Course Syllabus

TRT2504 – Early Thought, Doctrine and Theology in the Church Fathers and Mothers
Trinity College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall (September to December) 2018

Instructor Information

Instructors:	Dr Daniel G Opperwall, Dr Maria-Fotini Polidoulis Kapsalis
Office Location:	Larkin Building, Office 317
Email:	daniel.opperwall@utoronto.ca, mariafotini.kapsalis@utoronto.ca
Office Hours:	

Course Identification

Course Number:	TRT2504
Course Name:	Early Thought, Doctrine and Theology in the Church Fathers and Mothers
Course Location:	
Class Times:	Mondays, 7pm to 9.30pm
Prerequisites:	None

Course Description

The first major phase of Christian theological development took place between the Ascension of Christ as the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). During this period, the problems of the Trinity, appropriate exegesis of scripture, Christology, and salvation would be addressed in a variety of ways. In this course, we will explore the development of early Christian doctrine and theology through careful reading of key primary sources and secondary material. Emphasis will be on the above theological questions, with special attention to the significance of this theology for lived praxis among Christians at the time and in the present day. Key fathers and mothers of the Church will be explored alongside thinkers whose views would eventually be considered heretical.

Evaluation is based on two short response papers, a research paper, and class participation. For the online section, class participation will be offered either in real-time (meeting online) or through weekly journals.

Expanded Course Description

During the first five centuries CE, the Christian Church would develop from a small community of messianic Jews into the state religion of the world's most powerful empire. Along the road, a huge variety of voices and teachings would develop around the question of Jesus Christ, the Trinity, scripture, and salvation, each vying for control of the theological discourse. The controversies of this period, and their proposed solutions, would set the stage for all future Christian theology and thought, and impact every Christian community into the present day.

This course will explore the best and most influential of early Christianity's theological and spiritual authors, examining their intellectual context, the controversies within which they played a role, and their productive and creative theological and spiritual writings. The development and defense of Nicene Christianity will be of special emphasis, along with the early debates surrounding the Incarnation, the status of the Holy Spirit, the correct interpretation of Holy Scripture, the canonization of the New Testament, and the role of theology in the lived experience of Christians. The significance of early theology for modern Christian life will also be a focus. Authors who would eventually be regarded as orthodox will take centre stage, but the voices of non-orthodox ("heretical") authors will also be considered in detail.

Course Resources

Required Course Books

Behr, John. *The Way to Nicaea*. Crestwood: St Vladimir's, 2001

Basil the Great. *On the Holy Spirit*. Crestwood: St Vladimir's, 1980.

Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*. Crestwood: St Vladimir's, 2012.

Required Course Readings

Further primary source readings will be posted to portal in available, public domain translations.

Course Portal

This course will make extensive use of the University of Toronto's Learning Portal also known as 'Blackboard'.

To access the portal, go to the UofT portal login page at https://portal.utoronto.ca and log in using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students.

Please ensure that you are familiar with how to access the system and navigate through it. The portal will be used in the following ways:

- Keeping an updated version of the course syllabus and calendar
- Providing course readings, bibliographies and other handouts
- Sharing additional online resources
- Communicating class notices and updates
- Issuing assignment guidelines and deadlines
- Accepting assignment submissions
- Providing feedback and grades for all assignments and other course requirements

In addition, for the online section, the portal will be used in the following ways:

- Delivering weekly course lectures and seminars (available also for classroom-based students for review)
- Enabling student participation and interaction in the blogs, discussion forums and other online communications (see course requirements and evaluation below)

Auditors who do not have a UTORid should speak to the instructor to receive guest access to the course portal.

As in the classroom, online communication must be carried out respectfully and civilly at all times. Writing within the online media of blogs, discussion forums is not an excuse for laziness, lack of proper reflection or uncivility. Arguments must be carefully crafted, respectfully presented and grounded in source texts and solid reflection. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will not succeed in this course.

Course Learning Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Identify the authors studied, including the period in which they lived and their basic historical context. (Lectures, secondary readings, student research).
- Recall the most important extant writings of the authors studied, their basic content, and the reason for their significance. (Lectures, primary readings, student research).
- Communicate more effectively, verbally and in writing, about historical theology by making logical arguments about primary materials, engaging relevant secondary sources, and meeting academic standards for writing and annotation. (Primary readings, writing assignments, directive feedback thereon, class/online discussion).
- Analyze ancient texts in translation to identify the genre, context, core arguments, intended audience and authorial purpose evident therein. (Primary readings, secondary readings, class/online discussion, directive feedback on written work).
- Assess how historical thought and theology affect contemporary religious communities, parishes, and churches, so as to more effectively guide their congregations and communities through discussion about Christianity's past. (Class/online discussion).

Course Outcomes: Knowledge of the Area of Concentration	Course Elements	Programme Outcomes
Students successfully completing this course will be able to:	*This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:*	*This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of the Basic Degree Learning Outcomes*
Identify the authors studied, including the period in which they lived and their basic historical context.	Lectures, secondary readings, student research	Religious heritage Cultural context
Recall the most important extant writings of the authors studied, their basic content, and the reason for their significance.	Lectures, primary readings, student research	Religious heritage Cultural context
Communicate more effectively, verbally and in writing, about historical theology by making logical arguments about primary materials, engaging relevant secondary sources, and meeting academic standards for writing and annotation.	Primary readings, writing assignments, directive feedback thereon, class/online discussion	Religious heritage Cultural context Formation of Character Leadership
Analyze ancient texts in translation to identify the genre, context, core arguments, intended audience and authorial purpose evident therein.	Primary readings, secondary readings, class/online discussion, feedback on written work	Religious heritage Cultural context Formation of Character
Assess how historical thought and theology affect contemporary religious communities, parishes, and churches, so as to more effectively guide their congregations and communities through discussion about Christianity's past.	Class/online discussion	Cultural Context Formation of Character Leadership

Evaluation

Requirements – Classroom Section

The final grade for the course will be based on the following areas:

1) Short responses. Twice during the term, each credit student will compose a short response to the primary source passage or passages for the week. This will not exceed one page will not involve research. Students will present their short response to the class at the beginning of discussion for that week, either in summary or by reading it aloud (whichever is more comfortable), and will assist in leading the following discussion along with the instructor. 50%.

2) Final paper. By the end of exam week, students will turn in a final paper. This will (typically) expand upon their discussion in one of the short response (changes in topic are allowed if the instructor has been consulted in advance). The final paper should focus on assessment of the primary source material, but will be expected to delve further into the primary sources in question (thus, reading beyond the passage reviewed for class) and to incorporate academic research (secondary sources). The final paper should be synthetic and argumentative. 35%

3) Participation The course will involve a substantial discussion component each week. Students will be evaluated on preparedness for this discussion. Students will assist in leading one session of discussion as well, as noted above. 15%

Requirements – Online Section

The final grade for the course will be based on the following areas:

1) Short responses or weekly meeting. The online section for this course will offer two options for student participation. (1) A weekly real-time meeting (using Skype) will be set up (time to be determined) during which students can participation in live, real-time discussion of the course materials. (2) Students unable to attend some or all Skype sessions will be required, instead, to submit a very short [750 word, strict maximum] written response to the readings *each week*. The instructor will provide a series of critical questions for each primary source designed to help students get started on the essay. This weekly response will be informal and will not require research beyond the assigned primary sources; it should, however, be thoughtful and carefully written. Selections from these responses will be posted to the course module the following week. 30%

2) Final paper. By the end of exam week, students will turn in a final paper. This will (typically) expand upon their discussion in one chosen short response (changes in topic are allowed if the instructor has been consulted in advance). The paper will not exceed 4000 words [strict]. The final paper should focus on assessment of the primary source material, but will be expected to delve further into the primary sources in question (thus, reading beyond the passage reviewed for class) and to incorporate academic research (secondary sources). The final paper should be synthetic and argumentative. 30%

3) Short Responses. Twice during the term, each credit student will compose a short response to the primary source passage or passages for the week. This will not exceed 1000 words [strict] and will not involve research. The instructor will provide a series of critical questions for each primary source designed to help students get started on the essay. Students will present their short response to the class at the beginning of discussion for that week, either in summary or by reading it aloud (whichever is more comfortable), and will assist in leading the following discussion along with the instructor. 40%.

[Please note]

While some online courses allow for students to set their own pace in watching and responding to posted material, this course will require **active weekly engagement.** Students will need to keep up each and every week as the course progresses the way they would in an in-class environment. If you anticipate problems with your schedule in this respect, please contact the instructor immediately.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A RANGE: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, and broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base
B RANGE: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria

Policy on Late Assignments

The instructor reserves the right to deduct up to 2.5% of the final assignment grade for each week that an assignment is late. Students are generally granted a 'grace week' provided the instructor is informed of any special circumstances before the assignment deadline.

This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty advisor or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (for instance, a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = 'standing deferred') beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course Grades

Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from http://www.tst.edu/content/handbooks) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871. A student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of *Behaviour on Academic Matters* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm).

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all credit students are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up a utoronto email address which is entered in the ROSI system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction

- Course intro
- Key background

Week 2 - Early Apologetics; Canonization of New Testament

- Justin Martyr
- Irenaeus
- Marcion

Week 3 - Early Apologetics; Scriptural exegesis; Ecclesiology

- Irenaeus
- Clement of Alexandria
- Ignatius

Week 4 - Early Doctrine I

- Tertullian
- Augustine of Hippo

Week 5 - Origen

- Origen of Alexandria

Week 6 - Early Trinitarian Doctrine I

- Athanasius
- Council of Nicaea
- Basil of Caesarea

Week 7 - Cappadocians; The Holy Spirit

- Basil of Caesarea
- Gregory the Theologian
- Council of Constantinople

Week 8 - Early philosophical Theology

- Gregory of Nyssa

Week 9 - Early Trinitarian Doctrine II

- John Chrysostom

Week 10 - Asceticism and Monasticism

- Desert fathers and mothers
- Life of Antony
- Evagrius
- John Cassian

Week 11 - Incarnational Theology

- Cyril of Alexandria
- Council of Ephesus

Week 12 - Wrap-up

- Essential themes
- Doctrine and theology--significance for today?

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change in accordance with the regulations in the TST *Basic Degree Handbook*.