

ORTHODOXY & HERESY IN THE EARLY CHURCH
HIST9418/THEO9418
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I. Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

II. Core Values Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values—Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. Doctrinal Integrity is the primary core value addressed in this seminar. The Core Value Focus for 2015-2016 is Mission Focus. Moreover, understanding the relationship between biblical exposition, social, cultural, and political context, and the theological confessions of the church are vital for fulfilling the Great Commission.

III. Curriculum Competencies Addressed

NOBTS services seven key competencies in its academic programs—Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Discipleship Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. Christian Theological Heritage is the key competency addressed in this course.

IV. Course Description

This seminar examines the development of and relationship between orthodoxy and heresy in the early church. Topics include early heresies, such as Gnosticism, Marcionism, and Montanism; early church fathers and writings; and the responses of the church to heresy. Special attention is also given to contemporary discussions about orthodoxy and heresy with the intention of developing an effective apologetic response to critics of traditional views of Christianity.

V. Objectives

By the completion of this course,

- Students should know and comprehend the major leaders, movements, doctrines, selected heresies, dates, and geographical locations within the early church during the first three centuries.
- Students should know and comprehend the ways in which the early church formulated orthodoxy and defined and responded to heresies (canonization, creeds, apostolic succession).
- Students should value biblical authority, the formation of orthodoxy, and theological truth, recognizing the importance of orthodox theological formulations to the church and the mission of the church.
- Students should know and comprehend modern movements that challenge orthodoxy, especially those that draw on early heresies.
- Students should assimilate and apply this knowledge to the apologetic tasks of defending biblical authority and theological truth, countering current cultural preoccupations with Gnostic gospels and Christian pluralism.

VI. Textbooks

Required Texts:

Bauer, Walter. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971; reprint, Mifflintown, Pa.: Sigler Press, 1996
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rak//publics/new/BAUER01.htm>

Hartog, Paul, ed. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Contexts*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015.

Additional required reading will be assigned from primary sources that are available on the Internet.

Review Texts (In consultation with Dr. Butler, choose an approved text from the list below or an unlisted but appropriate book)

Bird, Michael F., et. al. *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus' Divine Nature – A Response to Bart Ehrman*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Ehrman, Bart D. *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

_____. *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014.

Hultgren, Arland J. *The Rise of Normative Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Kostenberger, Andreas and Michael Kruger. *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2010 – TAKEN

McGrath, Alister. *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth*. New York: HarperOne, 2009 – TAKEN

Robinson, James M., and Helmut Koester. *Trajectories through Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Robinson, Thomas A. *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1988.

Turner, H. E. W. *The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church*. (Assign two students).

VII. Requirements

- A. **Pre-work**: Each student must read entirely Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, and Decker, “The Bauer Thesis,” in Hartog, ed. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Contexts*, before the first class meeting.
 - a. Each student will be assigned responsibility for one chapter from Bauer prior to the first meeting of the seminar.
 - b. Students should be prepared to present and lead discussion of their chapter by the first meeting of the seminar.
- B. **Background Papers**: Each student will prepare a background paper on one of the following: a major leader, movement, doctrine, or selected heresy found within the first three centuries of the early church.
 - a. The topics are listed below, embedded in the Course Schedule.
 - b. The background paper should be **three to five pages, double-spaced**.
 - c. These papers are designed to be informative, much like encyclopedia articles. Define terms, incorporate historical persons and places, delineate variations, describe theological positions, and so forth. Work to make your paper appealing to the eye, easy to use as a resource.
 - d. In preparing for the background paper, each student will also read a chapter that more or less parallels his or her topic from Paul Hartog, ed., *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012 scheduled).
 - e. Students will present their papers along with the chapter material during the seminar. Papers should be provided electronically to each member of the seminar.
- C. **Book Reviews and Presentations**: Each student must choose one book from the above **Review Texts list** to review and present to the seminar. Send three options to the

professor. Books will be assigned on a first come first serve basis, though Dr. Butler reserves the right to strongly recommend a particular book to an individual student.

- a. Presentation: The student responsible for a book review and presentation must prepare to lead discussion for the seminar on the scheduled day. The following will help the student to prepare:
 - i. Know the content of the book
 - ii. Prepare good questions to promote dialogue about the concepts of orthodoxy and heresy, the task of the historian, individual doctrines, hermeneutics, authority, and so forth, expressed or implied
 - iii. Relate the reading to previously learned materials
 - iv. Bring to the forefront any critical concerns and biblical or theological responses. In other words, what is right or wrong about what you read and how ought Christians to respond to the issues raised
 - v. Other sources or positions on the issues addressed in an assigned book are welcomed and encouraged
- b. Review: The student responsible for a given reading assignment must prepare and provide for each seminar participant a written response based on the following criteria:
 - i. **Six to Eight (6-8) double-spaced pages**
 - ii. The following should be addressed (use 3-7 to formulate subheadings):
 1. Bibliographical information should appear at the top of the first page of the review
 2. Introductory description of book, including a brief biographical sketch of the author
 3. a brief summary [two to three pages] of the contents of the book
 4. a statement of the book's purpose and the extent to which the purpose was realized,
 5. Important concepts and applications to carry from the reading, highlight any changes or challenges to your thinking
 6. a statement regarding the book's uniqueness, including ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic
 7. a concluding evaluation
 - iii. If external sources are important for an appropriate response to the book, fully cite those sources.
 - iv. As a good segue for seminar discussion, think of important questions to raise and answer regarding the content of the book
 - v. Electronic copies should be provided for every member of the seminar

