

Early Christianity in the Eternal City

SECTION I: Course Overview

PC Course Code: TBD

Subject Areas: Theology, Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, History

Prerequisites: For Providence College students taking 363, THL 200-level core

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

N.B. This syllabus is subject to change according to availability, accessibility, and scheduling of site visits.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction, starting from New Testament times to several key figures at the rise of Christianity like Mary Mother of God, as well as Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the founders of Christian Rome. Throughout history Rome has fascinated Christian and non-Christians alike. The course explores how, in the early centuries, the followers of Jesus Christ lived their faith centered upon Him. It then goes on to investigate how the theological tradition of the importance of Rome developed in the Church and the Papacy. The course considers how the early Christians related faith and reason and suffered for their belief in martyrdom. Theological material will be offered which will help the students to understand better their time in Rome. This course also indicates how the Church had to face internal conflicts and heresies and illustrates the work of the first general Councils. It explores the significant role played by women in early Christianity, and describes the part played by monks and missionaries in spreading the faith.

Effectively, this course illustrates the impact of early Christianity through great and leading figures who exercised a great influence and are still most important today. This study is carried out in the context of being in Rome which is the cradle and center of Christianity. The timescale is roughly the first six centuries of the Christian era. Many of the other courses will dovetail with this one in furnishing a synthetic picture.

N.B. This course is designed to be flexible in serving either of Providence College's two core requirements in Theology, the 200-level course, and the 300-level course. It satisfies as a 200-level theology course in that it examines the principal theological themes and ideas of the entire New Testament, thereby exposing the students to the basics of Christian theology, which include: divine revelation, the doctrine of God (including the Trinity and Christology), the Christian view of human nature, the doctrine of grace, the Church, the sacraments, and the Christian moral and spiritual life. This course also meets, obviously, the requirement for a 200-level theology course to examine relevant biblical texts. And at all points throughout the course, the ongoing relevance of biblical theology will be highlighted since the principal themes of the New Testament can easily be applied to modern issues and concerns.

It satisfies as a 300-level theology course by using the New Testament as its primary theological source and by examining constantly the principal themes of the New Testament in light of relevant contemporary questions. Among these questions will be how the New Testament texts are understood among the various Christian

confessions and other religious traditions. This course also satisfies the requirement of a 300-level course to offer a critical appraisal of a theological discussion (see the syllabus below). Finally, the research-paper requirement (see below) is also in conformity with 300-level theology objectives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students are able to do the following:

1. Highlight the continuity between New Testament times and the early Christian epoch
2. See the importance of their stay in Rome in theological terms and in the light of early Christianity.
3. Describe the complex relationship between rationality and religious faith, through a focused exploration of this historical period of the early Church with reference to Christian thinkers of both East and West.
4. Articulate how the dialog between faith and reason defined this formative period of Christianity.
5. Explain how intellect, affect, moral development, and religious faith work together as bridges in learning and find expression in works of literature, in Roman architecture and in the other arts.

SECTION II: Instructor & Course Details

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

NAME: DR. PAUL MICHAEL HAFFNER
CONTACT INFORMATION:
CLASS SCHEDULE:
TERM:

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The instructor will assess your progress towards the above-listed learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted and will count towards your final grade. The following section (Assessment Overview) will provide further details for each.

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Engagement | 15% |
| Class Presentation | 20% |
| Long quiz | 10% |
| Midterm Research Paper | 25% |
| Written Final Exam | 30% |

The instructor will calculate your course grades using the PC Grading Scale shown below. As a CEA CAPA student, you should understand that credit transfer decisions—including earned grades for courses taken abroad—are ultimately made by your home institution.

Grading Scale: Your grades will be calculated according to P.C.'s standard grading scale, which is as follows:

PC GRADE AND QUALITY POINT CHART

| Letter Grade | Percentage Range | Standard Quality Points |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A Superior | 94.0 - 100% | 4.00 |
| A- | 90.0 – 93.9% | 3.67 |
| B+ Very Good | 87.0 – 89.9% | 3.33 |

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| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|------|
| B Good | 84.0 – 86.9% | 3.00 |
| B- | 80.0 – 83.9% | 2.67 |
| C+ Above Average | 77.0 – 79.9% | 2.33 |
| C Average | 74.0 – 76.9% | 2.00 |
| C- | 70.0 – 73.9% | 1.67 |
| D+ Passing | 67.0 – 69.9% | 1.33 |
| D Low Passing | 64.0 – 66.9% | 1.00 |
| D- | 60.0 – 63.9% | 0.67 |
| F Failure | 0 – 59.9% | 0.00 |
| WD | Withdrawal | |
| I | Incomplete | |

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Your course instructor will provide further details and instructions during class time.

Five elements will be taken into account in the evaluation for the final grade:

1) **Your courteous Engagement in the class (15%)**. The points are awarded according to the following civility guidelines:

- a. All participants should behave toward one another with appropriate respect.
- b. No conversations or activities unrelated to organized class discussions should be conducted. **Therefore, all mobile devices must be switched off.**
- c. Alert, active participation is expected, as learning is not a passive enterprise. It is understood, of course, if you are sick or otherwise indisposed. Advance preparation by all participants is presumed.
- d. Courteous attention is expected when colleagues are asking questions or making comments.
- e. You are responsible for undertaking the independent visits listed below in your own time and providing (through Moodle) selfie photographs taken on site, complemented by an adequate comment. Failure to do these independent visits will have a negative impact on the engagement grade. The relationship between the Christian sites you have visited will be tested during the semester. Any tickets will be reimbursed in the academic office.

The independent visits are listed in order of appearance in / relevance to class sessions:

- St. Mary Major
- St. Peter's Basilica
- St. John the Lateran
- The Catacombs
- Santa Maria in Cosmedin

2) **Your personal presentation to the class of an early Christian figure (20%)** chosen from the list below, or whom you propose yourself, with the professor's approval. This exercise is worth 20% of the final grade and aims at studying the beginnings of Christianity through a specific protagonist who helped shape it. Most of these figures were saints. Each student will select a person from the following list and develop a 10 or 15-minute class presentation as follows:

- a. When did they live? Supply dates if possible. Give some of the cultural context.
- b. What was the importance of your chosen person to the beginnings of Christianity?
- c. How, if at all, did they contribute to the relation of faith and reason?
- d. If they are saints, what is their feast day?

As well as from the library, you can obtain information, for example, on the following four reliable websites:

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- ✓ The Catholic encyclopaedia on New Advent: <http://newadvent.org/cathen/>
- ✓ Christian Classics Ethereal Library: <http://www.ccel.org/>
- ✓ St. Pachomius Orthodox Library: <http://www.voskrese.info/spl/index.html>
- ✓ Orthodox wiki, this is different from the Wikipedia: https://orthodoxwiki.org/Main_Page

List of significant figures to choose for the presentations and papers:

- Mary, Mother of God
- St. Peter
- St. Paul
- St. John the Apostle
- St. Thomas the Apostle
- St. Stephen
- St. Mary Magdalen
- St. Cosmas and St. Damian
- St. Felicity and St. Perpetua
- St. Polycarp
- St. Sebastian
- Pope St. Linus
- Pope St. Clement I
- Pope St. Callistus I
- Pope St. Leo the Great
- Pope St. Gregory the Great
- St. Irenaeus
- Clement of Alexandria
- Origen
- Tertullian
- Emperor Constantine
- St. Helena, Mother of Emperor Constantine
- St. Ignatius of Antioch
- St. Paul of the desert
- St. Anthony of the desert
- St. Pachomius
- St. Ephrem
- St. Agatha
- St. Lucy
- St. Cecilia
- St. Agnes
- St. Anastasia
- St. Catherine of Alexandria
- St. Marcella
- St. Paula
- St. Macrina the Younger
- St. Denis (patron of France)
- St. Hilary of Poitiers
- St. Augustine of Canterbury
- St. Patrick
- St. Ninian
- St. David
- St. Ambrose

