

Religion 250. Christianity
DePauw University (Spring, 2012)
Professor Valarie Ziegler

213 Emison Museum

Campus phone: 4028/ E-mail: vziegler@depauw.edu

Office hours: M/W 10:00-11:00; T/R 1:00-2:00; other times by appointment.

Welcome to this introduction to Christianity. This course is designed to initiate you into the academic study of religion and to help you grapple with critical issues of interpretation. Our approach will be historical, beginning with a study of the earliest Christian communities in their Greco-Roman context and (after dashing through a millennium or two) ending with a sampling of contemporary Christian expressions. We will read primary documents as well as secondary texts. By the end of the course, you should have an informed sense of a wide variety of ways in which Christians have attempted to relate faith and culture. You should also have attained skills in reading and assessing theological texts.

I am excited about working with you and look forward to getting to know each of you. If you need to see me at a time when I am not having office hours, please make an appointment. If I'm not in the office or don't answer the phone when you are looking for me, please leave a note on my door, or contact me by E-mail.

REQUIREMENTS

The most important expectation I have of you is that you will: (1) do the readings, (2) bring a copy of the readings with you when you come to class, and (3) participate in class discussions. This course is, above all else, dependent upon your careful preparation for, and willing participation in, our class conversations. It is not a lecture course, but is reading intensive and discussion intensive. If you like courses that involve sitting quietly and taking notes, this is not a good class for you. To help you prepare, I've included terms and questions to ponder for each reading assignment. You should come to class with prepared answers and questions.

You are allowed 2 cuts. Each additional absence will result in the deduction of two points from your final average. You can use your cuts for anything you wish, but you only get 2. If you have to be out of town for a varsity game, if you need to go home for your grandmother's birthday, if you are sick in bed, or just don't feel like getting out of it, it's all the same. Those of you who are involved in campus activities (sports, newspaper, theater, etc.) may need to use your cuts for commitments in those areas. That's fine, but you don't get 2 cuts in addition to "school related" absences.

DePauw University is committed to respecting students who seek to observe religious holidays during the academic year. If you need to miss class or reschedule an assignment for that reason, I will be happy to work with you. Absences due to religious observances count as cuts.

GRADING

There will be 3 examinations during the term and a final examination at the end. Each exam is worth 22.5% of your final grade. If you become ill and are unable to take an exam, **you must contact me prior to the exam** and must provide a doctor's excuse for your absence. If you suffer a death in the family, **you must contact me prior to the exam** to set up an alternative exam time. If you are unable to take an exam because of involvement in a university-related

activity, **you must contact me prior to the exam** to set up an alternative time before the regularly scheduled exam. If you have not acquired an extension in advance, and you fail to show up for an exam, there will be severe penalties. It is possible, but not likely, that at my discretion you will be permitted to take the exam the next day. Such a make-up will automatically be docked 20 points. It is more likely that you will not be permitted to take the exam and will receive a zero. If you miss an exam and I do not hear from you on the day of the exam, you will receive a zero. There are no exceptions. What I'm trying to say here is this: except in extraordinary circumstances, exams will be taken on time or not at all.

Class participation is worth 10%. The depth and frequency of your contributions to class discussions provide the primary factors in determining your participation grade. Pop quizzes will occur only if it appears that the class is not participating adequately in daily discussions.

My grading scale is as follows:

90-100	A	(90-92 = A-)
80-90	B	(88-89 = B+ / 80-82 = B-)
70-80	C	(78-79 = C+ / 70-72 = C-)
60-70	D	(68-69 = D+ / 60-62 = D-)

Academic Integrity

I will observe the University policy on academic integrity, and urge you to consult the Student Handbook to familiarize yourself with that policy. Cheating in any form (on exams, papers, etc.) will result in reductions of grade or in your failing the class.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- William Placher, A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY. (Westminster John Knox, 1983)
ISBN 0664244963
- William Placher, READINGS IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, vol. 1-2
(Westminster John Knox, 1988). Vol 1 ISBN: 0664240577; Vol 2: 0664240585
- Athanasius. THE LIFE OF ST. ANTHONY (Paulist Press, 1980)
- E-RESERVE*

Please note: the books are available at Fine Print bookstore on the square. There are also a few library E-reserve readings, which I expect you to read, *print and bring to class* with you.

Schedule of Readings

- 1/ 31 Introduction to course
- 2/2 HCT, 11-42
E-RESERVE: David R. Cartlidge and David L. Dungan, "Savior Gods in the Mediterranean World," in Documents for the Study of the Gospels (Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 13-22, 129-130, 154-155, 253-255.

