

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO AT MTSO

Summer, 2018

June 22-23; July 13-14

COS 222 – Theological Heritage: Early Church

Dr. Jeffrey Jaynes
jjaynes@mtso.edu

Course Description:

This course focuses on the history and theology of the Church through the first five centuries. Using primary sources, students will reflect on significant individuals, events, and the articulation of the Christian faith during this period.

Course Goals:

Students will be able to:

1. Understand and articulate the doctrine of the Trinity, and the historical debates in the early Church around the person and nature of Christ.
2. Understand and articulate a doctrine of salvation in light of the controversies of the early church.
3. Understand the history and significance of the creeds and ecumenical councils.
4. Appropriate historical theology for pastoral ministry.

Course Overview:

Welcome to the history and theology of the church in its early centuries! This course will survey the first 600 years of the church with interest in both its theological development and in the practice of Christian life. We will encounter a variety of fascinating individuals and engage in discussing several pivotal theological issues. Each segment of class will focus on particular themes or individuals so that you can become more closely acquainted with the world and faith of these Christians of our heritage. There will be far more material than you can absorb effectively in one course, but take heart--some of these writings will be worth putting on your shelf for reflection at a future point. Understanding your own faith and applying the insights of the past Christians can transform your life as it has throughout the history of the church.

Course Texts (required):

Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1 (HarperCollins, revised, 2010)

Roberta Bondi, *To Pray and to Love: Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church* (Fortress Press, 1991).

Reference Book (required):

Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, eds., *Documents of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2011)

Recommended:

Elizabeth Livingstone, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2013)

Other materials distributed in class.

Course Expectations and Assignments:

You are the ones that will determine the success of this course. Your attendance at class--mind and spirit, along with your body--is truly important. To insure that our discussion operates at the best possible level, make certain to complete the necessary reading before class. I have provided advance reading assignments and this will help to familiarize you with important individuals and events. A portion of your grade will be determined from your participation in class (10%). Your interest counts a lot; we love history, right?

Assignments:

I am asking each of you to complete FOUR different assignments that will help you to work with issues of this course in different settings. Three will be completed outside of class, and one in class response at the end of the second weekend. Each written assignment completed outside of class should be typed and submitted by the appropriate due date.

1. Pre-class writing assignment. Offer your response to the book by Roberta Bondi, *To Pray and to Love* in a two page paper. See the questions at the end of the syllabus. Please email these responses to Dr. Jaynes [jjaynes@mtso.edu] prior to the first weekend of class. **Due June 20.** (20% of final grade)

2. Biographical Response: Select one of the persons we have considered in this course and develop a sermon or adult study experience based upon this person. Becoming acquainted with someone from the history of the church is one of the best tools available for presenting the rich heritage of our Christian past. Make certain to incorporate appropriate background material to this person's life and faith experience. It also helps if you can incorporate primary materials, e.g. letters, writings, sermons, prayers, etc. from your character (see the Bettenson text). Your sermon and or class outline should be 5-6 pages. A list of possible figures is included at the end of the syllabus. Please email to Dr. Jaynes. **Due by July 13.**

3. Church History and the Media: Movies, music, and other multi-media sources often provide valuable resources of history and theology for our local churches. I would like you to select a media resource (I have several materials and suggestions I will bring to class the first weekend) and develop a strategy for using this in a church class or retreat. You identify the audience and event, then, provide a thoughtful and thorough outline about how you would use this media resource to introduce important theological and historical issues of our faith. Please email to Dr. Jaynes. **Due by July 31** (25% of final grade)

4. In-Class Theological Reflection: At the end of the second weekend I will ask you to provide some written response, in class, to our reading and class discussion. This assignment will be open book, open notes—but will require you to complete your own work. I will ask you to reflect on key theological themes and identify the importance of individuals and issues we have

discussed. You will practice these response assignments in class so that you have a clear idea of the information we want you to know and how to respond (20% of course grade).

A word on writing relevant to all assignments: Learning to write clear and effective prose is a skill worthy of any ministry. I will not be too picky, but if I encounter too many grammar or spelling mistakes, I may return the paper to you. Remember, the COS has a writing coach to assist in these matters.

Please Note: I expect all of your work to be completed as identified in the syllabus, but if there is a problem and your work will be late, talk to me BEFORE rather than after the fact. In most instances a reasonable penalty will be assessed to late work.

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling academic requirements must be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the published or unpublished words or ideas of another [including online resources] as if it were one's own work. A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following a

- (1) warning
- (2) probation
- (3) suspension for the remainder of the course
- (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio
- (5) failing grade for the course.

Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's district superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry.

Class Schedule:

Faith and Life in the Early Church

Weekend #1,

Course Introductions

The Church in the Rome's Empire: Experiences of the Early Christian Community

History as Biography and Martyrdom in the Early Church (see Bettenson)

The Early Church at Worship: Sacraments and Liturgy

Defending the Faith and Developing a Theological Vocabulary

The Gnostic Threat: Christianity Confronts Culture

Spiritual Contributions of the Desert Fathers and Mothers,

Discussion: Bondi, *To Pray and to Love* (read the entire book)

Reading: Gonzalez, 7-126; Bondi, *To Pray and to Love*; see too Bettenson, *Documents*, Part 1, sections I, II, VII, VIII

The Church, Empire and the Beginnings of Christendom

Weekend #2: Church, State, and the Empire

The Council of Nicea: the Early Church Wrestles with Christology

The Theology and Spirituality of the Eastern Church

Augustine of Hippo: Grace, Faith, Salvation and Sacraments

Foundations of the Medieval World—Monks and Missionaries

Christian Empire in the East and the West

Reading: Gonzalez, 129-314; see too Bettenson, *Documents*, Part 1, sections IV, V, VI, Part II, sections I and III

Final Assignment due by July 31, there are no provisions for incomplete work in COS

Assignment #1 Instructions

Pre-class response Paper to: Roberta Bondi, *To Pray and to Love*

Please prepare the following responses in a two-page paper; email to Dr. Jaynes prior to class.

1. During an all-too-tedious sermon someone notices you reading Bondi's book. After the service they ask you what the book is about. In a short paragraph (3-4 sentences), how would you answer them?

2. What sources does Bondi use to provide insights into the prayer life of the early church? What is the significance of these materials?

3. Bondi refers repeatedly to an illustration used by Dorotheos of Gaza. What is the point of this image and how does Bondi use this concept throughout her book?

4. Numerous references are made to the teachings of the various desert Abbas and Ammas. Select one of these that you found particularly significant or helpful (note the page number) and indicate why.

5. How will your prayer life be different as a result of reading and reflecting on this book?

Assignment #2 Instructions:

Biographical Response

Select one of the persons we have considered in this course and develop a sermon or adult study experience based upon this person. Becoming acquainted with someone from the history of the church is one of the best tools available for presenting the rich heritage of our Christian past. Make certain to incorporate appropriate background material to this person's life and faith experience. It also helps if you can incorporate primary materials, e.g. letters, writings, sermons, prayers, etc. from your character (see the Bettenson text for some examples and materials). Your sermon and or class outline should be 5-6 pages.

The Early Church

Perpetua of Carthage

Justin Martyr

Athanasius

Bishop Irenaeus

Macrina

Tertullian

Cyprian of Carthage

Emperor Constantine

Benedict of Nursia or Scholastica

Arius

John Chrysostom

Anthony of the Desert

Augustine of Hippo

Origen