

# PATRISTIC FOUNDATIONS

## CH 3XF3/5XF5/6XF6

**McMaster Divinity College**

Fall term 2021

Tuesday

1:00 PM – 2:50pm

Instructor: James R. Payton, Jr.

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**Specializations: CW/CC/PS**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines Christianity following the apostles, both in time and in message. We will consider evidence for the post-apostolic leaders' determination to adhere to and pass on that message and the means they used to do so. This will lead to examination of how the structures of church government developed within Christianity and how the doctrinal controversies in Christian antiquity related to the apostolic message as it had been embraced and transmitted. (Students who already have facility in Greek will be able to use some primary sources with Greek and English on facing pages.)

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

*Knowing...*

- to acquaint students with leading figures and main emphases in ancient Christianity
- to examine and evaluate the patristic claim to fidelity to apostolic teaching
- to help students appreciate the significance and importance of this period of the Church's history

*Being...*

- to stimulate an awareness of and appreciation for the early history of the Church
- to develop a sense of being rooted today in the apostolic message passed on in Christian antiquity

*Doing...*

- to develop in each student an ability to assess documents from a historical perspective
- to help students acquire the ability to enter into and express in a historically responsible fashion the ways the church fathers expressed and defended the apostolic message

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

### Textbooks:

- Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: Vol. 1*, revised edition (HarperOne, 2010).
- Bryan M. Litfin, *Getting to Know the Church Fathers: An Evangelical Introduction* (Brazos Press, 2007).

### Primary sources:

- Alistair C. Stewart, trans., *Melito of Sardis, On Pascha*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition {Greek/English} (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016).
- John Behr, trans., *St. Irenaeus of Lyons, On the Apostolic Preaching* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).
- John Behr, trans., *St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation* {Greek/English} (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011). → *CW*
- Ignatius Green, trans., *St. Gregory of Nyssa, Catechetical Instruction: A Handbook for Catechists* {Greek/English} (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2019). → *CC*
- Graham Neville, trans., *St. John Chrysostom, Six Books on the Priesthood* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996). → *PS*

\*All students are expected to complete all assignments based on the instructions provided in Gordon L. Heath, *Doing Church History*, and well as the MDC Style Guide.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

## METHOD:

### Instructor's Presentations:

Most classes will have a presentation by the professor. This presentation will seek to build on and further develop what students will have learned from the readings assigned for the class, as well as exploring other themes not in the assigned readings.

### Readings:

All readings are to be completed before the class begins. These readings are critical for understanding how ancient church history unfolded and will regularly be discussed in class.

**Discussions:** On days when papers are due, students will be invited and expected to discuss, informally, what they have found and/or learned in preparing their papers. Participation in these discussions will be counted as part of the discussion/participation grade.

## MDIV/MTS REQUIREMENTS:

- **Tradition Paper:** Students will prepare (and discuss in class) a 3-page paper on their view of the role tradition has had and should have on their faith and worship practice. **Due September 28.**
- **Transition Paper:** Students will prepare a 5-page paper evaluating the way the apostolic tradition (as discussed in class to that point) is handled in either Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*, or Irenaeus of Lyons, *On the Apostolic Preaching*. **Due October 12.**
- **Specialization Paper:** Students will prepare a 6-page paper summarizing the approach taken in and content of the patristic primary source they read for their specialization (CW,CC,PS) and comment on the way(s) this might influence their approach to or practice of their specialization going forward. **Due November 2.**
- **Research Paper:** Students will write a 10-page research paper on a topic related to their personal research interests. The paper's focus must be on a primary source from one of the church fathers, presenting the content of that source against the backdrop of secondary sources on the particular church father and patristic writing. The church father and primary source will be chosen in consultation with the professor. **Due November 23.**
- **Discussion/Participation:** Students will be expected to participate in class discussions and will be asked to indicate, at the end of the course, how much of the assigned readings they have completed.

## GRADING:

- **Tradition Paper: 10%**
- **Transition Paper: 15%**
- **Specialization Paper: 20%**
- **Research Paper: 45%**
- **Participation: 10%**

## DPT REQUIREMENTS

- **Literature Review:** Students will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately **15–20 sources (4000 pages)** related to the patristic content of the course and how it might relate to your research project; each annotation should be approximately 100 words. (The required texts and primary sources for the course can be included as part of this book list.) The literature review will be approximately **2000 words**. This assignment is **due October 19** and will account for **25%** of the final grade.
- **Research Presentation:** Students will present to the class the research they are working on for the major paper described below. This will include an introduction describing what is being investigated, the area of the student's DPT practice-led research, and the patristic source(s) being used. The bulk of the presentation will lay out what a careful consideration of the patristic source(s) offer as insight or contribution for the student's particular research program. The presentation should be approximately 25 minutes in

length, with 10-15 additional minutes for class discussion. This assignment is **scheduled for November 16** and will account for **25%** of the final grade.

- **\*\*Major paper:** Each student will prepare a major paper of approximately **5000 words** on a topic related to course content, dealing with at least one primary patristic source, and related to your area of DPT practice-led research. This paper should reflect both theological depth and insight regarding that relationship. Use and document (via footnotes) a minimum of 15 scholarly resources. This assignment is **due December 7** and will account for **40%** of the final grade.
- **Class participation:** Students will be expected to participate in class discussions. This will account for **10%** of the final grade.