D. **Major Research Paper**: Each student will consult with the professor to select a topic that relates to one or more of the emphases of this course. The topic *could be* a development and expansion of the student's research in the background paper. **Fifteen to twenty-five pages** in length, the paper should demonstrate the student's ability to think clearly and critically, engage in responsible research, dialogue objectively with differing viewpoints, reach defensible conclusions, and write in an acceptable style. A selected bibliography should accompany the paper. This assignment is framed in this way so that the student can write this paper with scholarly presentation in mind.

a. **Brief Research Paper Guidelines**

- i. The official style and form guide is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, official edition.
- ii. Use footnotes, not endnotes.
- iii. Use Times New Roman 12 point font for body of text.
- iv. Staple the paper; do not put it in a folder/binder.
- v. Include a title page
- vi. Include a table of contents that shows at least two levels of subheadings (functioning as an outline).
- vii. The use of first person (I or we) and second person (you) is not allowed. Arguments should be presented in such a manner so as to eliminate the need for all but third person references.
- viii. Use correct grammar and spelling.
- ix. The uses of past tense and present tense must be consistent. Generally, past tense is used to refer to historical events and persons, including writers of published materials. Present tense is utilized to present arguments, interact with opinions and viewpoints, and cite extant texts.
- x. Do not use split infinitives.
- xi. Avoid one-sentence paragraphs.
- xii. Do not overuse indefinite pronouns (such as “it” or “there” without an antecedent).
- xiii. Avoid “widows” and “orphans.”

E. **Formal Response to Research Paper**: Each seminar participant will choose a research paper to evaluate critically.

- a. The evaluation will be prepared for and presented on the day the research paper is presented in class. The evaluator will lead discussion after a paper is presented
- b. Written evaluations should be no more than **two single-spaced pages**. A copy of the written evaluation will be provided for the professors and for the student whose paper is being evaluated.
- c. Evaluate for form and style, content, communication of important concepts, and critical engagement of materials.
- d. Each evaluation should include a separate log of form and style errors or concerns.
- e. Beyond the written evaluation, the formal response is graded on the quality of in-seminar participation, engagement, and interlocution.

F. **Personal Reflection**: Each seminar participant will prepare a personal reflection paper.

- a. The personal reflection paper should be **3-5 double-spaced pages**.
- b. Personal reflections will be presented during the last seminar meeting
- c. Reflections may be driven by the following questions:
 - i. What determines orthodoxy and heresy, and why does it matter? Why is some variation allowed, thus denominations and some variation not allowed?
 - ii. What distinguishes biblical authority, confessions of faith, systematic theology, dogma, and tradition?
 - iii. What is the nature of doctrine, theological formulation or confessions of faith, in relation to Scripture, historical moments and movements, and culture?

- iv. How do doctrines, theology, or confessions of faith develop so that they preserve fidelity with biblical truth?
- v. How does one apply biblical truth or theology to the apologetic task in your culture?

VIII. Grade Distribution by Assignment

☐	Pre-Work Presentation	10%
☐	Background Papers	15%
☐	Book Review and Presentation	20%
☐	Major Research Paper	40%
☐	Personal Reflection Paper	15%

Seminar Schedule: The seminar will meet weekly on Thursday from **12:30 to 3:00**

Date	Assignment	Facilitator	
Aug. 27	Introduction to the Seminar Bauer Text Chapter Discussions	Professor Intro – Milstead 1. Rose 2. Todd	
Sep. 3	Bauer Text Chapter Discussions (Continued)	3. Burnett 4. Jeon 5. Nance 6. Sanders 7. Milstead 8. Cooper 9. Roberts 10. Bailey	
Sep. 10	Bauer Text Chapter Discussions (Continued) Hartog, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 10	App. 1 Nance App. 2 Bailey Butler & Roberts	
Date	Background Papers	Presenters	
Sep. 17	1. Ebionism (Judaizing Christianity) 2. Gnosticism	1. Nance 2. Todd	Hartog, Ch.4 Hartog, Ch.3
Sep. 25	3. Marcionism 4. Montanism 5. Monarchianism – Adoptionism & Modalism	3. Jeon 4. Rose 5. Milstead	Hartog, Ch.3 Hartog, Ch.5 Hartog, Ch.4
Oct. 1	6. Creeds & Apostolic Succession 7. Apostolic Fathers: Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp 8. Irenaeus	6. Sanders 7. Bailey 8. Burnett	Hartog, Ch.6 Hartog, Ch.2 Hartog, Ch. 7
Oct. 8	9. Tertullian 10. Heresiologists, including Eusebius & Epiphanius 11. Rome – Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Novatian	9. Butler 10. Cooper 11. Roberts	Hartog, Ch.7 Hartog, Ch. 8 Hartog, Ch. 9

Date	Book Reviews	Presenters	
Oct. 15	Book Review 1	Milstead - <i>Heresy of Orthodoxy</i>	
	Book Review 2	Rose – <i>Trajectories</i>	
	Book Review 3	Sanders – <i>Normative Christianity</i>	

Oct. 22	SPRING BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
Oct. 29	Book Review 4	Roberts – <i>Heresy</i> , McGrath Bailey & Burnett – <i>Pattern of Christian Truth</i>	
	Book Review 5		
	Book Review 6		
Nov. 5	Book Review 7	Jeon – <i>Lost Christianities</i> Nance – <i>How Jesus Became God</i> Todd – <i>How God Became Jesus</i> Cooper – <i>Geography</i>	
	Book Review 8		
	Book Review 9		
	Book Review 10		
Date	Research Paper Presentations	Presenter	Responder
Nov. 12	Paper Presentation 1		
	Paper Presentation 2		
Nov. 19	Paper Presentation 3		
	Paper Presentation 4		
Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Break	Break	Break
Dec. 3	Paper Presentation 5		
	Paper Presentation 6		
Dec. 10	Paper Presentation 7	Everyone	
	Paper Presentation 8		
	Personal Reflection Papers		

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