



**BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY
UNIT OUTLINE**

BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY

UNIT TITLE	EARLY CHURCH TO 500 CE
UNIT CODE	D51011
UNIT STATUS	Core
HOST FIELD	D
PREREQUISITE/S	Nil
INCOMPATIBLES	Nil
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13-week semester, plus small group work on primary documents.
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Annual
PREPARED BY	Rev Dr David Rankin
UNIT COORDINATOR	Rev Dr David Rankin
TEACHING STAFF	Rev Dr David Rankin
DATE PREPARED	15 August 2006

Rationale

The Christian church is an evolving institution, with a history of nearly 2000 years. During that history, the church has constantly acted and reacted in terms of its own developing sense of identity, and in terms of its historical and social context. In this way, the theology and the ecclesiology of the church have come to assume their current shapes. The study of the history of the early church is fundamental to the study of the broader history of the church in particular and to the study of theology in general. It deals with the period in the history of the church when the major Christian doctrines of God, of the person and work of Christ, of the Church, and of the human person in particular were first addressed and formulated. Thus, this study of the early church will give insights into the historical context and factors which shaped the thinking of the church, including the contemporary church. It provides a suitable historical backdrop for the advanced study of systematic theology in later stages of the course.

Relation to program

This unit is one of four core units in the Bachelor of Theology and serves in particular the Church History field (D). It serves the program as a whole by introducing students early in their degree to a critical period in the history of the Christian church and in the development of Christian theology. It provides students with a foundation for further studies in history, including more specialized consideration of the period to 500 CE (D52011 Fathers and Heretics), for the study of

later periods in the history of the church and of Christian theology, and to the analysis and discussion of primary texts, a basic skill requirement for all history students.

Aims

The unit aims to introduce students to a crucial period in the history of the church and the development of Christian doctrine and theology. It also seeks to demonstrate the importance of primary sources in the study of church history.

Learning Outcomes	
At the end of this unit the student should be able to:	
1.	Outline in detail the main elements of the life, witness and thought of the early church (to 500CE), and the interaction between church and society, with a particular focus on one major movement or issue/controversy of the period;
2.	Explain the causes and effects of the issues and/or movements which shaped the early church, with a particular focus on the study of the primary historical documents from the period;
3.	Analyse and evaluate the various approaches current among church historians in the reading and use of primary sources, using texts drawn from the period of the early church;
4.	Apply lessons learned from the history of the early church to an understanding of ministry today.

Content

- 1 The emergence of primitive Christianity from its Judaic background
- 2 The Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists of the second and third centuries
- 3 The development of the biblical canon
- 4 The Trinitarian Controversy of the fourth century: Nicaea, Arius and Athanasius
- 5 The Trinitarian Controversy of the fourth century: the Cappadocian Fathers
- 6 The Christological Controversy of the Fifth Century
- 7 Augustine: life and thought
- 8 Augustine: Pelagius, Nature and Grace

Organization and Teaching Strategies

The contact time comprises lectures and seminars, the latter including both small group and whole class discussion of issues raised in lectures, the students' own reading and selected primary texts. Two full sessions will also be dedicated to small group presentations based on texts derived from the pre-Nicene period and the Trinitarian-Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Assessment

	Type of assessment	No of words	Weighting %	Due date	Learning Outcomes covered
1	Gobbets (primary document extracts) analysis and discussion (two pieces)	1000	25%	Mid-semester	1, 2, 3
2	Essay.	2000	50%	End-semester	1, 2, 3
3	Personal Learning Reflection Journal	1000	25%	End-semester	4

Notes on Assessment

- Item 1 Will develop the student's knowledge of the historical events of the period and the ability to utilize the techniques of historical document analysis through independent work and thought.
- Item 2 Will develop the student's ability to collect, analyse and organize information and ideas and to convey those ideas clearly and fluently in written form.
- Item 3 Will develop the student's ability to engage in reflective application of the lessons from history to personal situations in church and ministry.

Bibliography

Textbooks

Required:

Students will be assumed to have ready personal access to the following texts:

Stevenson, JA & WHC Frend (eds). *A New Eusebius*. Rev ed; London: SPCK, 1987.

Stevenson, JA (ed). *Creeks, Councils and Controversies*. Rev ed; London: SPCK, 1989 (7th impression, 2003).

EITHER

Chadwick, H. *The Early Church*. Pelican History of the Church, Vol 1; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986.

OR

Frend, WHC. *The Early Church*. London: SCM, 2003.