- St. Augustine of Hippo
- St. Jerome
- St. John Chrysostom
- St. Basil the Great
- St. Gregory of Nyssa
- St. Gregory Nazianzen
- St. John Damascene

3) **A long quiz (10%)** on Mary, Mother of God, St. Peter and St. Paul, and the early Popes, three weeks or so into the semester. The aim here is to examine your potential in this course and see how it can be achieved.

4) **A Midterm Research Paper (25%)** *which is your Midterm exam*, at least 8-10 pages long and double spaced, to be turned in by a specific date, on the following theme:

Each student will choose a person or series of persons from the life of the early Church, within a timeline up till about 600 AD. It can be the same person chosen for the class presentation in (2) above; thus, the research will be continued and expanded. Explain their significance and importance to the beginnings of Christianity, including the relationship between faith and reason if relevant. Illustrate the importance of the person to the Christians and to theology today. An idea of the quality expected from the term paper can be found in P. Haffner's *Style Manual for Essays and Theses*.

5) **The final exam (30%)** in which you will be offered a good choice of questions on the whole course.

GENERAL ADVICE FOR SITE VISITS

For our site visits, you are advised to wear comfortable shoes as the course involves a lot of walking. You are also expected to have an appropriate dress code to enter churches. Respect for the local customs is in line with the cultural sensitivity CEA CAPA seeks to promote. Please, always bring along your student cards.

Late arrivals or early departures from class, sleeping or causing disruptions in class or during class activities can result in being marked absent from class.

- **Cellphones: During class time, all mobile phones must be switched off.**
- **Laptops: During class time, all laptops must be turned off, unless used for taking notes**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to abide by the principles of academic integrity. Specifically, students may not plagiarize, cheat, or collude. Plagiarism is defined as the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrative material, or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgement, and presenting them as one's own. Cheating is the use of improper means of subterfuge to gain credit or advantage. Forms of cheating include the use, attempted use, or improper possession of unauthorized aids in any examination or other academic exercise submitted for evaluation. It is also cheating to submit the same work for credit in more than one course, whether taken at Providence College or not. Collusion is assisting or attempting to assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty. (Modified from the *Providence College: Undergraduate Catalog, 2008-2010*, p. 54). 'Acts of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc) are subject to an appropriate penalty. The grade of 'F' may be assigned to students found guilty of such acts. The professor of the course in which this infraction occurred will inform the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies of the offense and the action taken.' *Providence College Undergraduate Catalog, 2002 -2004*, p. 39. Cheating is an academic crime; it will not be tolerated. Note: 'a second offense against academic honesty renders students liable to automatic dismissal from the College.' *Providence College Undergraduate Catalog, 2002 -2004*, p. 39

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments for this course will come from the required text(s) and/or the selected reading(s) listed below. All required readings—whether assigned from the text or assigned as a selected reading—must be completed according to the due date assigned by the course instructor.

REQUIRED TEXT(S): You may purchase the required text(s) upon program arrival. The required text(s) are listed below:

Primary:

- *Catholic Study Bible*
- P. Haffner, *Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints*. Leominster: Gracewing, 2016

Secondary:

- P. Haffner, *Style Manual for Essays and Theses*. Leominster: Gracewing, 2010.
- Hagstrom, Aurelie, Irena Vaisvilaite, *A Pilgrims Guide to Rome and the Holy Land for the Third Millennium*, Allen TX: Thomas More Press, 2000, 272pp.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To ensure your success abroad, CEA CAPA has provided the academic resources listed below:

- **UNH Online Library:** As a CEA CAPA student, you will be given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH). You may access the UNH online library [here](#). You must comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.
- **CEA CAPA Classroom – Moodle:** CEA CAPA instructors use Moodle, an interactive virtual learning environment. This web-based platform provides you with constant and direct access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources, such as forums, databases, and related academic support to help you achieve the learning objectives listed in this syllabus.

