

**New Geneva Theological Seminary
Church History (CH 501)
Early – Medieval
At Skyview Presbyterian Church
Dr. Dominic Aquila
April 2024**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help students think historically about pastoral ministry. It will seek to establish and present the pastoral concerns that motivated the writings, theological developments and ministries of Christian leaders. Students will be encouraged to look at present day ministry in light of historical and theological developments in the church.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. To acquaint students with the major personalities, schools of thought, and political, social and cultural trends which characterized the historical and theological development of the church.
- B. To widen students' comprehension of the pastor's and the historian's role as a creative and discerning thinker.
- C. To increase students' comprehension of past discussions about pivotal doctrines of the Christian church.
- D. To expand students' awareness of the lives of men and women in the history of the church who "knew" God through Jesus Christ and who can still influence pastoral ministry today.

COURSE TEXT

Shelley, Bruce L. *Church History in Plain Language* (4th or 5th Edition)

Suggested Reading:

Bettenson, Henry, ed. *Documents of the Christian Church*

Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrine*

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*

Schaff, Philip. *The Creeds of Christendom* (3 vols.)

Woodbridge, John, ed. *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*

Classes will meet April 22-26; 6:00-9:00 PM
Skyview Presbyterian Church (<https://www.skyviewpca.org/>)
251 E. Sterne Blvd
Centennial, CO 80122

Contact Dr. Aquila at daquila@newgeneva.org if you have any questions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. The careful reading of Parts 1-4 in the textbook.
- B. Assignments
 - 1. Prepare a number of theme papers on people, events or movements with special emphasis on their impact for church ministry today.
 - 2. Theme Papers:
 - a. Read selections from the *Didache* and write a 3–4-page summary a number of its teaching you found interesting. Due April 23.
 - b. Read the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Write a 3–4-page analysis of these two creeds, indicate their similarities and differences, and comment on their structures. Due April 30.
 - c. Choose an early church father (you may use the web, for example, www.newadvent.org/fathers/) and read one of his documents. Write a 3–4-page paper that summarizes the main idea of the document you read. Emphasize any strengths, benefits and applications that may touch on ministry for today. Due May 6.
 - d. Read a summary of the Council of Chalcedon and be prepared to discuss its structure and importance to orthodox Christianity. Write a 3-4-page paper that describes the purpose of the Council of Chalcedon and some of the implications for our understanding of the nature of Christ in the Church today. Due May 10.
 - e. Read sections of Augustine's *Confession* and write a 3-4-page summary. Be prepared to make comments in class on your findings. Due May 13.
 - f. Read about Gregory I and his arguments for the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. Write a 3-4-page summary of your assessment. Due May 17.
 - g. Read one of Thomas Aquinas's documents and write a 3-4-page paper on your observations. Due May 20.
- C. There will be one test for this course.

COURSE OUTLINE (Subject to adjustment):

THE EARLY CHURCH

1. Foundations of Dogma
2. The Development of the Episcopate
3. Early Church Fathers and Their Thoughts
4. Teachers in the Old Catholic Age (e.g., Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Augustine)
5. The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity
6. The Development of the Nature of Christ
7. Anthropology and Soteriology
8. The Sacraments

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

1. Theological Movements
2. The Development of Papal Supremacy
3. The Rise of Scholasticism
4. Continuing Development on the Lord's Supper
5. The Development of the Doctrine of the Atonement
6. Church and Theology in the 11th-15th Centuries