

Course Syllabus

Title:	Introduction to Early Christian Theology
Code:	
Type:	Seminar
Class schedule:	Tuesday 14:00-15:30
Venue	Faculty of Theology, Department of Philosophy (1 st floor)
Hours per week	2
Credits:	6
Name of the Lecturer:	Gábor Kendeffy
Status of the Lecturer:	Associate professor

Description:

The course aims to provide an introduction to early Christian theology, based on a general knowledge of the Bible. This is intended not only for Christian believers, but also for people of other faiths and atheists. In the classes, we analyse short English translations of excerpts. The main topics we focus on are: the creation of the world; the creation of man; the fall of the first couple; free will versus predestination; Trinitology; and Christology. Our approach will consist of re-reading fundamental biblical passages relating to the above topics and studying different interpretations of them by various early Christian church fathers.

Depending on the background and orientation of the students, the subject may be modified by the second class.

Requirements:

1) Attending at least 75% of classes; 2) actively participating in discussions based on the compulsory readings.

Classes of the Course

Class:	Date:	Subject:
1.		Finalizing the topic. The historical context, main periods and fundamental characteristics of early Christian theology.
2.		An overview of important biblical themes, including creation, the fall, grace and salvation.
3.		Bishops versus prophets. The ecclesiology and moral theology of the Apostolic Fathers.
4.		The Greek apologists of the second century: Christian faith and Pagan philosophy; the nature of God; the Holy Trinity; creation ex nihilo; the creation of man; free will.
5.		Dualistic and deterministic interpreters of Scripture: Gnosticism.
6.		The emerging doctrine of free will: Irenaeus of Lyons.
7.		The most renowned heretic. Origen, his followers and opponents.
8.		The Arian controversy and the Cappadocian Fathers. The anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa.
9.		The Christian who could not bring himself to decide whether to love this world or hate it. Lactantius.
10.		Augustine on will, grace, and the transmission of sin.
11.		Augustine on love and human society.

12.		The Christological debates of the fifth and sixth centuries.
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Compulsory readings to the particular classes

- (2) Excerpts from the Bible: Book of Genesis, Chs 1.3. Book of Exodus 1,20.. 2.; Gospel of John, ch. 1.; Letter to the Romans ch 7; ch. 9.
- (3) *The Lord's Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*. [CHURCH FATHERS: The Didache \(newadvent.org\)](http://www.newadvent.org/)
[CHURCH FATHERS: Letter to the Corinthians \(Clement\) \(newadvent.org\)](http://www.newadvent.org/).
- (4) Theophilus of Antiochia, *To Autolycus*, book 2, chs 17-28.
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/theophilus-book2.html>
- (5) Gospel of Truth, see: [The Gospel of Truth \(Grant Translation\) - The Nag Hammadi Library \(gnosis.org\)](http://www.gnosis.org/)
- (6) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 4, chs 37-39.
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book4.html>
- (7) Origen, *On the First Principles*, book 1, chs 5-6.
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04121.htm>
- (8) Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, chs 1-8.
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>
- (9) Augustine of Hippo, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, chs 32-39. See:
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/15121.htm>)
- (10) Theodoret of Cyrus: *Exposition of True Faith (Expositio rectae fidei)* (transl. b. V. Vranic), Chs 1-4. See:
http://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1182&context=dissertations_mu (p. 248-253)

Sources eligible as topic of presentation (for one subject only one reading can be chosen)

- (2) Plato, *Timaeus* 28a-47e. See: <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/physis/plato-timaeus/genesis.asp?pg=2>
- (3) Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Romans* chs 1-10. See:
<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/1clement-robert>
- (5) Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chs 1-9. See:
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-dialoguetrypho.html>
- 3) Apocryphon of John (NHC II.1; III.1.; IV.1; BG 2).
<http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/apocjn-short.html>
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/theophilus-book2.html>
- (6) Origen, *On the First Principles*, book 3.
(See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04123.htm>)
- (7) Jerome, *Letter 51*. (From Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, to John, Bishop of Jerusalem). See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001051.htm>
- (8) Lactantius, *On the Workmanship of God*, See:
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf07.iii.iv.ii.html>
- (9) Gregory of Nyssa: *On Soul and Resurrection*.
See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2915.htm>
- (10) Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, book 8, see:
faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/augustine/Pusey/book08

Recommended Secondary Literature as Background and for Further Orientation

Quasten, J. *Patrology* I-III. Utrecht:,1962.