While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus, you should always check Moodle for the most up-to-date information regarding this course. The instructor will use Moodle to make announcements and updates to the course and/or syllabus. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials and that you monitor Moodle daily in case there are any changes made to course assignments or scheduling.

To access Moodle: Please log-in to your MyCEACAPA account using your normal username and password. Click on the “Academics” tab. There you will see a link above your schedule that says “View Online Courses” select this link to be taken to your Moodle environment.

COURSE CALENDAR
Early Christianity in the Eternal City

| Session | Topics | Activity | Readings & Assignments |
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| 1 | <p>Introduction to the course</p> <p>Explanation of assessments</p> <p>Assignment of class work</p> <p>Study on Mary, Mother of God</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In aula</i></p> <p>Our Lady in the New Testament. Mary fulfils the Old Testament Mary in the Synoptic Gospels, The Gospel of Mark, The Gospel of Matthew, The Gospel of Luke and Acts, The Magnificat, The Presentation of the Lord, The Finding in the Temple. Mary in the writings of St John and St Paul Mary and the early Christian Community Mary's house at Ephesus Mary and Mount Athos The Assumption of Our Lady</p> | <p>Read assigned course readings by each session, as indicated in this course schedule.</p> <p>P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 1 “Mary, Mother of God”.</p> <p>Independent visit: St. Mary Major</p> |
| 2 | <p>Study on St Peter</p> <p>Class Presentations</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In aula</i></p> <p>St Peter New Testament evidence for the Petrine ministry St. Peter and the Holy Eucharist St. Peter's profession of faith St. Peter's preeminence in the early Church St Peter in Rome and his martyrdom</p> | <p>Readings:</p> <p>P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 2 “St Peter”</p> <p>Independent visit: St. Peter's Recommended additional visit: Scavi under St. Peter's</p> |
| 3 | <p>Study on St Paul</p> <p style="color: red;">ON SITE CLASS</p> <p>At the Basilica of St. Paul</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>On site</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meet in the square in front of San Paolo at 15:00</p> <p>St Paul Early life and conversion Missionary journeys, St Paul in Rome Pauline theological themes: 1) The <i>two Adams</i> (Christological typology) 2) The <i>redeeming death and resurrection of Christ</i> 3) The Church as the <i>mystical body of Christ</i> 4) Faith and reason 5) The Holy Spirit and Love</p> | <p>Readings:</p> <p>P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 2 “St Paul”</p> |

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| | | 6) Baptism and the Eucharist 7) Eschatology: the last things | |
| 4 | <p>Study on early Popes</p> <p>ON SITE CLASS</p> <p>At the Basilica of St. Clemente</p> <p>Class Presentations</p> | <p><i>On site</i></p> <p>Meet in the square in front of San Clemente at 15:00</p> <p>St Clement and the first 20 Popes The first antipope St. Hippolytus The early Papal election Taking a new name Church and State</p> | <p>Readings:</p> <p>P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 3 “The Early Popes”</p> <p>Independent visit: St. John the Lateran</p> |
| 5 | <p>Long quiz on course material covered so far</p> | <p><i>In aula</i></p> | <p>Readings:</p> <p>All readings and your class notes so far</p> <p>LONG QUIZ</p> |
| 6 | <p>The New Testament Canon</p> <p>Class presentations</p> | <p><i>In aula</i></p> <p>The arrangement of the books The formation of the New Testament Canon The early period (AD 100–220) The period of discussion (AD 220–367) The period of fixation (AD 367–405) The Criteria for Canonicity Examples of non-canonical books</p> | <p>Readings:</p> <p>P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 8 “The New Testament Canon”</p> |
| 7 | <p>Sacramental Life in the early Church</p> <p>Class presentations</p> | <p><i>In aula</i></p> <p>House Churches The concept of sacrament Specific sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, The Holy Eucharist as Presence and Sacrifice, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony The date of Easter: First phase, Second phase, Third phase</p> | <p>Readings:</p> <p>P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 4 “Sacramental Life”</p> <p>MIDTERM PAPER DUE in Moodle drop-box - no later than 11:59 pm on Oct 11, 2023</p> |
| 8 | <p>ON SITE CLASS</p> <p>At the Basilica of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere</p> | <p><i>On site</i></p> <p>Meet in the square in front of Santa Cecilia at 15:00</p> <p>Motives for persecution Periods of persecution The Issue of Second Repentance The Catacombs and early Christian symbols</p> | <p>Readings:</p> <p>P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 5 “Early Christian Martyrs”</p> <p>Independent visit: The Catacombs</p> |

