EARLY PATRISTICS CH 6R1050

McMaster Divinity College Fall term 2024

Tuesday 11:00am–12:50pm

Instructor: James R. Payton, Jr. paytonjj@mcmaster.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers an in-depth study of early patristics. It focuses on the second century, during which Christianity emerged from the efforts of the apostles and sought to articulate the apostolic message with fidelity and clarity, both for itself and for its surrounding culture. Extensive reading of primary sources and careful consideration of secondary ones in a seminar format invite a high level of student participation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Knowing...

- Learn the significance of this period for the history of Christianity.
- Learn and wrestle with the scholarly dissonance regarding Christianity in the early patristic period.
- Learn key figures who contributed to the articulation of the Christian faith during the second century.
- Learn and discern the varieties of patristic contributions from this formative period.

Being...

- Develop a sense of how deeply the Christian faith is rooted in second-century patristic teaching.
- Develop the ability to enter the intellectual world of the second-century Church fathers and "think their thoughts after them."

Doing...

- Read and intelligently discuss assigned readings.
- Engage in scholarly and professional interaction with colleagues in collegial fashion.
- Prepare and present a scholarly research paper on a topic rooted in primary sources from the second century.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Preliminary reading:

• Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, rev. ed. (Penguin Books, 1993 [Volume 1 of *The Penguin History of the Church*])

By the beginning of the course, students should have read this volume (or another careful scholarly treatment of ancient church history, through the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West), to provide them with a general familiarity with that history (which will be assumed as we move into the class sessions).

Textbooks:

- Michael J. Kruger, *Christianity at the Crossroads: How the Second Century Shaped the Future of the Church* (IVP Academic, 2018). {→ **K** in the class schedule below.}
- James L. Papandrea, *The Earliest Christologies: Five Images of Christ in the Postapostolic Age* (IVP Academic, 2016).
- John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001). Volume 1 of *The Formation of Christian Theology.* {→ **B** in the class schedule below.}
- Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford University Press, 2003).
- C.E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Primary sources:

- Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Baker Academic, 2007). {→ **H** in the class schedule below.}
- Alistair C. Stewart, trans., *Melito of Sardis, On Pascha*, 2nd edition {Greek/English} (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016).
- James R. Payton, Jr. *Irenaeus on the Christian Faith: A Condensation of Against Heresies* (Pickwick Publications, 2011).
- Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The First Apology of Justin Martyr* (Lighthouse Publishing, 2020).
- Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2: Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria — Available in an inexpensive Kindle format or in a Cosimo Classics edition.
- Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3: Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian. — Available in an inexpensive Kindle format or in a Cosimo Classics edition.

METHOD:

Instructor's Presentations:

In the initial class session, the professor will make a presentation for orientation purposes, to describe the significance of early patristics, as well as the opportunities and challenges of the discipline, and to explain how the class will proceed. In subsequent class sessions, presentations by the professor will be to get discussion of the assigned readings underway, respond to questions raised by students, or for focusing on another issue or question in the readings which has not yet been addressed in the class session.

Readings:

All readings assigned for a class session are to be completed before the class session begins. Students should bring their copies of the assigned readings for the session with them for ready reference as the class interacts with the readings.

Discussions:

Students are expected to engage consistently and insightfully in the discussions. They should come with observations about or questions regarding what they have read and be ready to engage with each other and the professor in a close interrogation of and careful listening to the readings.

