1. Course Description

1.1 Catalog Description: This course will introduce students to the history and theological development of the early Church from the post-apostolic period through the end of the patristic period. Throughout the course students will be introduced to and explore the teachings and circumstances of the primary figures in the theological period and selections of their writings.

1.2 Importance of the Course: The Catholic Church teaches that genuine renewal of the Church follows the vibrant encounter with the Fathers and to that end the course will seek to cultivate the study of the Fathers “seriously and lovingly,” as the privileged witnesses to the living tradition of the Church.¹

1.3 Goals: Students will (1) To survey the lives, teachings and selections from the writings of the major Church Fathers; (2) To introduce the varying styles of theological exposition used by the Fathers; (3) To develop an understanding of the development of major doctrines concerning the Trinity, Christ and the Church through the Fathers; (4) To introduce students to the models of Scriptural interpretation utilized by the Fathers; (5) To develop an adequate understanding of the Fathers’ theology and theological method for students to incorporate in their theological studies.

2. Topical Outline

2.1 The First Three Centuries
   2.1.1 The Geography of Christianity and the Christian Literature up to the Year 313
   2.1.2 The Apostolic Fathers
   2.1.3 The Greek Apologists
   2.1.4 The Acts of the Martyrs
   2.1.5 The Heretical and Anti-Heretical Literature of the Second Century
   2.1.6 The Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament
   2.1.7 The School of Alexandria in the Third Century: Clement and Origen
   2.1.8 The Writers of Rome and Africa in the Third Century
   2.1.9 Other Authors of the Third Century
   2.1.10 Doctrinal Content of the Works of the Fathers of the Third Century

2.2 From Nicaea (325) to Chalcedon (451)
2.2.1 General Panorama of the Years 300 to 450
2.2.2 The First Period of the Long Fights against Arianism
2.2.3 The Three Great Fathers of Cappadocia
2.2.4 Cyril of Jerusalem and Apollinarius of Laodicea
2.2.5 The Antiochians
2.2.6 The Fight against Nestorius
2.2.7 The Great Fathers of the West
2.2.8 Other Fathers of the East and West
2.2.9 Doctrinal Content of the Works of the Fathers of the Golden Age

2.3 The Time between the Barbarians and Islam
2.3.1 Panorama of Years 450 to 750
2.3.2 The Fathers after the Council of Chalcedon

2.4 Concluding Synthesis and Overview of the Early Church Fathers

3. Required Textbook and Selected Bibliography

Moline, Enrique. Los Padres de la Iglesia: Una Guia Introductoria (Sixta Edicion)


The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church edited by J.

“Instruction on the Study of the Fathers of the Church in the Formation of Priests
Instruccion sobre el Estudio de los Padres de la Iglesia en la Formacion Sacerdotal,
Congregacion para le Educacion Catolica, Roma, 30 de noviembre de 1989.

Quaesten, Johannes. Patrologia, vols. I, II, III. Bibloteca de Autores Cristianos. La

Trevijano, Ramon. Patrologia. Sapientia Fidei Serie de Manuales de Teologia. Bibloteca
de Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 2009.

Vives, Jose. Los Padres de la Iglesia: Textos doctrinales del cristianismo desde los

4. Format of Presentation: This course will be a mixture of lecture, class discussion, and study
review questions.
5. Required Workload:
  5.1 Students are expected to complete all the assigned reading and answer the study review questions.
  5.2 There will be a Midterm and Final exam (written outside class time).
  5.3 A final synthesis project, due December 14.

Suppose you were invited to give an hour presentation to an RCIA group or parish adult education group summarizing the study of Early Church Fathers - Patristics entitled “Por Que estudiar a los Padres? Haga referencia detallada de las grandes herejias, de los grandes concilios, en los que intervinieron los Padres de la Igleisa” “Why study the Fathers? Make detailed reference to the great heresies and to the great Councils in which the Fathers of the Church intervened” What important points would you explore? Prepare an outline for your PowerPoint presentation. Attach a brief explanation or note for each point in your outline. Finally, compose five questions you think the group might ask of you, and tell me, clearly and succinctly, how you would answer them. Please submit the whole assignment as a single file.