## MA/PhD REQUIREMENTS

- **Literature Review:** Students will develop an annotated bibliography of **10–12 volumes (including the textbooks) and 10–12 journal articles or chapters in edited volumes (5000–6000 pages)** related to the topic of the course; each annotation should be approximately 100 words. (The required texts and primary sources for the course can be included as part of this book list.) The literature review will be approximately **2000 words**. This assignment is **due October 19** and will account for **25%** of the final grade.
- **Research Presentation:** Students will present to the class the research they are working on for the major essay described below. This will include an introduction describing what is being investigated (and why it is important), the approach taken to examine the question, and the results of the investigations. The presentation should be approximately 30 minutes in length, with 10 additional minutes for class discussion. This presentation is **scheduled for November 16** and will account for **25%** of the final grade.
- **\*\*Major essay:** Each student will prepare an academic thesis paper of approximately **6000 words** on the topic presented in class, to be written at the level of a peer-reviewed journal article. The focus of the paper should be on some facet of patristic endeavors to preserve and hand on the apostolic message. This assignment is **due December 7** and will account for **40%** of the final grade.
- **Class participation:** Students will be expected to participate in class discussions. This will account for **10%** of the final grade.

\*\*The focus for each of these papers, including church fathers, patristic source(s) and/or emphases, and theme of each paper will be chosen in consultation with the professor.

## GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic

dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

- McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. 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 the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).
- Essays must be handed in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due, in hard copy. All other essays will be considered to be late. Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 5% per day (not including weekends) if they attach to their essay 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.
- The essay should be handed directly to the instructor. To avoid any potential problems, students are advised to keep their working notes and a copy of their paper until a final mark has been received.
- 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.
- 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:

Sept. 14	Introduction to the class; New Testament Perspectives for Church History	
Sept. 21	The Question of Continuity	
	G: Introduction & Chapters 1–3 (30 pp.)	L: 9–51 (43 pp.)
Sept. 28*	<b><i>*Tradition Paper Due*</i></b>	
	Passing on the Apostolic Message	
	G: Chapters 4–6 (28 pp.)	L: 53–74 (22 pp.)
Oct. 5	Passing on the Apostolic Message, cont'd	
	G: Chapters 7 & 8 (24 pp.)	L: 75–117 (43 pp.)
Oct. 12*	<b><i>*Transition Paper Due*</i></b>	
	Passing on the Apostolic Message, cont'd	
	G: Chapters 9 & 10 (22 pp.)	
Oct. 19*	<b><i>*DPT Literature Review Due*</i></b>	

***\*MA/PhD Literature Review Due***

Church Government; Persecutions

G: Chapters 11 &amp; 12 (24 pp.)

L: 119–163 (45 pp.)

{Oct. 26}

{Reading week}

L: 165–212 (48 pp.)

Nov. 2\*

***\*Specialization Paper Due\****

The Impact of Constantine's Conversion

G: Chapters 13–15 (44 pp.)

Nov. 9

Monasticism; The Trinitarian-Christological Controversies

G: Chapters 16–19 (36 pp.)

L: 213–237 (25 pp.)

Nov. 16

***\*DPT & MA/PhD Research Presentations\****

The Trinitarian-Christological Controversies, cont'd

G: Chapters 20–26 (52 pp.)

L: 239–265 (27 pp.)

Nov. 23\*

***\*Research Paper Due\****

The Trinitarian-Christological Controversies, cont'd

Nov. 30\*

The Trinitarian-Christological Controversies, cont'd

G: Chapters 27 &amp; 28 (52 pp.)

Dec. 7\*

***\*DPT & MA/PhD Papers Due\****

The Trinitarian-Christological Controversies, cont'd

Concluding remarks

**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 first day of class.**

***Selected Bibliography for Patristic Foundations***

- Anatolius, 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.
- Behr, John. *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.
- 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. Minneapolis: Light & Life Publishing Company, 2003.

- Damick, Andrew Stephen. *Bearing God: The Life and Works of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the God-Bearer*. Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2017.
- Ehrman, Bart D. *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Fairbairn, Donald. *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.
- 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.
- Gilbert, Peter, trans. *On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.
- 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.
- Hall, Christopher A. *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Hanson, R.P.C. *Tradition in the Early Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009 (reprint of SCM Press, 1962).
- Hardy, Edward R., ed. *Christology of the Later Fathers*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1954.
- 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, C.E. *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Holmes, Michael W., ed. *The Apostolic Fathers in English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.
- Hunter, David G., trans. *A Comparison Between a King and a Monk/Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life—Two Treatises by John Chrysostom*. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, vol. 13. Queenston, ON: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988.
- Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrines*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_, trans. *Rufinus: A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed*. Ancient Christian Writers, No. 20. Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1955.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Michael J. Kruger. *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- Kruger, Michael J. *Christianity at the Crossroads: How the Second Century Shaped the Future of the Church*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018.
- Litfin, Bryan M. *Getting to Know the Church Fathers: An Evangelical Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007.
- Luibheid, Colm, trans. *John Cassian: Conferences*. Classics of Western Spirituality. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985.
- Malherbe, Abraham J., and Everett Ferguson, trans. *Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses*. Classics of Western Spirituality. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978.
- Maloney, George A., trans. *Pseudo-Macarius: The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*. Classics of Western Spirituality. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992.
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- Minns, Denis. *Irenaeus: An Introduction*. New York: T & T Clark, 2010.
- Neville, Graham, trans. *St. John Chrysostom, Six Books on the Priesthood*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996.
- Nichols, Stephen J. *For Us and For Our Salvation: The Doctrine of Christ in the Early Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.
- Osborn, Eric. *Irenaeus of Lyons*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Papandrea, James L. *The Earliest Christologies: Five Images of Christ in the Postapostolic Age*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Reading the Early Church Fathers: From the Didache to Nicaea*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012.
- Payton, James R., Jr. *Irenaeus on the Christian Faith: A Condensation of Against Heresies*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *A Patristic Treasury: Early Church Wisdom for Today*. Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2013.
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- Ramsey, Boniface. *Beginning to Read the Fathers*, rev. ed. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012.
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