

POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY
CMI 652 The Christian Faith
Spring 2016

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION: A survey of the history of Christian thought.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The student will

- Outline the general history of Christian thought;
- Express the historical context and significance of the creeds; and
- Evaluate the nature of Christian ethics and the application of Christian thought for personal/corporate practice in contemporary society.

REQUIRED READING:

- Samuel M. Powell, *Discovering Our Christian Faith*
- Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology*
- Robin W. Lovin, *Christian Ethics*
- Mark Noll, *Turning Points*

REQUIREMENTS:

January 8

Reading:

- McGrath, *Historical Theology*, chapter 1
- Noll, *Turning Points*, chapters 1-3

Assignment: Write a three page essay in which, based on the assigned readings, you expound your understanding of the issues at stake in the Trinitarian and Christological debates in early Christianity.

January 15

Reading:

- McGrath, *Historical Theology*, chapter 2
- Noll, *Turning Points*, chapters 4-6

Assignment: Participate in a Canvas discussion about the middle ages. In particular, create at least one discussion thread in which you identify an issue from the assigned reading and explain your understanding of the importance of that issue for Christian theology and for the life of the church. Additionally, you are required to respond to the discussion threads of at least two other students.

January 22

Reading:

- McGrath, *Historical Theology*, chapter 3
- Noll, *Turning Points*, chapters 7-9

Assignment: Write a three page essay in which, based on the assigned reading, you discuss the important of the Reformation for Christian theology: What were the most important issues? Why were they important? Where do you stand on these issues?

January 29

Reading:

- McGrath, *Historical Theology*, chapter 4
- Noll, *Turning Points*, chapters 10-13

Assignment: Participate in a Canvas discussion about the modern era. In particular, create at least one discussion thread in which you identify an issue from the assigned reading and explain your understanding of the importance of that issue for Christian theology and for the life of the church. Additionally, you are required to respond to the discussion threads of at least two other students.

February 1-5

Class meets at PLNU

February 12

Reading: Powell, *Discovering*, unit 1

Assignment: Using the assigned reading and lectures as resources, write a three page essay in which you describe how you teach and/or preach the doctrine of creation to a congregation. Which issues would you cover? Why would you include them? Which issues would avoid? Why would you avoid them? What approach would you take?

February 19

Reading: Powell, *Discovering*, unit 2

Assignment: Using the assigned reading and lectures as resources, write a three page essay in which you describe how you teach and/or preach the doctrines of sin and grace. Which issues would you cover? Why would you include them? Which issues would avoid? Why would you avoid them? What approach would you take?

February 26

Reading: Powell, *Discovering*, unit 3

Assignment: Using the assigned reading and lectures as resources, write a three page essay in which you expound your understanding of either sanctification or ecclesiology. In particular, discuss the most important features of the doctrine you've chosen and its importance for the pastoral task today.

March 4

Reading:

- Powell, *Discovering*, unit 4
- Lovin, *Christian Ethics*

Assignments:

- Using the assigned reading and lectures as resources, write a two page essay in which you explain the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christian theology and the life of the church today.
- Using *Christian Ethics* as a resource, write a three page essay in which you set forth a pastoral response to the ethical and theological questions surrounding homosexual behavior. How should the church respond? How should pastors, in particular, respond? Think about issues such as presiding over gay marriage, receiving homosexuals into church membership, ordaining practicing homosexuals, and so on.

GRADING (points are approximate):

- Jan 8 essay 12%
- Jan 22 essay 12%
- Feb 12 essay 12%
- Feb 19 essay 12%
- Feb 26 essay 12%
- Mar 4 two pg essay 10%
- Mar 4 three pg essay 12%
- Jan 15 discussion 9%
- Jan 29 discussion 9%

OTHER MATTERS:

- Email is the official mode of communication in this course.
- Inclusive language: The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the department urges students, faculty and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings.