

Christian Foundations

RELI 300C – Spring 2012

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Office Hours:	Mon. - Wed. - Fri. 1:40 - 2:30 p.m. & 4:40 - 5:30 p.m. Tues. – Thurs. 2:40 – 3:30 p.m.
Class meeting times:	Tues. & Thurs. 1:20 – 2:35 p.m.
Classroom:	Hoover, room 102

INTRODUCTION

How have Christians come to believe what they believe? In this course students will have the opportunity to explore the historical contexts out of which Christian beliefs and practices have taken shape from the beginning of the Church to the present day. They will examine how key theological doctrines and creeds have developed as Christians across many eras and geographical locations have reflected on and borne witness to their faith. And since faith is not merely a cerebral activity, there will also be ample opportunity to become *experientially* acquainted with classical spiritual practices through designated readings with practical application exercises.

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this course each student should be able to:

1. Identify key historical events & theological controversies that have shaped the formulation of Christian beliefs.
2. Articulate a basic understanding of core theological doctrines (e.g., the person and work of Jesus, the Trinity, nature and purpose of the Church, grace and salvation, authority of Scripture, the meaning of human personhood, sin, freewill, the nature and role of sacraments).
3. Demonstrate an appreciation for the complexity and diversity of Christian perspectives as the Christian story has developed globally over the centuries (e.g., sparked by such pivotal events as the East/West Church split, the Catholic/Protestant reformations, and various renewal movements).
4. Discuss how the religious experiences and thinking of Christians in past generations might inform and speak to the spiritual quest of Christians today.
5. Develop a deeper understanding of and experiential acquaintance with practical spiritual disciplines through exposure to primary writings by spiritual leaders past and present.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is expected of all students with respect to all written work produced, whether it be in the form of papers or exams. Plagiarism (using words or concepts taken from someone else and trying to pass them off as your own original ideas—i.e., without enclosing direct quotes in quotation marks or otherwise including footnote references) is a serious offense that is not tolerated in any academic setting. Likewise, cheating on exams is unethical and contrary to the George Fox University ethos and will also not be tolerated. The instructor will assess the gravity of the plagiarizing offense, which may result in an “F” for the paper and possibly failing the course. Cheating on an exam will incur similar repercussions. For further explanation of plagiarism & cheating, refer to the handout entitled **Guidelines for Student Papers**. If you still have some confusion about what might constitute plagiarizing material, please see me.

DISABILITY SERVICES ASSISTANCE

If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services office *as early as possible* so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to Disability Services. For more information, go to ds.georgefox.edu or contact Rick Muthiah, Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning (503-554-2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu).

TEXTS

Richard Foster and Emilie Griffin, ed. *Spiritual Classics*. New York: Harper Collins Pub., 2000.
Justo L. González. *The Story of Christianity*, vol. I & II. Peabody, Mass.: Prince Press, 2010 (revised & updated).
Hannah, John D. *Charts of Ancient and Medieval Church History*. Zondervan, 2001.

CLASSROOM ETHOS & LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

1. *Express common courtesy*, through:

- Showing mutual respect for each other in every class interaction.
- Listening attentively when others are speaking.
- Cultivating an open climate where each student feels free to express opinions, “trying on” new ideas without fear of being judged and dismissed.

2. *Cultivate focus*, through:

- Being on time and avoiding leaving class early, if at all possible, as late arrivals and early departures can seriously disrupt the focus for both the professor and other class members. While occasionally such things as a doctor’s appointment may pose an unavoidable conflict necessitating one to leave early, please tell the professor before class and leave as unobtrusively as possible. But generally speaking, the norm is to honor the time commitment you have made by signing up for this class and avoid causing a break in our focus by arriving or leaving in mid-stream.
- Keeping side conversations to a minimum with those around you so as not to distract others. What may seem like an innocuous private interchange with another student can create a ripple effect of commotion that pulls everyone off-task and impedes engagement in the topic of the day.
- Not “packing up” (putting books and notes away in your backpack, etc.) prematurely. Professors often count on planning activities that utilize class time down to the final minute. Again, a ripple effect of inattention can quickly develop by even one student packing up several minutes before the end of class.

3. *Honor a technology-free zone*, through:

- No laptops or iPads, texting on cell phones, or listening to iPods or iPhones during class sessions. As helpful and enjoyable as such devices can be, I have found from past experience that they can also pose too great a temptation for you or those around you to be distracted. Therefore, we will remove the temptation so as not to compete for attention with the learning activity of the day.

4. *Take responsibility for your own learning*, through:

- Coming to class prepared to engage actively in the topic of the day. Do whatever you need to do not only to read assigned readings but to keep track of and remember key points so as to be “discussion-ready.”
- Taking initiative to pick up missed outlines, handouts, etc. or make up a missed exam due to unavoidable absences due to illness, athletic team travel, etc.
- Seeking help from the professor or a fellow classmate at the first sign of feeling lost or confused, not tracking with ideas presented in the readings of class lectures, having trouble taking notes, studying for exams, etc. Don’t wait until exam disaster befalls you. Visit me during my office hours (listed at the top of this syllabus) or, if those time slots don’t work for you, talk to me about scheduling a specific appointment time. *I am ready and eager to be of service to you any way I can!*

5. *Practice self-discipline*, through:

- Honoring due dates for assignments. Papers are due at the BEGINNING of the class period on which they are due. Points will be deducted for late papers or FoxTALE postings, unless extenuating circumstances (e.g., prolonged illness, family emergency, etc.) warrant an extension at the discretion of the professor.
- Committing yourself to invest in approximately 2 hours of out-of-class work for every in-class hour.
 - This standard college undergraduate workload formula (**3 in-class hrs. x 2 homework hrs. = 6 hrs. per week**) means that organizing your time well is a “must” so that you don’t fall behind.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Active class participation.** This will be comprised of the following:
 - Regular and prompt attendance
 - **Three unexcused absences are allowed** during the course without penalty. Additional absences (e.g., other than for illness, emergencies, athletic team travel, etc.) will result in points forfeited.
 - Participation in class discussions.
 - Positive attitude and contribution to the learning environment. As mentioned above, a classroom climate of freedom to explore new ideas as well as being courteous and respectful toward all—regardless of whether or not you agree with someone else’s perspective—is an important part of fruitful academic inquiry. It will also enhance your own enjoyment of the course. Needless to say, incivility, disrespect, or rudeness are totally out of bounds and will not be tolerated.
2. **Careful reading of the daily assigned texts.”** Lively class discussions count on students coming prepared to class, having thoughtfully read and digested assigned readings prior to class. Taking notes on key ideas gleaned from each reading assignment will greatly help you assimilate and recall that information later. It is also beneficial to jot down anything you’d like clarified or questions you’d like to pursue further in class discussion.
3. **Quizzes.** These must be posted on Foxtale by Tues. by 10 a.m. Quizzes cannot be made up. However, to accommodate illness or other vicissitudes of life, the lowest two quizzes will be thrown out.
4. **Four exams.** The final exam (one of the four) will cover the last section of the course (In other words, it will *not* be comprehensive over the entire course’s material).
5. **FoxTALE Journal--- 7 entries (out of 13 possible).** As a weekly discipline each student will choose one of the four practical spiritual disciplines from that week’s assigned cluster in the *Spiritual Classics* text and post his/her journal reflections about it on FoxTALE. Here are some questions to spur your thinking:
 - What new insights does the reading arouse in you? What questions does it provoke?
 - What challenges or obstacles might it pose to you regarding your present values, how you choose to spend your time, how you relate to God or others, etc.?
 - What resonates with you? What strikes you as strange?
 - Imagine you could sit down to have a conversation with the author over a cup of coffee. What might you like to ask them about what they have written?

You may choose to use as “grist for the mill” of your reflective writing some of the ‘Discussion Questions’ listed at the end of each excerpt. Try putting one of the ‘Suggested Exercises’ into practice & reflect upon your experiences. **The goal is to integrate head and heart**—i.e., interweaving what you are learning about cerebrally with the practical level of your own spiritual experience on whatever trajectory that journey is taking you. It may be helpful to think of journaling as an ongoing conversation you undertake with yourself. Feel free to ask questions that arise for which you might not have yet answers at this point.

Although the main focus is intended to be reflections drawn from your engagement with the *Spiritual Classics* text, you may also draw into the conversation reflective insights sparked within you from class discussions or from any of the other assigned texts.

Each journal entry: appr. 250-400 words. Worth 10 points each. What I am looking for is a thoughtful response that interacts with ideas in the text and interfaces with your own sense and/or experience of spirituality. Points are not allotted for whether or not I agree with you or you agree with an author, but rather for your willingness to ponder the subject matter deeply and relate it in some way to your own life.

