

Syllabus for CH 603 History of Doctrine I (Online Version)

Course Description

Study of the development of doctrine from early church through the Middle Ages. Emphasis placed on the six ecumenical councils, various doctrinal apostasies, and the church's theological responses.

Course Objectives

1. Through textbook reading and lectures the student will learn the basic historical framework of the history of Christian doctrine up to the Reformation.
2. The student will read and learn to analyze primary sources concerning the history of Christian doctrine by reading selected documents writing an essay on each one.

Text

David Beale, *Historical Theology In-Depth*, Vol. 1 (Bob Jones University Press, 2013) ISBN 978-1-60682-468-9

Ancient and Early Modern Creeds, pdf provided with course materials

Schedule of Reading

For Test #1

- Listen to Lectures 1-9
- Read Beale, 1-206
- Ideally, turn in the Assignment on "The Epistle to Diognetus" during this unit

For Test #2

- Listen to Lectures 10-20
- Read Beale, 207-416, 484-95
- Read the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Chalcedonian Formula, and Athanasian Creed in *Ancient and Early Modern Creeds*
- Ideally, turn in the Assignment on "The Gospel of Thomas" during this unit

For Test #3

- Listen to Lectures 21-31
- Read Beale, 440-83, 497-517
- Read the Profession of Faith of the Roman Catholic Church (w/ selections from the Council of Trent); Confession of Cyril Lucar, Confession of Dositheus in *Ancient and Early Modern Creeds*
- Turn in the Assignment on Thomas Aquinas during this unit

Textbook Reading

Students are expected to read the textbook using the assignment sheet as a guide. A study guide for the text is provided.

Lecture Copies

For the convenience of students the teacher will provide copies of the lecture notes in pdf (portable document format). Students may use these in connection with listening to the lectures

or as a separate study resource. Using these copies does not eliminate paying proper attention to the lectures.

Class Projects

Students will read three primary sources from the history of doctrine and write an essay on each reading.

Readings & Essays

- The Epistle to Diognetus: An “apology” such as this work is a defense of the Christian faith. Write an essay describing how “The Epistle of Diognetus” succeeds as a defense of the faith but also how you might suggest it could have been even better.
- The Gospel of Thomas: This work is an apocryphal, Gnostic work often used by more liberal scholars in NT studies. Write an essay explaining how you would answer a member of your church who asked you why we would not include this work in our study of the Bible.
- Thomas Aquinas on the Virgin Mary: Thomas Aquinas, the leading Scholastic theologian of the Catholic Church, wrote this brief exposition on the angels annunciation to Mary. Write an essay describing how Aquinas argues for the exaltation of Mary but also how his argument is deficient.

Procedure

1. Students should write a double-spaced essay on each reading, at least one page in length but not more than two pages. The essay does not need a title page but should have the student’s name at the top of the first page.
2. If possible, the student should turn in the essay by sending the teacher a file in Microsoft Word. Students who do not have access to Word may send a pdf.
3. The three essays will be averaged together and will count as a single grade equal to a test. The following are the standards for grading:
 - *Content*: The primary emphasis is on the content of the essay. Does the essay answer the questions posed? Does it show a careful reading of the source? Does it present evidence from the reading that supports the argument?
 - *Form*: Is the essay properly written? Is there a clear topic sentence at the beginning? Do the sentences logically support the argument? (Note that quotations from the selections should be sparse, at best, in such a short essay.)
 - *Grammar and Mechanics*: This point will not be a major consideration, but the teacher will reduce the grade for errors in spelling, grammar, mechanics, etc. Although the essays are short, proofread them carefully as you would any written assignment.

Essay Questions for the Tests

Each test in the class will include one essay question. To help students as they review the material for the test, the question is provided ahead of time. However, students may not use any notes in actually taking the test. The following are the essay questions for each test:

Test #1: What were some of the major heretical teachings of early Christianity and how did the Church Fathers and the church in general respond to them?

Test #2: Discuss the contributions of Augustine to Christian theology and offer your thoughts on how that contribution has been both positive and negative.

Test #3: Are the Orthodox Churches actually “orthodox” from the Protestant point of view?
Explain how the Orthodox are not truly biblically orthodox.

Class Grading

The final grade will be averaged from four letter grades: the three tests and a single grade on the three essays. All four grades are weighted equally.

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