REQUIREMENTS

- Literature Review: Students will develop an annotated bibliography of 10 articles in scholarly journals and/or chapters (in edited volumes) on the Apostolic fathers (individually or collectively). Each annotation should be approximately 200 words. The literature review will be approximately 2000 words. This assignment is due October 15 and will account for 25% of the final grade.
- Appraisal Paper: Students will prepare a paper offering an assessment of the controversy in second-century patristics regarding "multiple Christianities," drawing from and reacting to the textbook presentations in Kruger, Ehrman, and Hill. Students should treat this as if it were to be a scholarly presentation to interested graduate students in theology who are unfamiliar with early patristics but have heard of the dissonance in the field and are interested in having it sorted out and commented on for them. Use footnotes to cite sources. This paper should be 8–10 pages (approximately 2000–2500 words). It is due November 12 and will account for 25% of the final grade.
- **Research Essay:** Each student will prepare an academic thesis paper of approximately **5000 words**, on a topic within second-century patristics (or another patristic topic related to the student's area of study): the focus for this paper will be chosen in consultation with the professor. The paper is to be written at the level of a peer-reviewed journal article. This assignment is **due December 10** and will account for **40%** of the final grade.

• Class participation: Students will be expected to participate extensively and insightfully in class discussions. This will account for 10% of the final grade.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you "tidy up" your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive

version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Bookstore

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

Submitting Papers

Papers must be submitted at least 30 minutes before the beginning of the class on the day they are due. Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 5% per day (not including Sunday) if they attach to their paper a letter explaining the genuine emergency that delayed them. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will not receive comments and constructive criticism from the professor.

All written work must conform to the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays* and *Theses*. Failure to use appropriate form will result in grade reductions. Further, failure to abide by the "Usage Guidelines" posted on Avenue to Learn by the instructor will result in grade reductions.

- Please turn off your cell phone and/or pager before the class begins.
- Please do not attend class if you are ill and contagious (e.g., the flu or symptom of Covid 19).

CLASS SCHEDULE:

{Oct. 15*	*Literature Review Due* No class: Reading Week}			
Oct. 8	The "Great Church" and early apologists K: 135–166 ANF 2: Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras			
Oct. 1	Worshipping . K: 75–134	•	atives and Apostolic fathers defending the faith H: Epistle of Barnabas–Papias (the rest of H)	
Sept. 24		•	d and Apostolic fathers taught by St. John H: Ignatius, Polycarp	
Sept. 17	Second-centur K: 1–39	ry settings as B: 1–70	nd the earliest Apostolic fathers H: Introduction, Didache, 1 & 2 Clement	
Sept. 10	Introduction and orientation {Chadwick}			

Oct. 22	The structures and arguments of the apologists Justin Martyr and Tatian B: 93–110 Justin Martyr, "The First Apology" ANF 2: Tatian			
Oct. 29*	Christianity as a textual culture and an extraordinary exegete from Asia Minor K: 167–231 Melito of Sardis			
Nov. 5	The greatest theologian of the second century, Irenaeus of Lyons B: 111–133 Irenaeus of Lyons			
Nov. 12*	*Appraisal Papers Due* and discussion of the problem			
{Nov. 19	No class: prof away at ETS conference}			
Nov. 26	Into the third century and the school of Alexandria B: 135–206 ANF 2: Clement of Alexandria, "The Instructor"			
Dec. 3	The conflict with Modalism and Latin theologizing in North Africa B: 207–241 ANF 3: Tertullian, "Prescriptions against Heretics," "Against Praxeas"			
Dec. 10*	*Research Essays Due* and discussion Concluding remarks			

• In addition to the *Selected Bibliography for Early Patristics* listed below, students may want to consult the excellent bibliographies offered in the textbooks by Kruger (at pp. 232–248) and by Behr (pp. 243–255).

Please note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the second day of class.

Selected Bibliography for Early Patristics

Anatolios, Khaled. Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Arand, Louis A., trans. *St. Augustine: Faith, Hope and Charity*. Ancient Christian Writers, No. 3. Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1947.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *The Scandal of the Incarnation: Irenaeus Against the Heresies (Selections)*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990.