E-RESERVE: "Biblical Texts on the Parousia"

TERMS:¹ Sadducees; Pharisees; Zealots; Qumran; Dead Sea Scrolls; messiah; savior gods; Plato; Philo; Pythagoras; incarnation; parousia; Gentiles; Jewish diaspora.

TO PONDER: in what ways did early Christians depict Jesus as similar to other savior gods in the Mediterranean world. What was unique about Christian depictions of Jesus as savior? In what ways was first-century Judaism diverse?

2/7 HCT, 44-49

E-RESERVE: “Mark 1; Mark 8:27-9:13; Mark 13:1-14:11; Luke 24; Acts 2:1-36 (NRSV); public domain online at <http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.html>;

E-RESERVE: “New Testament Christological Passages”

E-RESERVE: “Questions for Discussion.”

TERMS: christology; solidarity; Logos; apocalypticism; eschatology; Paul; first Adam/second Adam

Assignment: bring to class typed answers to the Questions for Discussion

TO PONDER: in the NT passages, what is the difference between low and high Christology?

2/9 HCT, 49-53

E-RESERVE: “Hymn of the Pearl”(public domain at <http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/library/hymnpearl.htm>); Ignatius of Antioch, “Letter to the Romans,” in Cyril Richardson, Early Christian Fathers (Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 102-107; public domain online at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.ii.iii.iv.html>

Placher I: “Second Treatise of the Great Seth,” 14-15; Gospel of Thomas, 12-14.

TERMS: Gnosticism; Nag Hammadi; doceticism; antinomian; ascetical; rule of faith; charisma; hierarchy; office; apostolic succession; apostolic age; orthodoxy; canon; Montanus; Marcion; martyr

TO PONDER: what’s Gnostic about “Hymn of the Pearl?” For what theological reasons does Ignatius want to die? In what ways do proto-orthodox reactions to Marcion and Montanus stifle diversity in early Christianity?

2/14 *E-RESERVE*: Elaine Pagels, “What Became of God the Mother?” In Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, Woman Spirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion (HarperSan Francisco, 1979), pp. 107-119; Genesis 1-3,” NRSV, public domain online at <http://bible.oremus.org/browser.cgi?passage=Genesis+1-3>.

Placher I: Origen, “On First Principles,” 36-40.

¹ Note: these terms are not exhaustive, nor are they the only important concepts we will discuss. Use them as a guide if you like. They are not a substitute for your own synthesis of the course materials.

TERMS: God as male/female; 3 levels of scripture

TO PONDER: what is Pagels' thesis, and how does it relate to Genesis 1-3? What relevance do gender roles have to the disputes between Gnostic and proto-orthodox Christians? What 3 levels of scripture does Origen identify, and why does he claim that every passage in scripture is inspired, but not necessarily literally true?

- 2/16 *E-RESERVE*: "The Martyrdom of Perpetua," in Wilson-Kastner et al, *A Lost Tradition: Women Writers of the Early Church* (University Press of America, 1981), pp. 19-32; public domain online at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/actsperpetua.html>

TO PONDER: how would you compare this martyrdom account to Ignatius'? What theological points does the narrator (who introduces and concludes the piece) want to make?

- 2/21 Exam, chapters 1-4

- 2/23 HCT, 55-66

Placher I: Tertullian, "On Prescription Against the Heretics," 43-33
E-RESERVE: Justin Martyr

TERMS: apologist; Platonic forms; Logos theology; Justin Martyr; Irenaeus; recapitulation; recreation; innocence to experience; passions; corruption.

TO PONDER: How does Justin Martyr attempt to connect philosophy and Christianity?

- 2/28 HCT, 68-75

E-RESERVE: Favorite Arian Biblical Passages
Placher I: Athanasius, "On the Incarnation," 48-51.

TERMS: atonement; Devil-ward theory; legal/debt metaphor; trinitarian controversy; Sabellianism; theories of identity, derivation, mutuality; mode; mask; Wisdom (Sophia) and Proverbs 8; Arius; subordinationism; Origen; Tertullian; Athanasius; "only God can save"; "God became what we are that we might become what God is."

TO PONDER: how do Irenaeus and Athanasius use the theory of recreation to explain how the incarnation redeems people? What is the trinitarian controversy? What's problematic about Sabellianism? Why does Arius use Proverbs 8 to interpret John 1? What is subordinationism, and how do the two aphorisms above attempt to combat it?

- 3/1 HCT, 75-79

Placher I: Nicene Creed, 53

TERMS: Council of Nicea; homoousia; homoiousia; hypostasis; Cappadocians

TO PONDER: who lost at Nicea? How is the Cappadocian hypostasis different from a Sabellian mode? Why did Athanasius and his supporters insist upon a model of mutuality, not subordination?

