I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

*The Early Church* is the introductory course of the history curriculum at Trinity School for Ministry. It provides a foundation for subsequent history and theology courses by zeroing in on key people, events, movements, and concepts from the early Church. Through engagement with the Scriptures, it then applies this historical data to issues of contemporary significance. This course is a prerequisite for CH 635, CH 645, and ST 625.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course students will:

1. Learn to study history sympathetically. Students will learn to engage and identify the different perspectives that people bring to the study of history. Students will also learn to evaluate monuments and representations of history critically, yet charitably.

2. Learn about important historical events in the early Church, and about the lives, practices, and beliefs of early Christians. Students will become conversant in speaking about these events and the various forms of Christian life and practice that took root within them.

3. Consider what it means to interpret history in light of Scripture. Students will reflect upon what it means to study the histories in question as providentially ordered and what it means to be edified by them.
objectives will be facilitated through:

Weekly Readings
Weekly Reading Reviews
Preparation for and participation in weekly class discussions
Weekly Lectures
Final Essay

III. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes for Trinity School for Ministry are:

1. *The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.* CH 625 will equip students to consider representations of the early Church as biblical theologians. CH 625 will also help students to reflect upon how it is that the Bible can be said to speak truthfully about the world and about history.

2. *The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology.* CH 625 students will consider what it means to study history as Christians and whether there is a properly "Anglican" reading of the histories in question. Students of other traditions, especially those in the Lutheran and Presbyterian programs, should be able to articulate the theological perspective of their own tradition.

3. *The student will be able to effectively communicate the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.* To study history is to encounter the other. The skills we can acquire in our responses to and representations of those that have gone before us are directly transferable to our engagements with the living.

4. *The student will be prepared to effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities.* As Christians, we have a common history, which informs and even governs the way we worship and what we believe. Knowing this history and being able to impart it to others is an important part of Christian leadership. Christian leaders must personally overcome the conceit of our culture that we are the first ones to encounter the problems we now face, and they must equip others to overcome this conceit as well.
C.S. Lewis famously said, “If you do not listen to Theology, that will not mean that you have no ideas about God. It will mean that you have a lot of wrong ones.” The same statement can appropriately be applied to the study of History: if you do not listen to History, that will not mean that you have no ideas about History. It will mean that you have a lot of wrong ones. Wrong ideas about history come from two places. First, they come from a lack of historical knowledge, and second, they come from wrong interpretation of historical knowledge. This course equips students to avoid both pitfalls. It presents the historical foundation of the Christian church by teaching the basic contours of the life, practice, and doctrine of early Christians. It also equips students to identify the different perspectives that authors bring to the stories that they tell about the early church, in order to enable students to consider what it means to interpret history as Christians.

VI. REQUIRED TEXTS


V. ASSESSMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation: As the TSM Student Handbook states, “Students who miss more than three classes in one term may forfeit credit for the class and may be in danger of failing the course. As a matter of courtesy, students who must miss any classes should notify their professors, ahead of class.” Please note that participation in morning prayer before class is mandatory. Attendance and class participation are worth ten percent of the final grade.

Reading Questions: Doing the readings ahead of the class is basic to participation. Students will prepare simple reading reviews, which answer some basic questions about the primary readings and reading supplement each week. Students must come to class prepared, with a hard copy of their answers in hand. The reading reviews will serve as the basis of our class discussions together. Reading reviews will be graded as “pass/fail” and are worth thirty percent of the final grade.

Weekly Quizzes: There is no way around it. Students of history must memorize and internalize basic historical facts. It is impossible to move on to the most interesting part
of doing history, trying to figure out what the facts mean, and what we are to make of
them today unless this first step is attended to. Students will answer a few short answer
questions based on the primary textbook before class. These weekly quizzes are worth
thirty percent of the final grade.

_Final Assignment._ Students will complete a two-part final assignment, submitted as a
Google doc. on the course online platform by December 10, 2020. The first part will ask
students to respond personally to Augustine’s _Confessions_, and the second will ask
students to relate what they have read there to the course materials. This assignment is
worth thirty percent of the final grade. Students will utilize parenthetical notation for
the final assignments, as articulated in *The SBL Handbook of Style: for Ancient Near
summary of this notation can be found [here](#).

**IV. ASSESSMENTS**

Trinity School of Ministry has the following grade scale: A = 100-95; A- = 94-90; B+ =
89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = below 70; F = below
60. As per The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) requirements, several samples
of student work may be randomly selected and used as a class artifact as part of an on-
going assessment of courses and degree programs. Students’ names will be removed
from any work used for this purpose.

Written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria: clarity and charity of
thought and expression, accuracy of information, and breadth and depth of discussion. I
will use letter grades or their equivalent to mean the following:

- **A (90-100):** The material is exceptional. Usually, this means that it is not only
clear and accurate but also develops the topic in breadth and depth beyond what
is necessary for a good understanding of it. Such material is often, though not
always, marked also by creativity, exceptional insight, and/or relatively
extensive research.

- **B (80-89):** The thought and expression are clear and the information is accurate.
The discussion is broad and deep enough to indicate a solid understanding of the
issue. By “broad” I mean that sufficient aspects of the topic are covered, and by
“depth” I mean that enough supporting and illustrating material is offered to
flesh out the basic thought.

- **C (70-79):** The material shows an adequate grasp of the topic, but at points, the
discussion is unclear, inaccurate, narrow or shallow.

- **D (60-69):** The material shows something close to an adequate grasp of the topic
but is notably defective according to one or more of the criteria.
F (below 60): The material does not indicate that the student has an adequate grasp of the topic, or it is severely defective according to the criteria.

In the liberal arts, there is always a subjective element in grading insofar as grades reflect qualitative work rather than quantitative measures. For historical and theological work, a number of factors enter into grading: competence in understanding and summarizing material; insightful comments; thoughtful argumentation in addition to summarizing and commenting. Generally, the more of these factors that are present, the higher the grade, but other factors will also be taken into account, for example, organizational coherence, narrative flow of argument, lucidity. (Longer is not necessarily better.)

As per The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) requirements, several samples of student work may be randomly selected and used as a class artifact as part of an ongoing assessment of courses and degree programs. Students’ names will be removed from any work used for this purpose.