

**DONOVAN / STHS 4412**

**Spring 2009 Tues - Fri 11:10-12:30**

## **GOD, CHRIST, & SALVATION IN EARLY CHURCH**

**Description:** This lecture-discussion course will explore the concepts of God, Christ, and salvation in scripture, ritual, creed, and councils of the patristic period. Designed for advanced M Div and MA or STL students. Meets requirements of a content course for the 2nd and 3rd year JSTB MDiv curriculum.

**Requirements:** attendance, readings, participation in discussion,, and personal questions which those readings stimulate, and, finally, one of two options. Option A: two ten page papers. The first ten page paper is due on either Feb. 27 or March 13. The second ten page paper is due on either April 7, or May 19. Option B: an oral midterm dealing with Parts 1-3 of course, on March 31 or April 3; and a 15 to 20 page paper drawn from material from Part 4 of course, with proposal due March 31 and paper due May 19.

**Objectives:** 1) to attain suitable familiarity with the layers of the tradition around the concepts and their interrelationships; 2) to grow in ease in the historical interpretation of primary sources; 3) to attain mastery (appropriate to the student's level of study) of one or two sections of the material.

**Assessment:** Competence in objectives 1 and 2 will be demonstrated via the discussions, or the oral; competence in objective 3 will be demonstrated via two ten page papers on two sections of the course, or the longer paper.

### **Required texts**

Gerald O'Collins, SJ. *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*. New York: Paulist, 1999.

All other readings, primary and secondary are on Moodle.

No class Feb. 3 or Feb. 6 as I must be away.

### Part 1: In Story

February 10 Alternate Stories: Gods of Ancient Mediterranean World. Read for next class: "Mercy, Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise!': The Testimony of the Apologists." In Daniel J. Sheerin, *The Eucharist*, pp.21-49.

February 13 God of the Christian Story: from the God of Israel, through the God of Jesus. Read for next class one Gospel in its entirety.

February 17 Did Jesus think He was God? Jesus's growth in consciousness. Read for next class: Karl Rahner, "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ."

February 20 "A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16). How did Jesus become the Savior? Read for next class: "Jesus, the World's Redeemer." In Gerald O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, pp.132-169.

### Part 2: In Ritual

February 24 Ritual and the God it honors. Read for next class: from Daniel J. Sheerin, *The Eucharist*, pp.116-157; pp.283-303; pp.349-392.

February 27 Celebration as a Christian. Read for next class: "General Introduction." In Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, pp.1-27. Option A: paper due today or March 13.

March 3 Becoming a Christian: conversion journey. Read for next class: "Egypt." In Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, pp.173-233.

March 6 Baptismal experience: diverse rituals. For next class, read "The Scriptural Roots." In G. O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*, pp.11-82.

#### Part 3: In Creed

March 10 The New Testament and the Trinity: Jesus, Son of the Father. For next class, read "The Trinity Before Nicaea." In Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*, pp .85-113.

March 13 Second century reflections: the salvation Jesus brings. Read for next class: "Christ." In Origen, *De principiis*, c.2. Option A: Paper due today if not turned in Feb. 27.

March 17 Third century clarifications: One God, and Jesus. Read for next class: #s 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 299. In J. Stevenson, ed. *A New Eusebius*.

March 20 Position of Arius: Jesus, the perfect Son, saves by example. For next class: read Joseph T. Lienhard, "The Arian Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered."

#### March 22-27: SPRING BREAK

#### Part 4: In Conciliar Teaching

March 31 Nicaea \_ Is the Son God as the Father is God? Salvation by transformation. For next class: read "From Nicaea I to Constantinople I." In Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God*, pp 114-126. Option B: paper proposal due; oral today or April 3.

April 3 Athanasius in Post-Nicene Situation. For next class, read "First Letter to Serapion" by Athanasius. Option B: oral today if not Mar. 31.

April 7 Read Basil, "On the Holy Spirit". Option A: paper due today or May 19. (April 10: Good Friday - no class.)

April 14 Holy Spirit from Athanasius through Cappadocians. For next class, read "Fifth Theological Oration" of Gregory of Nazianzen.

April 17 Is the Holy Spirit God? I Constantinople. For next class, read "The Person of the God-Man." In Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (199-600)*, pp. 226-243.

April 21 Presuppositions of Christological doctrine. For next class, read "The Person of the God-Man." In Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, pp. 243-277.

April 24 Problems of exegesis and theologies of the Incarnation. For next class, read Definition of Chalcedon.

April 28 Chalcedon: Is Jesus equally God and a human being? For next class, read “Chalcedon and the History of Theology,” and “Chalcedon \_ End of Beginning?” in Aloys Grillmeier, SJ, Christ in Christian Tradition 1, pp. 550 - 557.

May 1 Chalcedon continued .For next class, read M. Shawn Copeland “To Live at the Disposal of the Cross: Mystical-Political Discipleship as Christological Locus.” In Anne M. Clifford and Anthony J. Godzieba, eds, Christology: Memory, Inquiry, Practice. College Theology Society, Annual Volume 48 (2002), pp.177-196 with response Mary Ann Hinsdale, pp. 197-205.

Conclusion

May 5 Faith Doing Justice. For next class read Anne M. Clifford, “The Global Horizon of Religious Pluralism and Local Dialogue with the Religious-other.” In Terrence W. Tilley, ed. New Horizons in Theology. College Theology Society, Annual Volume 50 ay 19(2004), pp.162-182.

May 8 Jesus and Others. For next class, read “What Does It Mean Today to Believe in Jesus Christ?” In Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations 18, pp.143-156.

May 12. Belief Today in Jesus Christ. For next class prepare about three pages on what you think it means today to believe in Jesus Christ.

May 15 Jesus Christ, Yesterday, Today, and Forever.

May 19: Final papers due in my box, options A and B. No class.