- 3/6 HCT, 80-85

Placher I: "Definition of Chalcedon," 75

TERMS: Christological controversy; nature; Alexandria; Antioch; Nestorius; theotokos; Apollinaris; rational soul governing a body; Eutyches; Council of Chalcedon; "what God has not assumed, God has not redeemed"

TO PONDER: what were the principal issues at stake in the Christological controversy? Which positions lose in the Definition of Chalcedon?

3/8 Athanasius, Life of Antony, 29-99

TO PONDER: how does Athanasius use the story of Antony to defend his trinitarian and christological positions? And what's the deal with the demons and with Antony's weird diet?

3/13 HCT, 108-120

Placher I: 101-105

E-RESERVE: "Augustine on Election"

TERMS: Augustine; original sin; bondage of the will; grace; Donatism; Pelagianism

TO PONDER: why is Augustine so upset about the pears? What does he conclude that "grace comes before all merits" in his discussion of Esau and Jacob in Romans 9-10? How does office trump charisma in the settlement of the Donatist controversy?

3/15 Exam, chapters 5-6, 8

3/20 HCT, 122-150

Placher I: Anselm, "Why God Became Man," 147-149; Peter Abelard, "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans," 150-151.

TERMS: sacramental system; seven sacraments; monasticism; transubstantiation; confession; purified conscience; Anselm; Abelard; objective and subjective theories of the atonement

TO PONDER: how does the sacramental system attempt to make Christianity real in the daily lives of ordinary people? How is Anselm's method representative of monastic theology, while Abelard's work typifies theology written in a university setting? What are the crucial differences in their theories of the atonement? Where have we seen similar models of the atonement before? Why doesn't Anselm need to quote scripture in explaining why God became human?

3/22 HCT 150-158

Placher I: Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Part 1, Q. Art. 2, 156-157; Part 1 of part 2, 161-162.

TERMS: Aristotle; Aquinas; operative grace; co-operative grace; salvation as transformation; sin as disordered disposition; grace as habitual disposition; donum superadditum; nature; grace; supernatural end; "grace does not contradict nature, but completes it."

TO PONDER: how does Aquinas' category of "nature" allow him to honor Aristotle at the same time that he proclaims Christian theology superior to pagan philosophy? What two things must grace achieve in the Christian, according to Aquinas in the Summa? What is the goal of Christian life for Aquinas, and why does it necessitate good works?

Spring Break!

4/3 HCT, 162-170

Placher I: Robert Holcot, "Lectures on the Wisdom of Solomon," 181-182; Thomas Bradwardine, "The Cause of God Against the Pelagians," 182-184.

TERMS: forms; universals; universalia ante rem; universalia en rem; universalia post rem; nominalism; covenant; contracted value; Robert Holcot; ex condigno; de congruo; Thomas Bradwardine

TO PONDER: what, exactly, does it mean to deny the reality of universals? Why do nominalists question humanity's ability to know God's mind? What happens to theories of salvation when nominalists reject human solidarity? How does Holcot argue that God saves believers?

4/5 *E-RESERVE*: Kramer and Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum, Kvam, Scheering, and Ziegler, Eve and Adam (Indiana, 1999), pp. 242-248; Jacques de Vitry, "The Life of Marie d'Oignies," Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, Medieval Women's Visionary Literature (Oxford, 1986), pp. 179-183 and Thomas de Cantimpre, "The Life of Christina of St. Trond," pp.184-188.

TERMS: mysticism; tears of compunction; Jesus as mother; woman as temptress.

TO PONDER: How does the Malleus blame Eve (and through her, all women) for human sin and suffering? In what sense is woman a flawed creation in this text? In what specific ways does the Malleus invite men to project their own fears and failures on women? Why does the Malleus claim that "all witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable?" Turning to the other readings: why does Placher say that many people in the late Middle Ages turned to mysticism? In the lives of Marie and Christina, what texts suggest that mystical experiences give them spiritual authority, and in what texts do mystical experiences cause them to threaten the church's institutional authority? And what's the deal with the crying and fasting (and floating, burning, drowning)?

4/10 HCT, 181-187

Placher II: Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," 12-19

TERMS: justification by grace through faith alone; sola scriptura; sola gratia; purified conscience; works righteousness; passive righteousness; alien righteousness; forensic justification; imputed righteousness; simul justis et peccator; Council of Worms; treasury of merit; relics; Christian freedom; sanctification; Word of God; law and gospel; priesthood of all believers; outer person/inner person

TO PONDER: what, exactly, does Luther mean by justification by grace through faith? Relate his view of justification to his understanding of Christian freedom (Placher II). How does he regard the medieval notion that the goal of the Christian is to be transformed into godliness?