Bauer, Walter. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. (of 2nd ed.) Robert Kraft and Gottfried Krodel. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

- Beaven, James. An Account of the Life and Writings of St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons and Martyr. London: J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1841 (Kessinger Publishing's Rare Reprints).
- Behr, John. *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- _____. *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity*. Christian Theology in Context. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- _____. *The Way to Nicaea*. The Formation of Christian Theology, volume 1. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.
- _____. *The Nicene Faith, Part One: True God of True God.* The Formation of Christian Theology, volume 2, part 1. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004.
 - _____. *The Nicene Faith, Part Two: One of the Holy Trinity*. The Formation of Christian Theology, volume 2, part 2. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004.
- ______, trans. *St. Irenaeus of Lyons, On the Apostolic Preaching*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997.
- ______, trans. *St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation* (Greek & English). Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.
- Benedict XVI, Pope. The Fathers. 2 vols. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2008, 2010.
- Bercot, David W., ed. *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs: A Reference Guide to More Than* 700 Topics Discussed by the Early Church Fathers. Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998.
- Bird, Michael F. *Jesus Among the Gods: Early Christology in the Greco-Roman World.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2022.
- ———, and Scott D. Harrower, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to the Apostolic Fathers*. Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Bock, Darrell L. *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006.
- Brock, Sebastian, trans. *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990.
- Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, new ed. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2000.

- Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*, rev. ed. The Penguin History of the Church, vol. 1. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Chitty, Derwas J. The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995.
- Chryssavgis, John. *The Way of the Fathers: Exploring the Patristic Mind*, 2nd rev. ed. Minneapolis: Light & Life Publishing Company, 2003.
- Cohick, Lynn H., and Amy Brown Hughes. *Christian Women in the Patristic World: Their Influence, Authority, and Legacy in the Second through Fifth Centuries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Crehan, Joseph Hugh, trans. *Athenagoras: Embassy for the Christians, The Resurrection of the Dead.* Ancient Christian Writers, No. 23. Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1956.
- Damick, Andrew Stephen. *Bearing God: The Life and Works of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the God-Bearer.* Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2017.
- Donovan, Mary Ann. *One Right Reading? A Guide to Irenaeus*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997.
- Edwards, James R. From Christ to Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the Church in Less Than a Century. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021.
- Ehrman, Bart D. Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
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- Florovsky, Georges. *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth* Century, trans. Catherine Edmunds. Volume 7 of The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky. Belmont, MA: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987.
- Foster, Paul, and Sara Parvis eds. *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.
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- Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Volume I: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, rev. ed. New York: HarperOne, 2010.

- Grant, Robert M. Irenaeus of Lyons. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Green, Ignatius, trans., St. Gregory of Nyssa, Catechetical Instruction: A Handbook for Catechists (Greek & English). Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2019.
- Greenslade, S.L., ed. *Early Latin Theology: Selections from Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Jerome*. Library of Christian Classics. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1956.
- Guarino, Thomas G. Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine. Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.
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- Hanson, R.P.C. *Tradition in the Early Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009 (reprint of SCM Press, 1962).
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- Harkins, Paul W., trans. *St. John Chrysostom on the Incomprehensible Nature of God.* The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, vol. 72. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1984.
- Hart, David Bentley. *The Story of Christianity: A History of 2,000 Years of the Christian Faith*. New York: Quercus, 2009.
- Hill, Charles E. From the Lost Teaching of Polycarp: Identifying Irenaeus' Apostolic Presbyter and the Author of "Ad Diognetum." Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 186. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.
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- Kelly, J.N.D. Early Christian Doctrines, 2nd ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.
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- _____. The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.
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Meredith, Anthony. <i>The Cappadocians</i> . Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995.
Gregory of Nyssa. New York: Routledge, 1999.
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- Verheyden, Joseph. "Four Gospels *Indeed*, but Where Is Mark? On Irenaeus' Use of the Gospel of Mark," pp. 169–204 in Agnès Bastit & Joseph Verheyden, eds. *Irénée de Lyon et les Débuts de la Bible Chrétienne: Actes de la Journée du 1.VII.2014 à Lyon*. Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia: Research on the Inheritance of Early and Medieval Christianity 77. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2017.
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Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.
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Young, Frances. The Making of the Creeds. London: SCM Press, 1991.
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