



A M B R O S E

**CH 645– *The World and Thought of the Church Fathers*
(Summer, 2012)**

Course Description

In this course we want to explore together the theology and spirituality of the church fathers, Christians living from roughly the second to the seventh centuries CE. What were key theological issues these early Christians worked through? How did they read and interpret the Bible? How did early Christians pray? How did they deal with temptation? What was their understanding of Christian character and how its development is nourished or starved? Who were the “desert fathers”? What was their particular contribution to Christian spirituality? How can the biblical, theological, and spiritual insights of these early Christians be translated into the context of the modern world? These and other questions and issues will form the heart of the course.

Class Schedules

M/T/W/TH/F 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
A2131

Instructor Information

Dr. Chris Hall is chancellor of Eastern University and dean of Palmer Theological Seminary. Dr. Hall holds an undergraduate degree from the University of California at Los Angeles (history) and graduate degrees from Fuller Theological Seminary (biblical studies), Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. (theology), and Drew University (historical and systematic theology). Before coming to Eastern Dr. Hall was affiliated with Christian Associates International, a church-planting ministry located in Los Angeles, California, and has been involved in church-planting in Southeast Asia and Europe. Dr. Hall served for five years as associate pastor at the Crossroads Evangelical Church in Ferney-Voltaire, France. He has also served on the pastoral staff of Granville Chapel (Vancouver, B.C.) and was Director of Pastoral Care at the Hagedorn Center for Geriatrics, New Jersey’s only state gero-psychiatric hospital.

Dr. Hall is the author of a number of books including *Realized Religion: Research on the Relationship between Religion and Health* (Templeton Press), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: The Gospel of Mark*, with Thomas C. Oden (InterVarsity Press), *The Trinity*, with Roger Olson (Eerdmans), *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (InterVarsity Press), *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers* (InterVarsity Press), and *Worshipping with the Church Fathers* (InterVarsity Press). Dr. Hall also serves on the editorial council of *Christianity Today*.

Address:

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Textbooks

1. Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*, tr. Robert C. Gregg, (Paulist Press, 1980).
2. Owen Chadwick, *Western Asceticism* (Westminster, 1958). Read the sections on *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* and John Cassian's *Conferences*.
3. St. John Chrysostom, *On Wealth and Poverty* (St. Vladimir's Press, 1984).
4. Christopher A. Hall, *Worshiping with the Church Fathers* (InterVarsity, 2010).
5. Christopher A. Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers* (InterVarsity, 2002).

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each day of week module classes. Given that this is a module course, it is extremely important that you attend all of the class time.

Course Outline**Mon., June 11**

Introduction to the theology and spirituality of the church fathers; introduction and discussion of Athanasius's *The Life of Antony*.

Reading:

Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, pp. 9-33.

Hall, *Worshiping with the Church Fathers*, pp. 11-80, 202-221.

Athanasius, *The Life of Antony* (entire text). Remember that you should have read these texts by the first day of class.

Tue., June 12

In the morning we will work through together key sayings of the Desert Fathers on a variety of issues related to spiritual formation. The afternoon will be devoted to Chrysostom's important sermons on wealth and poverty.

Reading:

Chadwick, *Western Asceticism*, material from sayings of the desert fathers, (parts II [40-43], V [59-77], VII [82-96], IX [102-105], X [105-131]). The sections from Chadwick's *Western Asceticism* are largely made up of short, pithy sayings or stories. Feel free to skim. If you find a story or saying that is of special interest, stay with it. Meditate upon it. And be prepared to share your thoughts with your colleagues in class

Hall, *Worshiping with the Church Fathers*, pp. 82-200, 222-246.

Chrysostom on Wealth and Poverty. This is a short paperback of sermons on Jesus' parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16). Read at least sermons 1, 2, and 7.

Wed., June 13

For the remainder of the week we will be discussing key areas of theological discussion and dispute for the church fathers. Today's morning will be devoted to the mystery and wonder of the Trinity. In the afternoon we will discuss the early church's perspective on the incarnation: Christ – fully God and fully human.

Reading: Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, pp. 9-120.

Thur., June 14

This morning's discussion will focus on the issue of God's providence from the perspective of John Chrysostom. At the end of his life – while in exile – Chrysostom wrote an extended discourse on providence that will be the centerpiece for our conversation. In the afternoon we will investigate the church fathers' understanding of authority, a topic surely related to their thoughts on the nature of Bible and the nature of the church itself.

Reading: Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, pp. 121--247.

Fri., June 15

What better way to end the week than by spending time together exploring the church fathers' understanding of the resurrection body, a topic near and dear to their heart. If time permits, we will also revisit the ideas and issues we have covered throughout the week.

Reading: Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, pp. 248-273.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- ◆ To become familiar with key figures, movements, emphases, and issues in the history of early Christian spirituality and theology.
- ◆ To gain an appreciation of early Christian reflection and practice in the area of Christian discipleship. In short, how did the fathers' understanding of discipleship influence their understanding of Christian spirituality/devotion? Might there be models of discipleship we have lost in the modern era and can retrieve through our interaction with the fathers?
- ◆ To explore how early Christians understood the dynamics of spiritual growth and the implications of the fathers' thought and practice for our lives as Christians today.

That is, if all church fathers regularly fasted, why did they do so? Might there be patterns here we should still emulate?

- ◆ To investigate the problem and dynamics of temptation as experienced and analyzed by significant early Christian fathers. How might their struggles with various temptations help us deal with our own?
- ◆ To carefully examine the Christian world-view of key early Christian leaders and communities. How, for example, did the Christian world-view of Athanasius influence his understanding of Christian spirituality? How might this influence be present in his biography of Anthony?
- ◆ To study the fathers' prayer life. How did they pray? At what times? In what manner? What might they have to teach us about the nature and practice of prayer

Course Requirements

Lectures (5 days x 6 hrs.)	30 hrs
Reading	30
Book Review(s)	20
Integration Paper (15-20pp.)	40
TOTAL OUTSIDE OF CLASS WORK HOURS = 90	

Evaluation:

Two book reviews: 25% per review
Integration Paper: 50%

All course assignments must be submitted by July 31, 2012.
Please include your name, student ID number, and my name on all course assignments.

Grading: The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
A+	
A (93-100)	Excellent
A- (90-92)	
B+ (87-89)	
B (82-86)	Good
B- (80-81)	
C+ (78-79)	
C (71-77)	Satisfactory
C- (69-70)	
D+ (67-68)	
D (60-67)	Minimal Pass
F (0-59)	Failure

Because of the nature of the Alpha 4.00 system, there can be no uniform College/Seminary-wide conversion scale. The relationship between raw scores (e.g. percentages) and the resultant letter grade will depend on the nature of the course and the

instructor's assessment of the level of each class, compared to similar classes taught previously.

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Important Notes/Dates:

Include here such information as is relevant to the course but not listed above.

The last day to enter this course without permission and /or voluntary withdrawal from this course without financial and academic penalty (**drop**): 4 PM of the first day of classes. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. If you wish to drop a class, please stop by the Registrar's Office or send an email to registrar@ambrose.edu.

Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit, or drop out of the "audit" up to the "drop" date indicated above. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees. If you wish to change to audit, please drop by the Registrar's Office or send an email to registrar@ambrose.edu.

Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (**withdraw**): 1 pm on the fourth (4th) day of your class. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this

policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by July 17, 2012. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Note:

- The Ambrose Library will be open from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm during the Spring courses.
- The Ambrose Bookstore will be open from Monday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, Tuesday - Friday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm