



**BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY
UNIT OUTLINE**

**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY
GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY**

UNIT TITLE	EARLY CHURCH TO 500 CE
UNIT CODE	D73111
UNIT STATUS	Core
HOST FIELD	D
PREREQUISITE/S	Nil
INCOMPATIBLES	D51011
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	22 December 2003

Rationale

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. For these reasons the unit is best undertaken at the beginning of the study of church history and early in the study of theology generally.

For students within the GCertTh program beginning, *inter alia*, to 'develop awareness of the constant reinterpretation throughout history and within diverse contexts of the historical event of Jesus Christ' it is critical that they do so in the first instance through the crucial first centuries of the development of Christian thought and doctrine. 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 Christian theological development.

Relation to program

This unit is one of two alternate core introductory units for the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma in Theology. It provides graduate students with an introduction to a critical period in the

history of the church in which the foundations for the major doctrines of Christian theology were laid. It also provides a foundation for those who may wish to pursue higher studies in church history, particularly in the area of patristics, in terms both of subject and content and also of the analysis and discussion of primary texts.

Aims

The unit aims to introduce both undergraduate and postgraduate 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

Week 1	The emergence of primitive Christianity from its Judaic background and pagan context.
Weeks 2 – 4	The Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists – Doctrine of God; Christology; Church – Orthodoxy and heresy – Ebionitism, Gnosticism, Docetism, Marcion, Montanism – Clement of Rome; Ignatius of Antioch; Polycarp; Hermas of Rome; Justin Martyr; Tatian; Theophilus of Antioch; Melito of Sardis; Irenaeus of Lyons; Athenagoras of Athens; Hippolytus of Rome; Tertullian of Carthage; Cyprian of Carthage; Clement of Alexandria; Origen of Alexandria; Arnobius of Sicca; Lactantius.
Week 5	Group exercise: Presentation on a figure/s and/or issue from the second or third centuries – Input from Lecturer/revision (20 – 30 mins) – Group planning of presentation (2 hours) – Group presentations (3 x 10 mins) – Summing up.
Week 6	The development of the biblical canon: The development of the biblical canon, with particular respect to the texts of the New Testament, from the original writing of these texts, through their gradual reception and use by early Christian communities and theologians, to their formal adoption as canonical in the fourth century.
Weeks 7-10	(a) Council of Nicaea (325) - Arius and Athanasius; (b) Nicaea to Constantinople (381) - the Cappadocians and the Holy Spirit; (c) Nestorius, Cyril, Ephesus and the Council of Chalcedon.
Week 11	Group exercise: Presentation on a figure/s and/or issue from the fourth and fifth centuries – Input from Lecturer/revision (20 – 30 mins) – Group planning of presentation (2 hours) – Group presentations (3 x 10 mins) – Summing up.
Weeks 12 - 13	Augustine – (a) “Confessions” and “City of God”; Augustine and Donatism (The Church) – (b) Augustine and Pelagianism (Grace and Freewill)

Organisation 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 student's own reading and selected primary texts. Where *undergraduates* and *postgraduates* are taught together, as is the case in this core unit for both BTh and GCertTheol/GDipTheol programs, the small group system employed for both primary document and personal learning discussions will be program-specific (that is, individual groups will comprise students from only one program).

Assessment

	Type of assessment	No of words	Weighting %	Due date	Learning Outcomes covered
1	Two (2) papers comprising analysis and discussion of texts (gobbets) selected by the lecturer. This piece of assessment will test student on the reading and use of primary sources in that it will test the capacity of the student to place a particular gobbet within a specific historico-theological context, to demonstrate an appreciation of the major thesis of the original author in that gobbet, and to analyse the contents of the gobbet in terms of that primary context.	750 words each	25%	Mid-semester	1, 2, 3
2	2500 word essay centred around a selected theme from the unit – e.g., issues of orthodoxy and heresy in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the development of the doctrines of God, of Christology (particularly the debates of the 5th century), of the Trinity (particularly the debates of the 4th century), and of Church Order, the emergence of the biblical canon in the second and third centuries, the theology of the human person and of nature and grace (these both with particular respect to the controversy involving Augustine and the Pelagians), and so on - and in which students are asked to address the issue of their learning in that context. The essay will address the following issues: (a) a brief description of the theme – the theologian or Church Father/s or controversy chosen (=5/50%) (b) a brief historical sketch of the person or controversy (=15/50%); (c) an analysis of the issues addressed in that theme (person or controversy) (=25/50%); (d) a brief statement of your major learning/s in studying that person/s or controversy within the context of the whole unit (=5/50%) (= 50%)	2500 words	50%	End semester	This piece of assessment will test Objective 2 – the capacity of the student to engage in detailed research of at least one major movement or issue/ controversy of the period and to argue a particular thesis on the research question posed.

	Type of assessment	No of words	Weighting %	Due date	Learning Outcomes covered
3	A journal of up to 1000 words comprising at least 7 weekly responses, of no more than 150 words each, to the week's class or own reading: Students may submit more than 7 responses but only the best 7 will be used for assessment purposes. (= 25%) This piece of assessment will test Objective 3 in that it will require the student to demonstrate an awareness of their own learning in the context of this unit. Assessment will not be based on the revealed content of that learning but rather solely on the articulation of such learning.		25%	End semester	3

Generic Attributes

- Established skills in the application of primary text analysis to research
- Established skills in participation in class group projects
- Advanced skills in the integration of a variety of research materials

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: Regel, 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.
- Petterson, 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>