6. Grading: Two exams – Midterm & Final, each 30%; Final project 35%; Attendance, quizzes and participation, 5%.

7. Academic Standards
  7.1 Academic Honesty: All the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy and reported to the University’s Academic Misconduct Committee. They will also be reported to appropriate ecclesiastical authorities where applicable.

  As stated in the Norms of Conduct for the University of St. Thomas, academic misconduct includes: (a) cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; (b) assisting others in any such act; (c) attempting to engage in such acts.

  Plagiarism is using the work of another person and claiming it as your own. The most common types of plagiarism include:
  • Using a paper or portion of a paper prepared by someone else;
  • Quoting someone else’s language or words without proper quotation or citation; and
  • Paraphrasing someone else’s ideas, framework, or insights without giving credit to the original author in a citation.

  Students are very strongly urged to consult the following websites for additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it:
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html
  http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz/

  Academic misconduct in any form is unacceptable and suspected violations will be pursued aggressively.
7.2 Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend every meeting. Any absences without substantive reason (in the judgment of the instructor) will adversely affect your final grade. Regardless of the reasons for absence, students are responsible for the whole content of the course.

8. Office Hours: Email is the preferred way of reaching the instructor. You may also phone my office during regular business hours. If you would like to have a conversation outside of business hours, please email to arrange an appointment. My email address and phone number are given at the top of the syllabus.

9. Submission of Work:
   9.1 Work should be submitted electronically in an email attachment as a Microsoft Word or Rich Text file, to andersjb@stthom.edu .
   9.2 Format: Please identify each and every assignment you send with this label: “CU2221S2016.Lastname,firstinitial.Assignmentname.”
   This is how my Final Project should appear:
   9.3 Use this label format in three places:
      a. In the topic of the email;
      b. As the name of the file;
      c. In the header on page one (1) of the paper, placed in the top left hand corner.
   9.4 Rationale for the format: This format will organize each student’s work under his/her own name in my files, and facilitate my retrieval of each document without having to re-label it.

10. Calendar of Classes and Assigned Readings: Please note that the four parts of the course have been divided into sections with readings assigned and recommend for each part.

Part 1: The First Three Centuries
October 12 – No readings assigned
October 19 – Moliné, Los Padres de la Iglesia, pp. 11-30; 31-40, 41-64, 65-92
October 26 – Moliné, Los Padres de la Iglesia, pp. 93-112; 113-126; 127-144, 145-164
November 02 – Moliné, Los Padres de la Iglesia, pp. 165-190, 191-198; 199-220
Midterm Exam – Outside Class – Brief Answer Questions

The Geography of Christianity and the Christian Literature up to the Year 311
The Apostolic Fathers
The Greek Apologists

The Acts of the Martyrs
The Heretical and Anti-Heretical Literature of the Second Century
The Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament
The School of Alexandria in the Third Century: Clement and Origen

The Writers of Rome and Africa in the Third Century
Other Authors of the Third Century
Doctrinal Content of the Works of the Fathers of the Third Century

Part 2: From Nicaea (325) to Chalcedon (451)
November 09 – Moline, Los Padre de la Iglesia, pp. 221-236; 237-244
November 16 – Moline, Los Padres de La Iglesia, pp. 253-276; 277-292
November 23 – Thanksgiving Break
November 30 – Moline, Los Padres de la Iglesia, pp. 293-300; 301-337; 337-360

General Panorama of the Years 300 to 450
The First Period of the Long Fights against Arianism

The Three Great Fathers of Cappadocia
Cyril of Jerusalem and Apollinarius of Laodicea
The Antiochians

The Fight against Nestorius
The Great Fathers of the West
Other Fathers of the East and West
Doctrinal Content of the Works of the Fathers of the Golden Age

Part 3: The Time between the Barbarians and Islam
Part 4: Concluding Synthesis and Overview of the Early Church Fathers
December 07 – Moline, Los Padres de la Iglesia, pp. 387-394; 395-444; 445-460
Final Exam – Outside Class – Brief Answer Questions