



**BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY
UNIT OUTLINE**

BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY

UNIT TITLE	FATHERS & HERETICS
UNIT CODE	D52011
UNIT STATUS	Elective
HOST FIELD	D
PREREQUISITE/S	D51011 Early Church to 500 CE
INCOMPATIBLES	Nil
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13-week semester.
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 study of patristic writings has always been an integral part of the study of the history of Christian doctrine. Every period of reform or revival in the history of the church has coincided, and not by accident, with a renewed interest in and study of the writings of the Fathers. This was as true in the Evangelical Revival of the 18th and the Oxford Movement of the 19th as it was in the Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries. The study of patristic writings is complementary to and informed by the study of the history of the church of the early period but they are not identical. Likewise the methodology employed for each is necessarily different. The study of that history forms the necessary background to and therefore is a necessary prerequisite for the study of patristic writings. The contribution which a study of the early Fathers of the Church makes to the study of theology generally and thus to a particular theological degree or award is that it is in their writings that the formative determinations on a whole range of theological issues – the doctrines of God, the person and work of Christ, the Trinity, the Church, the sacraments, the human person, and so on – are first argued and formulated. It is for this reason that reformers through the ages have almost invariably gone to the writings of the Fathers in their own consideration of a whole range of theological issues.

Relation to program

The study of the thought of the Church Fathers and their contemporaries is fundamental to the study of the development of Christian thought. It deals with the development of ideas in that period of the church's history 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. The significance (or relevance) of the unit for theology students is that they cannot properly engage in biblical, systematic, or missional theology studies unless they have, as part of those studies, reflected upon the formative period of the development of Christian thought. This unit builds on the foundations laid in *Early Church to 500CE* (D51011), lays its own foundation for the study of the development of Christian thought in subsequent ages, and further develops the student's competence in dealing with primary documents.

Aims

The unit aims to introduce the student to critical readings of the writings of the early Fathers, and to develop in the student an informed understanding of these writings against the background of the Fathers' struggles with heresy.

Learning Outcomes	
At the end of this unit the student should be able to:	
1.	Explain the subject matter of at least two major issues or controversies within the life and witness of the early church through the analysis and discussion of particular patristic or other (Christian) contemporary texts;
2.	Analyse the contribution made by particular patristic or other (Christian) contemporary writings to the development or resolution of the pertinent issue or controversy;
3.	Evaluate critically a number of particular patristic or other (Christian) contemporary texts, with particular application to their significance for today's theological thinking.

Content

- 1 Gnosticism and the Fathers
- 2 Trinitarian and Christological Thought in the Fathers
- 3 The Fathers and Prayer
- 4 The Fathers and the Interpretation of Scripture
- 5 The Fathers and matters of Church and State
- 6 Catechetics and the Fathers
- 7 The doctrine of nature, grace and the human person in Augustine

Organization and Teaching Strategies

The classes will be conducted in seminar style with brief introductory input from the lecturer followed by the reading and discussion by the whole class of the primary document text set for the day. There will also be the opportunity during the semester in class for peer review of particular pieces of assessment.

Assessment

	Type of assessment	No of words	Weighting %	Due date	Learning Outcomes covered
1	Class presentation with short paper	500	10%	Week 4	1
2	Project (Essay or Visual Presentation)	2000 (or equivalent for a presentation)	40%	Week 8	1,2, 3
3	Project (Essay)	2500	50%	End-semester	1, 2, 3

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 oral and written form.
- Item 3 Will develop the student's ability to engage in reflective application of the lessons from history to contemporary theological thinking.

Bibliography

Textbooks

The following texts will comprise the discussion material for the contact time:

(Note: Some of these translations were made some time ago but remain either the latest translation into English of a particular work or the best available.)

Athanasius. *Contra Arianos* In *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Vol IV; Edinburgh: St Athanasius; 1991, 306-43.

Augustine. *On Nature and Grace* in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Vol V; *St Augustine: anti-Pelagian Writings*. Edinburgh: St Athanasius; 1991, 121-51.

Cyprian of Carthage. *De Unitate Ecclesiae* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol V; *Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*. Edinburgh: St Athanasius; 1990; 421-9.

Cyril of Jerusalem. *The Works of St Cyril of Jerusalem*. CUA, 1970.

Eunomius. *The Extant Works*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987.

Ignatius. *To the Smyrnaeans* in WR Schoedel. *Ignatius of Antioch: a commentary on the letters of Ignatius of Antioch*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985.

Origen. *On Prayer* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. II; *Alexandrian Christianity*. Philadelphia: 1954, 238-329.

Tertullian. *On Prayer* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol III; *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*. Edinburgh: St Athanasius; 1993, 681-92.

The Epistle to Rheginos in *The Nag Hammadi Library*. Ed JM Robinson; Leiden/San Francisco: Brill/Harper & Row, 1981, 50-53.

The Nicene Creed and The Chalcedonian Definition of Faith in Creeds, Councils and Controversies. Ed J Stevenson; rev WHC Frend; London: SPCK, 1989 (7th impression, 2003), 350-54.

Recommended

Nil

References – Books

- Anatolios, K. *Athanasius: the coherence of his thought*. London: Routledge, 1998, 2005.
- Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Chadwick, Henry. *Augustine*. Oxford: OUP, 1986.
- Churton, T. *The Gnostics*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987.
- De Bruyn, T. *Pelagius' commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- Dodaro, R & G Lawless (eds). *Augustine and his critics*. London/New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Harrison, C. *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*. Oxford: OUP, 2002.
- Kelly, JND. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 5th ed; London: A&C Black, 1977.
- Logan, AHB. *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- McGuckin, JA. *St Cyril of Alexandria: the Christological Controversy*. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- McGuckin, JA. *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: an intellectual biography*. London: Continuum, 2001.
- Markschies, C. *Gnosis: an introduction*. London: T&T Clark, 2003.
- Meredith, A. *The Cappadocians*. New York: St Vladimir's Press, 2000.
- Pettersen, A. *Athanasius*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995.
- Proctor, E. *Christian Controversy in Alexandria*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.
- Rankin, DI. "Arianism" in *The Early Christian World*. Vol II; ed PE Esler; London/New York: Routledge, 2000, 975-1001.
- Rees, BR. *Pelagius*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1991.
- 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.
- 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

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

References - Online and Other IT resources

<http://www.ccel.org> (Calvin College – writings of the Fathers)
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/christian-history.html> (Guide to Early Church documents)