4/12 HCT, 188-209, 219-227

Placher II: Council of Trent, "Decree Concerning Justification," 43-47; John Calvin, "Institutes of the Christian Religion," pp. 58-66; "The Five Arminian Articles," 66-68; "The Canon of the Synod of Dort," 68-69.

TERMS: Anabaptists; Peace of Augsburg; cuius region, eius religio; Council of Trent; tradition; free will; visibly holy society; third use of the law; Calvinism; TULIP; Arminianism; prevenient grace; ir/resistible grace.

TO PONDER: how does Trent reject/accept Luther's theology? What are the 3 uses of the law that Calvin expounds? What are the purposes of civil government? What are the crucial differences between the classical Calvinism of the Synod of Dort and the revised Calvinism in the Arminian Articles?

4/17 Exam 3

TO PONDER: does the author think this prison is related to capitalism or to the rise of biblical criticism? Is it possible to escape this prison, or is prison simply a precondition of postmodern society?

4/19 HCT, 237-244

Placher II: John Locke, "The Reasonableness of Christianity," 83-87.
E-RESERVE: "Thomas Paine, Apostle of Deism," in H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation With Representative Documents, vol. 1, pp. 507-513.

TERMS: Enlightenment; evidential tradition; evidences of Christianity; natural religion; revealed religion; miracles; laws of nature; law of works; law of grace; Deism

TO PONDER: how does Locke accept the basic complementarity of natural and revealed religion? Why is it crucial to him that Christians believe Jesus did miracles? What does Paine think about miracles and the relationship of natural and revealed religion?

4/24 HCT, 248-252, 272-275

E-RESERVE: Lessing, "On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power," in Gotthold Lessing, Lessing's Theological Writings (Stanford, 1956), pp. 51-56.

E-RESERVE: selections from Wordsworth

Placher II: Schleiermacher, "On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers," 132-136

TERMS: truth of reason; truth of fact; Lessing's ditch; Romanticism; Wordsworth's "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads; "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"; "emotion recollected in tranquility"; piety; three stages of consciousness; God consciousness; Christocentrism; theology as reflection on piety; revelation; experience; ethics; science

TO PONDER: what, precisely, is Lessing's ditch? How does it make the validation of miracles (or historical claims) irrelevant to theology? How does Schleiermacher define miracles differently from Locke, Paine, and Lessing? How does he relate natural and revealed religion? Why does he say that religion is not science (knowledge) or ethics (moral behavior) but piety (feeling)?

4/26 HCT, 275-280, 285-287
Placher II: Feuerbach, "Lectures on the Essence of Religion," 139-140; Schweitzer, "The Quest for the Historical Jesus," 151-153

TERMS: religion as consciousness of the infinite; theology as anthropology; divided self; "lives" of Jesus; Jesus as an eschatological and apocalyptic messiah

TO PONDER: Schleiermacher argued that religion was consciousness of the infinite and that the best way to encounter the infinite was to immerse oneself in studying the life of Jesus, who had uninterrupted God consciousness. Feuerbach reacts to Schleiermacher's first point, and Schweitzer to his second. How? What do they conclude?

5/1 HCT, 291-298
Placher II: Harnack, "What Is Christianity?" 149-151; Troeltsch, "The Place of Christianity Among World Religions," 153-155; Kierkegaard, "Attack Upon 'Christendom,'" 141-143.

TERMS: kerygma; history of religions approach; supreme validity; absolute religion; "Christendom"; "Christian" nation.

TO PONDER: How does Troeltsch disagree with Harnack's description of Christianity as a religion of supreme validity? What is the value of Christianity for Troeltsch? Why is Kierkegaard scornful of "Christendom"? What does he think Christianity ought to be instead?

5/3 HCT, 291-298
Placher II: Karl Barth, "Church Dogmatics," and "The Barmen Declaration," 156-162; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Letters and Papers from Prison," 162-165; Charles Hodge, "Systematic Theology," 165-167.

TERMS: Neo-orthodoxy; natural theology; cultural Christianity; Confessing Church; religionless Christianity; Princeton theology; infallibility; plenary inspiration; Fundamentalism

TO PONDER: How is Barth's theology a reaction to liberalism and the ravages of World War I? How does he reject "religion"? How is the Barmen Declaration a rejection of cultural Christianity? What is Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity? How did Barth and Bonhoeffer shape their theology in opposition to the Nazis? What does Hodge mean by "infallible" and "plenary inspiration"? How is his view of scripture different from Schleiermacher? From Harnack?

5/10 TBA

Final exam, ch. 12-15, 17. Thursday, May 17, 1:00-4:00.