Recommended

Frend, WHC. *The Rise of Christianity*. London/Philadelphia: Darton, Longman & Todd/Fortress, 1984.

Frend, WHC. *The Archaeology of Early Christianity*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999.

Halton, T (ed). *Message of the Fathers of the Church*. 17 vols; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984.

References – Books

Anatolios, K. *Athanasius: the coherence of his thought*. London: Routledge, 1998, 2005.

Augustine. *Confessions*. Books 1-8; trans EM Blaiklock; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987.

Barnard, LW. *Justin Martyr: his life and thought*. Cambridge: CUP, 1966.

Barnes, TD. *Athanasius and Constantius*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Bauer, W. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in earliest Christianity*. Philadelphia/London: Fortress/SCM, 1971/1972.

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Burtchaell, JT. *From Synagogue to Church: Public services and offices in the earliest Christian communities*. Cambridge: CUP, 1992.

Cary, P. *Augustine's Invention of the Inner-Self*. Oxford: OUP, 2000.

Chadwick, Henry. *Augustine*. Oxford: OUP, 1986.

Chadwick, Henry. *The Church in Ancient Society: from Galilee to Gregory the Great*. Oxford, New York: OUP, 2001.

Churton, T. *The Gnostics*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987.

De Bruyn, T. *Pelagius' commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.

Dawson, D. *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in ancient Alexandria*. Los Angeles: University of California, 1992.

Dodaro, R & G Lawless (eds). *Augustine and his critics*. London/New York: Routledge, 2000.

Eusebius of Caesarea. *Eusebius: The Church History: A New Translation with Commentary*.

Trans Paul L Maier; Grand Rapids: Regal, 1999.

Frend, WHC. *From Dogma to History: How Our Understanding of the Early Church Developed*. London: SCM, 2003.

Frend, WHC. *Martyrdom and persecution in the early church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967.

Grant, RM. *Irenaeus of Lyons*. London: Routledge, 1997.

- Harding, Mark (ed). *Early Christian Life and Thought in Social Context: a Reader*. London, New York: T&T Clark, 2003.
- Harrison, C. *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*. Oxford: OUP, 2002.
- Kelly, JND. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 5th ed; London: A&C Black, 1977.
- Kelly, JND. *Golden Mouth: the story of John Chrysostom - ascetic, preacher, bishop*. London: Duckworth, 1995.
- Kelly, Joseph F. *The World of the Early Christians*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997.
- Logan, AHB. *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- Ludemann, Gerd. *Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity*. London: SCM, 1996.
- Markschies, C. *Gnosis: an introduction*. London: T&T Clark, 2003.
- McGuckin, JA. *St Cyril of Alexandria: the Christological Controversy*. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- McGuckin, JA. *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: an intellectual biography*. London: Continuum, 2001.
- McKechnie, P. *The First Christian Centuries. Perspectives on the Early Church*. Leicester: Apollos, 2001.
- Meredith, A. *The Cappadocians*. New York: St Vladimir's Press, 2000.
- Minns, D. *Irenaeus*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994.
- Pettersen, A. *Athanasius*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995.
- Proctor, E. *Christian Controversy in Alexandria*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.
- Rankin, DI. "Arianism" in PE Esler (ed). *The Early Christian World*. Vol II; London/New York: Routledge, 2000, 975-1001.
- Rankin, DI. *Tertullian and the Church*. Cambridge: CUP, 1995.
- Rebenich, S. *Jerome*. London/New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Robeck, CM. *Prophecy in Carthage: Perpetua, Tertullian and Cyprian*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1992.
- Russell, N. *Cyril of Alexandria*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Schoedel, W. *Ignatius of Antioch: a commentary on the letters of Ignatius of Antioch*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Trevett, C. *A study of Ignatius of Antioch*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1992.
- Wedderburn, Alexander JM. *A History of the First Christians*. London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004.
- Weinandy, TG & DA Keating. *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria*. London: T&T Clark, 2003.
- Williams, DH. *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.
- Williams, Rowan. *Arius: Heresy & Tradition*. London: SCM, 2001.
- Young, F. *The Making of the Creeds*. London: SCM, 1991.

References - Journals

Church History
Journal of Early Christian Studies
Journal of Ecclesiastical History
Journal of Theological Studies
Studia Patristica
Vigiliae Christianae

References - Online and Other IT resources

Early Church Fathers (Primary texts). <http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/>
 Institute for Christian Leadership: Guide to Documents from the Early Church
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/christian-history.html>
 Augustine of Hippo. <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>