



**ORTHODOXY & HERESY IN THE EARLY CHURCH
HIST9418/THEO9418/APOL9418
SPRING 2023**

ADAM HARWOOD
(504) 816-8074
Dodd 213
aharwood@nobts.edu

REX D. BUTLER
(504) 816-8202
Dodd 105
rbutler@nobts.edu

I. Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

II. 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.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

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; available at https://noachideblog.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/walter_bauer_orthodoxy_and_heresy_in_earliest_chri.pdf

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 (From the list below, choose an approved text in consultation with Drs. Butler and Harwood; in consultation with Drs. Butler and Harwood, books may be chosen that are not listed below)

Ehrman, Bart D. *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

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

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.

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

Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Reprint edition. Oxford University Press, 1997.

Newman, John Henry. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2010.

Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Random House, 1979.

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.

Tabbernee, William. *Prophets and Gravestones: An Imaginative History of Montanists and Early Christians*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009.

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 background paper should be **three to five pages, double-spaced**.
 - b. 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.
 - c. In preparing for the background paper, each student will also read a chapter that more or less parallels his or her topic from the unpublished manuscript, Paul Hartog, ed., *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015). These chapters will be provided by the professors.
 - d. 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. Note the dates of presentation in the Seminar Schedule below. Books will be assigned on a first come first serve basis, though Drs. Butler and Harwood reserve 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 double-spaced pages** (4,000–6,000 words) 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.

a. The Research Paper will be evaluated as follows:

- i. **Grammar and style:** Spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; and conformity to the 7th or 8th edition of Turabian. (20 points)
- ii. **Clarity and Coherence:** Balance; thoroughness; organization; logical development; overall sense of the paper. (20 points)
- iii. **Research:** Bibliography; type and variety of sources (primary, secondary, monographs, journal articles, etc.); most bibliographic entries should be accompanied by footnote citations. (20 points)
- iv. **Historical Awareness and Insight:** Factual accuracy; awareness of historical connections (continuity/discontinuity, cause/effect, contrasts/comparisons); sensitivity to historical context; awareness of the historical impact of a person. (20 points)
- v. **Analysis and Evaluation:** Going beyond the mere reporting of facts to include explanation, interpretation, analysis of material; evaluation of strengths and weakness of a person; demonstration that you have thought about the material that you have researched. Give strong and insightful introduction and conclusion. (20 points)

b. **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. **Proposal for Scholarly Meeting**: Based on the Major Research Paper, each seminar participant will create a proposal to submit to a scholarly meeting, such as the regional or national ETS meeting, or another meeting of the student’s choice.

- i. The proposal will be 200-300 words.
- ii. The proposal will lead off with an Abstract of the paper’s theme and purpose.
- iii. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to participate in the academic guild.

VIII. Grade Distribution by Assignment

- Pre-Work Presentation 10%
- Background Papers 15%
- Book Review and Presentation 20%
- Major Research Paper 40%
- Scholarly Proposal 15%

Seminar Schedule: The seminar will meet on Thursdays, 2:00–4:30 PM.

Date	Assignment	Facilitator	
Jan. 19	Introduction to the Seminar Bauer Text Chapter Discussions	Professors Intro – 1. 2.	
Jan. 26	Bauer Text Chapter Discussions (Continued)	3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.	
Feb. 2	Bauer Text Chapter Discussions (Continued) Hartog, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 10	App. 1 App. 2 Butler	
Date	Background Papers	Presenters	
Feb. 9	1. Ebionism (Judaizing Christianity) 2. Gnosticism	1. 2.	Hartog, Ch.4 Hartog, Ch.3
Feb. 16	3. Marcionism 4. Montanism 5. Monarchianism – Adoptionism & Modalism	3. 4. 5.	Hartog, Ch.3 Hartog, Ch.5 Hartog, Ch.4
Feb. 23	6. Creeds & Apostolic Succession 7. Apostolic Fathers: Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp 8. Irenaeus	6. 7. 8.	Hartog, Ch.6 Hartog, Ch.2 Hartog, Ch. 7
Mar. 2	9. Tertullian 10. Heresiologists, including Eusebius & Epiphanius 11. Rome – Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Novatian	9. Butler 10. 11.	Hartog, Ch.7 Hartog, Ch. 8 Hartog, Ch. 9

Date	Book Reviews	Presenters	
Mar. 9	Book Review 1 Book Review 2 Book Review 3		
Mar. 16	SPRING BREAK		BREAK
Mar. 23	Book Review 4 Book Review 5 Book Review 6		
Mar. 30	Book Review 7 Book Review 8 Book Review 9 Book Review 10		
Date	Research Paper Presentations	Presenter	Responder
Apr. 6	Paper Presentation 1 Paper Presentation 2		
Apr. 13	Paper Presentation 3 Paper Presentation 4		
Apr. 20	Paper Presentation 5 Paper Presentation 6		
Apr. 27	Paper Presentation 7 Paper Presentation 8		
May 4	Paper Presentation 9 Paper Presentation 10		

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