaeus
Justin Martyr
Clement of Alexandria
Origen
Tertullian

Spend no more than 1 paragraph telling the theologian’s life story; spend the rest of the time discussing his theology, drawing on the selections from each theologian in the Placher book. Explain why each theologian’s thought is important for the church today.

Mid-Course Assignment: The written assignment is due by Friday, May 6. Please submit as a Microsoft Word document, and send it to the e-mail address listed above):

1. Read Gonzalez, Part II (Chapters 13 through 25); Placher, Chapters 3 through 5

2. In a paper of no fewer than 1,400 and no more than 1800 words, write a presentation you would make to a Sunday School class in your congregation. The presentation will examine both of the following two subjects:

   The doctrine of the Trinity
   The doctrine of the full humanity and full divinity of Christ.

Spend no more than 1 paragraph each telling the story of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries, respectively. Focus the rest of your discussion on what the major theologians on each side of these controversies said, drawing on the selections from these theologians in the Placher book. Explain why these are among the most central Christian beliefs. Extra credit if you can use the word “mystery” creatively and constructively in the discussion of the Trinity (i.e. not as an excuse for why this stuff is so hard to explain).

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.”

Plagiarism is theft of another person’s work and lying by claiming to have written something that you didn’t write. If I determine that a student has plagiarized, that student will receive a “0” for the assignment and a failing grade for the course.

Final Examination:
The final will be handed out at the end of class on Saturday, May 14. It will be open book, and due by 9:00 p.m. CDT on Friday, May 20.

**Grading:**

- 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.

**Class Schedule**

**Friday, April 15 2016**

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, April 16 2016**

8:00-9:55 a.m.: Formation of the canon; The early church and society; Eastern and Western Christianity

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

10:05 a.m.-12:00 p.m.: Irenaeus; Cyprian; The Sacraments;

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

1:00-2:15 p.m.: Sacraments (cont.); A gathered, disciplined church; Origen and early biblical interpretation

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

2:25-4:00 p.m.: Early monastic spirituality; Church and state in early Christianity; Constantine

**Friday, May 13 2016**

6:00-7:45 p.m.: Trinitarian controversy, part 1

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

7:55-9:00 p.m.: Trinitarian controversy, part 2
Saturday, May 14 2016

8:00-9:55 a.m.: Women in early Christianity; Jews and Christians; Christological controversy

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

10:05 a.m.-12:00 p.m.: Rise of the papacy; Augustine biography

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

1:00-1:30 p.m.: Communion service

1:30-2:50 p.m.: Augustine’s Theology of the Church; Augustine’s Theology of Grace

2:50-3:00 p.m.: Break

3:00-4:00 p.m.: The Legacy of Early Christianity; Implications for Ministry in the Twenty-first Century