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| | <p>Early Christian Martyrs</p> <p>Class presentations</p> | Theological reflection on martyrdom | |
| 9 | <p>Early Church Fathers</p> <p>Class presentations</p> | <p><i>In aula</i></p> <p>Cultural setting The Latin Fathers, St Augustine The Greek Fathers, Theological Schools of Alexandria and Antioch, The Cappadocian Fathers, St Gregory of Nazianzus The Syriac Fathers, Origins of Syriac, St Ephrem the Syrian</p> | <p>Readings: P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 6 “Early Church Fathers”</p> |
| 10 | <p>A window on the East: Rome and Constantinople</p> <p>Class presentations</p> | <p><i>In aula</i></p> <p>The emperor Constantine and Christianity in the Roman empire Constantinople as the New Rome Widening differences and flavors of East and West</p> | <p>Readings: P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 7 “Councils and heresies”</p> <p>Independent visit: Santa Maria in Cosmedin</p> |
| 11 | <p>Faith and Reason</p> <p>Class presentations</p> | <p><i>In aula</i></p> <p>New Testament foundations The Christian West St Irenaeus, Tertullian, Lactantius, St Hilary of Poitiers, St Augustine, Boethius, St Isidore of Seville The Christian East, St Justin, Origen, Theophilus of Antioch, St Athanasius of Alexandria, St John Damascene</p> | <p>Readings: P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 9 “Faith and reason”</p> |
| 12 | <p>Women in the early Church</p> <p>Class presentations</p> | <p><i>In aula</i></p> <p>New Testament Times, The Anointing of Jesus, Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, Martha, Mary, Wife of Cleophas, Salome, Wife of Zebedee, St Veronica, St Thecla. Early Christian community Women martyrs, St Cecilia Women scholars St Marcella of Rome Mother of an emperor: St Helena Sister of Church Fathers: St Macrina Christian wives: Elpis</p> | <p>Readings: P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 10 “Women in the early Church”</p> |

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| 13 | <p style="text-align: center;">Monks and missionaries</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Class presentations</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In aula</i></p> <p>Role models St Paul of Thebes, St Anthony the Great, St Macarius The eremitic life, Stylites The cenobitic life, St Pachomius, St Basil the Great, St Martin of Tours, Lérins Abbey, St Benedict Britain and Ireland St Ninian, St Patrick, St Brigid, St Enda, St David, Saint Columbanus, St Laserian</p> | <p>Readings: P. Haffner, <i>Early Christianity. Theology shaped by Saints</i>, chapter 11 “Monks and missionaries”</p> |
| 14 | FINAL EXAM | Three-hour final written exam | Comprehensive |

SECTION III: CEA CAPA Academic Policies

To see all CEA CAPA academic policies outlined, please follow the following links. Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including the academic policies outlined online. CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time.

Class & Instructor Policies can be found [here](#)

General Academic Policies can be found [here](#)