6. **Class Debates and Prep Papers.** Periodically, class debates will take place that address theological controversies sparked by the following historical figures or issues:
 - Arius: Defender of Monotheism OR Dangerous Heretic?
 - Pelagius: Champion of Free Will OR Corrupter of Grace?
 - Arminius: Protector of Faith OR Perverter of Divine Sovereignty?

In preparation for each of these in-class debates, you will write and submit a 1-page (single-spaced) paper. Construct your paper according to the following **3-fold format**:

- 1) Describe the main issue and circumstances leading up to the controversy
- 2) Describe the point of view of *one* of the key players, mustering up your best debating points to support your side of the controversy.
 - o *Prior to the debate, the class will be divided into 2 halves, each of which will be pre-assigned to role-play one of the two key players.*
 - o *Write this middle part of your paper in 1st person role play style, like this: **“I, Arius, contend that...”***
- 3) What is the your own personal view of this controversy?

7. *Theology and Life Integration Paper (5-6 pages)*. Choose a theological question that is currently garnering your attention and has in some way been affecting spiritual experience. It may be because it fascinates, nags, frustrates, agitates or exhilarates you. Find at least three people who have “been around” and are experienced in living a Christian life (*and at least 50 years old*). Interview them and inquire about how their life experiences might shed light on your experience. Ask others as well (classmates, family, other people in church, professors, etc.) and then write about your own reflections on the question after having discussed it with others. Some initial conversation starters for this might be general questions like: What is one thing you know about faith or God that you wish you had known earlier in life? What is one piece of advice you would give a young adult?

Feel free to draw from insights gleaned from your assigned readings or other texts to spur your thinking. While this is intended to be a reflective essay rather than a formal research paper, you are free to incorporate thoughts from other sources to supplement your own reflective insights. I want to hear your own voice as the predominant one resounding with your perspective on the issue even while you may allow for a “chorus” of other voices to chime in on occasion as you deem relevant

GRADING

Participation (attendance, class discussion, group activities, online discussions, etc.)	70 points
12 quizzes (10 pts. each---two lowest dropped)	100 points
FoxTALE Journal (7 entries---10 pts. each)	70 points
3 Debate Prep Papers (20 points each)	60 points
Theology & Life Integration Paper	100 points
4 Exams (125 pts. each)	<u>500 points</u>
Total	900 points

Grading Scale

A = Exceptional work (93-100)	A- = (90-92)	
B = Superior work (83-87)	B+ = (88-89)	B- = (80-82)
C = Satisfactory work (73-77)	C+ = (78-79)	C- = (70-72)
D = Unsatisfactory work (63-67)	D+ = (68-69)	D- = (60-62)
F = Failing work (0-59)		

DAILY SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1:

Tues. Jan. 10 **Introduction to the Course**
Due: González, Introduction (pp. xv-xviii)

Thurs. Jan. 12 **Early Church Beginnings**
Due: González, vol. I: ch. 1-4
Charts 6-7, 9-13,17-23

WEEK 2:

Tues. Jan. 17

Persecution and Martyrdom

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 5-6, 10, 12

Chart 31

QUIZ #1

Journal Reflection #1 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **MEDITATION**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 5-28

Thurs. Jan. 19

State & Heretical Challenges: Apologists to the Defense!

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 7-8

Charts 29-30, 33-36, 43-45, 47-48, 51-52

WEEK 3:

Tues. Jan. 24

Church Teachers: Irenaeus, Clement of Rome, Tertullian & Origen

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 9

Charts 24, 32, 37-41

QUIZ #2

Journal Reflection #2 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **PRAYER**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 31-54

Thurs. Jan. 26

Christian Life and Worship

Constantine and the “Officialization” of Christianity

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 11, 13-14

Charts 25-27, 55

WEEK 4:

Tues. Jan. 31

Reactionary Impulses: Monasticism, Donatism, Paganism

What is the Church?