Di Berardino, Angelo, Adrian Walford, and Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*. Cambridge, 2006.
[England]: James Clarke.Chadwick, H. *The Early Church* (The Penguin History of the Church), 1967(revised 1993)

Rudolph, K. *The History and the Nature of Gnosticism*, Translated by R. McL. Wilson. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983

[http://books.google.com/books?id=3XxxkESCWz4C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Rudolph+Gnosis&source=bl&ots=pZMq3qU-](http://books.google.com/books?id=3XxxkESCWz4C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Rudolph+Gnosis&source=bl&ots=pZMq3qU-S4&sig=PwqtbLj4zjf9Xj3qGCmuTbB0j3I&hl=hu&ei=c_GNTN6qNYzKswbZ8L3tAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBcQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false)

[S4&sig=PwqtbLj4zjf9Xj3qGCmuTbB0j3I&hl=hu&ei=c_GNTN6qNYzKswbZ8L3tAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBcQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=3XxxkESCWz4C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Rudolph+Gnosis&source=bl&ots=pZMq3qU-S4&sig=PwqtbLj4zjf9Xj3qGCmuTbB0j3I&hl=hu&ei=c_GNTN6qNYzKswbZ8L3tAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBcQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Osborn, E. F., *Irenaeus of Lyons*, Cambridge : 2001.

Trigg, J.D., *Origen*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992

Cavarnos, J. P., *St. Gregory of Nyssa on the Human Soul*. Belmont, Mass.: 2000.

Stump, Eleonore and Kretzman, Norman (eds.) (2001), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*: Cambridge: 2001.

[http://www.google.hu/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CEMQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bdp.org.ar%2Ffacultad%2Fcatredras%2Fcp%2Fpolitica%2Ftextos%2Fsan_agustin%2FCambridge_Companion_to_Augustine.pdf&ei=](http://www.google.hu/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CEMQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bdp.org.ar%2Ffacultad%2Fcatredras%2Fcp%2Fpolitica%2Ftextos%2Fsan_agustin%2FCambridge_Companion_to_Augustine.pdf&ei=EIUa7oN6HI4ASQ9oDgAQ&usg=AFQjCNGz3Bhfl1FF_kc974094l4QsC2vnA&sig2=XEsIMu7cg8sqthILweLBVw&bvm=bv.41642243,d.Yms)

[x-EIUa7oN6HI4ASQ9oDgAQ&usg=AFQjCNGz3Bhfl1FF_kc974094l4QsC2vnA&sig2=XEsIMu7cg8sqthILweLBVw&bvm=bv.41642243,d.Yms](http://www.google.hu/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CEMQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bdp.org.ar%2Ffacultad%2Fcatredras%2Fcp%2Fpolitica%2Ftextos%2Fsan_agustin%2FCambridge_Companion_to_Augustine.pdf&ei=EIUa7oN6HI4ASQ9oDgAQ&usg=AFQjCNGz3Bhfl1FF_kc974094l4QsC2vnA&sig2=XEsIMu7cg8sqthILweLBVw&bvm=bv.41642243,d.Yms)

Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography*. (New edition with an epilogue) University of California Press: Berkely, Los Angeles: 2000.

http://books.google.com/books?id=bJPY1dAZg8cC&printsec=frontcover&dq=inauthor:%22Peter+Robert+Lamont+Brown%22&hl=hu&ei=EfKNTNT9KdjPjAfDkOWfBg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCcQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

Clayton, P. B. Jr., *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, Oxford, 2007.