

**Patristic
& Celtic
Spirituality
(Ph.D. course)**

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Theological Seminary,
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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A detailed study of three major traditions of Christian spirituality in the period between the Apostolic Fathers (2nd century A.D.) and the end of the Celtic Church (8th century A.D.). Particular focus is placed upon the Greek and Latin patristic traditions, and Celtic spirituality.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the course are basically three-fold.

- First, to provide the student with a detailed understanding of three major Christian traditions of spirituality (the Greek and Latin patristic, and the Celtic) between the close of the New Testament era and the early Middle Ages.
- Second, to learn how to read and appreciate the piety of these early Christian authors and exegetes.
- Third, to furnish the student with models for imitation in his or her Christian walk as well as guidance in the practice of various spiritual disciplines.

3. COURSE TEXTS AND XEROXED NOTES

1. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1961).
2. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Saint Macrina* (2001 ed.; repr. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2005).
3. Michael A. G. Haykin, comp., *Readings in Early Christian & Celtic Spirituality* (Louisville: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009).
4. Gordon Mursell, *The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two thousand years from East to West* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. The class will meet roughly every second Tuesday 3-5, 6:30-9:00 on the following days: February 3, 17; March 3, 17; April 7, 14, 28.
2. There will be written assignments for some of the lectures. These assignments will usually consist of brief answers to questions based on primary and secondary sources. Assignments *must* be in a type-written form. Marks will be deducted for numerous grammar and spelling errors. Assignments are to be handed in at the lecture for which they are required. Late assignments will receive at best a grade of C, unless they are accompanied by a written statement explaining the reason(s) for the lateness of the assignment. No late assignment will be accepted after the last day of classes. These assignments constitute 40% of the final mark.
3. Each student will also be responsible for giving a seminar. This seminar will constitute 50% of the student's final mark. A typed copy of the student's lectures with footnote and bibliographic documentation is to be given to the professor at the time of the seminar as well as to each of the other students.
4. The remaining 10% will be based on analyzing a gobbet, which will enable the student to develop the ability to produce a close reading of a short text. The student will have 16 hours to finish the assignment. Writing on a gobbet involves the following:
 - a. Briefly setting the text in context, and identifying the work from which it comes. Where does it appear in the work and what is the importance of your text to the work as a whole?
 - b. Discussing *relevant* points such as characterization, diction (choice of words), tone, themes, figures of speech (e.g., similes, metaphors), images, structure, and argument.
 - c. Identifying proper names, places and people, if they occur in the text. If it is a historical passage or a passage with historical data in it, elucidating the historical data: people, dates, places, etc.
5. **Note for Students with Disabilities:** In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g. tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course.

5. Outline of lectures

Lectures 1-2: Introduction to Patristic Spirituality (February 3, 2009)

Lectures 3-4: Ignatius of Antioch, *Letters* (February 3, 2009)

Lectures 5-6: *The Odes of Solomon* (February 17, 2009)

Lectures 7-8: *The Letter to Diognetus* (February 17, 2009)

Lectures 9-10: Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word* (March 3, 2009)

Lecture 11: Basil of Caesarea on knowing God (March 3, 2009)

Lecture 12: Basil of Caesarea, *Of Humility* (March 3, 2009)

Lectures 13-14: Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of St. Macrina* (March 17, 2009)

Lectures 15-16: Macarius-Symeon, *Spiritual Homilies* (March 17, 2009)

Lectures 17-20: Augustine's spirituality and his *Confessions* (April 7, 2009)

Lectures 21-22: Introduction to Celtic Spirituality (April 14, 2009)

Lectures 23-24: Patrick and his *Confession* (April 14, 2009)

Lectures 25-26: Celtic missionary spirituality: Columba, Columbaeus and Cuthbert (April 28, 2009)

Lectures 27-28: Bede and the Celtic Spirituality of the Word (April 28, 2009)