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 15, 16, 18

QUIZ #3

Journal Reflection #3 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **FASTING**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 57-76

Thurs. Feb. 2

***** EXAM #1 *****

(covering González, vol. I: ch. 1-16, 18]

WEEK 5:

Tues. Feb. 7

***** STUDENT DEBATE #1: Arius: Defender of Monotheism OR Dangerous Heretic?**

Who is Jesus Christ?: Arius, Athanasius & the Council of Nicea

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 17, 19

Charts 56-57, 61-65

Debate Pres. Paper #1

QUIZ #4

Journal Reflection #4 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **STUDY**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp.79-106

Thurs. Feb. 9

Who is the Triune God?: Trinitarian Controversy & the Cappadocians

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 20

Charts 58-60, 66, 68

WEEK 6:

Tues. Feb. 14

“Flex Day” (catch-up/discussion)

Due: QUIZ #5

Journal Reflection #5 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **SIMPLICITY**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 111-138

Thurs. Feb. 16

***** STUDENT DEBATE #2:** *Pelagius: Champion of Free Will
OR Corrupter of Grace?*

What is human nature?: Augustine vs. Pelagius

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 24-25

Charts 46, 78-84, 89, 91-92

Debate Prep. Paper #2

WEEK 7:

Tues. Feb. 21

Eastern Orthodoxy / Journey toward Chalcedon

Who is Jesus Christ?

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 28 [also see vol. II, ch. 30]

Charts 53-54, 69-75, 112-117

QUIZ #6

Journal Reflection #6 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **SOLITUDE**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 141-167

Thurs. Feb. 23

Reform and Rampage: Monasticism, Papacy, Scholasticism and Schism

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 27 (pp. 277-289) & ch. 30, 32 (pp. 357-369)

Charts 88, 94-97, 120-121

WEEK 8:

Tues. Feb. 28

Scholasticism and Schism

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 32 (pp. 369-385) & ch. 33

Charts 98, 122-123, 127-129, 136-144

QUIZ #7

Journal Reflection #7 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **SUBMISSION**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 171-196

Thurs. Mar. 1

***** EXAM #2 *****

(over González, vol. I: ch. 17, 19-20, 24-28, 30, 32-34)

Due: **Journal Reflection #8** from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **SERVICE**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 199-224

WEEK 9:

Tues. Mar. 6

Pre-Reformation: Councils, Wycliff, Hus, Savonarola, Mysticism

Due: González, vol. I: ch. 34

Charts 149-151

QUIZ #8

Thurs. Mar. 8

What is salvation?

Luther and the German Reformation:

FILM: “Martin Luther Heretic” (Part I)

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 1-2

Charts 147-148

WEEK 10:

Tues. Mar. 13

Highlights of Luther's Theology

FILM: "Martin Luther Heretic: (Part II)

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 3-4

Journal Reflection #9 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **CONFESSION**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 229-250

Thurs. Mar. 15

Zwingli; Anabaptists; Calvin and Calvinism

What are the Sacraments?----Baptism

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 5-7

Charts 39-40, 93

WEEK 11:

Tues. Mar. 20

Reformation in Great Britain

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 8, 18

QUIZ #9

Journal Reflection #10 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **WORSHIP**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 253-276

Thurs. Mar. 22

***** EXAM #3 *****

(covering González, vol. II: ch. 1-8, 18)

WEEK 12:

T, Th Mar. 27-29

***** SPRING BREAK (no classes!) *****

WEEK 13:

Tues. Apr. 3

Catholic Reformation & its Challengers

What are the Sacraments?----The Lord's Supper

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 12, 14, 19

Charts 98-100, 134-135

QUIZ #10

Journal Reflection #11 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **GUIDANCE**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 279-306

Thurs. Apr. 5

***** STUDENT DEBATE #3: Arminius: Protector of Faith
OR Perverter of Divine Sovereignty?**

Arminianism vs. Calvinism

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 21

Debate Prep. Paper #3

WEEK 14:

Tues. Apr. 10

Rationalism, Spiritualism, Pietism, The Great Awakening

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 22-25

QUIZ #11

Journal Reflection #12 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **CELEBRATION**-----reflect on one (of 4 listed) reading from pp. 309-334

Thurs. Apr. 12

Second Great Awakening

Fundamentalism & Protestant Liberalism

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 27 & 31

Journal Reflection #13 from *Spiritual Classics*:

- **READINGS FROM 5th WEEK**-----reflect on one reading from pp. 337-368

WEEK 15:

Tues. Apr. 17

Catholic Theology [Vatican I & II], Missionary & Ecumenical Movements

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 32-34, 37

QUIZ #12

***** THEOLOGY AND LIFE INTEGRATION PAPER due *****

Thurs. Apr. 19

European & American Protestantism [Post WWI]

Due: González, vol. II: ch. 35-36

WEEK 16:

Fri. Apr. 27

10:00 a.m.

***** FINAL EXAM (Exam #4) *****

(covering González, vol. II: ch. 12, 14, 19, 21-25, 27, 31-38)