THE 790/890 — Theology of Irenaeus
Spring Block 2013

Essential Information
Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information
Professor: K. Steve McCormick, Ph.D. Email: smccormick@nts.edu
Office: (816) 268-5486
Office Hours: By appointment

Catalog Description
This seminar will explore the life and thought of St. Irenaeus in an attempt to ‘place’ him within Christendom. Special attention will be given to how Wesley’s theology of the Christian life engages the legacy and theology of Irenaeus in the missio Dei of the Church.

Degree Objectives

M.Div.
1. The articulation of the knowledge of this God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
2. The development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the
intellectual challenge of the literature of the Christian faith, by the critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity, and of the literature and practices of Christian spirituality, ethics and ministry.

3. The growth of mature self-awareness and self-understanding as flawed human beings, reconciled to God and to each other within the Christian community, who are being transformed into the perfect likeness of Christ, filled with his Spirit, and gifted for the service of humanity.

4. The investigation of human society, thought and culture in order to articulate clear and coherent views of the context of the mission of the Church, and to develop an understanding of the Church as the community of faith with a passion for the gospel engaging in mission to different cultures.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course you will have (R = Course requirement directed toward achieving objective):

- Demonstrated acquaintance with the theology of St. Irenaeus. (R3, Course Outline Lectures, R2, R1)

- Demonstrated understanding of Wesleyan theology in the theology of Irenaeus. (R1, R2, R3)

- Demonstrated understanding of the "place" and "legacy" of Irenaeus within the Church catholic. (R1, R2, R3)

Required Texts & Course Materials (1,227 pages)

2) St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against Heresies. A Free text from this can be found from this website: http://www.textexcavation.com/irenaeusah.html. Cf. also the following from Early Christian Writings: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/irenaeus.html
3) For PDF downloads of Against Heresies: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.toc.html
4) Dennis Minns, Irenaeus: An Introduction, (T&T Clark, 2010). (192 pages)
Course Outline Motifs

Gnostic Rebuttal
The Rule of Faith
Truth & Heresy
Scripture & Apostolic Succession
Mary and Incarnation
Incarnation & Atonement
Recapitulation
Theosis
Creation & New Creation
Trinity & Ontic-Participation
Two Hands of God
Creation & Redemption
Creatio ex-nihilo & Creatio Ex-Amore
Image & Likeness
Pastoral Theology
Revelation & Narrative Theology

Course Assignments & Requirements

A thorough and critically reflective reading of Irenaeus, "Against Heresies" before the start of class is strongly recommended. This is not required, but it will only enhance and strengthen your readiness for the class discussions and for the course requirements!

1. Critical Book Digest Papers: (Outcomes 1-3)

Each student will write a critically reflective précis for each of the five assigned theology texts (Lawson, Minns, Parvis & Foster, Osborn and Payton). Each précis is to be approximately 3 pages, double-spaced and in twelve point font. The written papers along with your class presentations and the defense of your critical reflections will comprise 35 points of your final grade. Each paper is due on the assigned date for the Book Discussion:

Critical Book Digest & Presentation Schedule:

Dennis Minns, Irenaeus: An Introduction —February 19
Sara Parvis & Paul Foster (eds.) Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy —February 26
John Lawson, The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus —March 5
James R. Payton, Irenaeus on the Christian Faith —March 12
Eric Osborn, Irenaeus of Lyons —March 19

Here are a few questions and issues to consider in your reading and in the careful writing of your Critical Book Digest Précis: (Remember, the Subject of each author is St. Irenaeus)
1) What is the thesis of the author?
2) What underlying assumptions guide each author in the defense of his thesis and accompanying arguments?
3) What significant contributions are made in the thesis and its defense?
4) Where are the specific places of 'disconnect' in the critical arguments made to support the thesis?
5) Where are the places of 'convergence' with one author to the other? Be clear and concise and explain why you think there is overlap and how and why this is important.
6) Where are the places of 'divergence' with one author to the other? Be clear and concise as you explain why you think there is strong disagreement and disconnect between them. How and why is this significant?
7) Where did you find yourself resonating with each author and why? What crucial difference will each make in the way you understand God, grace, salvation, Truth, Scripture, Church, Hope, etc?
8) Where are the provocative places in each author and why do you find yourself resisting such argumentation in each?
9) Does the author(s) fairly and consistently represent the theology of Irenaeus? How? Where?
10) Where and why do you think the author has overstated the case in their interpretation of Irenaeus?

2. Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam: (Outcomes 1-3)

There will be one major Critical Thinking Exam given at the end of the semester covering the textbooks, class lectures and class discussion from each section of the Course Outline. The nature of this exam will be entirely essay covering the reading (texts) and lecture material. The exam will be posted in Moodle one week prior to the due date. Essentially, this is a 'take home exam' where you can use all your resources to respond to the questions. No less than 5 pages, and no more than 10 pages of double-spaced typewritten text are expected. This exam will comprise 20 points of your final grade. The date for this exam is Tuesday, May 7.

3. Group Research (Thesis) Papers: (Outcomes 1-3)

Each student will be assigned to a Research Group of 3 students to develop a thesis and collaborate on the research and writing of a 20 page (5,000 words) typewritten paper that is fully footnoted, with bibliography, table of contents, and in Turabian format. Specific detail pertaining to the thesis of each Research Paper, and the make up of each Research Group, will be elaborated on during the first day of class. Each Research Group of 3 students will also be assigned to work as a Critical Rebuttal Group of 3 students. All rebuttal groups will have access to the full text of the Group Research Paper. These will be uploaded into Moodle for the entire class. The Research Group Papers are due: Tuesday, April 2. The scheduling of these Class Presentations and Responses will take place after the Groups are assigned and the topics are chosen. This should happen no later than the second week of the semester! The Group Research Paper along with the Presentation and defense of the thesis will comprise 35 points toward your final grade.
Each Rebuttal Group will bring to class for distribution a 1-3 page typewritten response. These are due on the day of the Class Presentation. That schedule will be determined no later than the second week of the semester! The Rebuttal Group class response and written rebuttal will comprise **10 points toward your final grade.**

The format of each Group Presentation and Group Rebuttal will follow this arrangement: Each presentation will be given a maximum of one hour to make its case. Each rebuttal will be given approximately 10-15 minutes. Afterwards, the class will engage the Group Presenters and the Group Responders until we see the white smoke of Irenaeus’ “irenic spirit” ascending. 😊 Further details will be given for this entire assignment on the first day of class.

**Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

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<tr>
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<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face Class Sessions</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>49.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Group Paper (20 pages)</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Digest Papers (3 hours per paper x 5 papers)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection &amp; Synthesis Exam (Final Exam Week)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>146.08</td>
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**Method for Submitting Assignments**

All assignments will be uploaded for this course in Moodle:
https://moodle.nts.edu/login/index.php

**Form and Style Expectations**

Turabian style and format is not expected for these ‘Theological Commentaries.’ Simply insert in parenthesis the name of Wesley’s sermon, letter, journal entry and/or the secondary author and title of book or article along with the page number(s) inside or at the end the paragraph(s) of your paper. Attach a bibliography of sources at the end of each Theological Commentary.

**Inclusive Language**

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.
Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

In the spirit of ‘fairness’ and ‘class integrity,’ all late work that is submitted before the last day of class sessions (Late Work will not be accepted during final exams week) will be graciously accepted, but with a letter grade reduction. This means that if a late paper is turned in on the last day of class, the best your potentially perfect paper (A) can expect to receive is a B for that late submission.

Class Attendance

Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. Since the professor in each course is best acquainted with the importance of consistent attendance, he or she will determine the rules for attendance.

If you must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation. If a student is absent for four or more weeks of the pre/post module, the professor may automatically fail the student.

Daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits. Students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.

Policy on Incompletes

Only under the rarest of circumstances will the professor approve an incomplete. Only ‘Death in the family’ or the ‘prolonged illness’ of the student will be considered as a justifiable cause for petition. For the most part, all other requests will not be considered. And yet, if the rarest of unforeseeable circumstances do arise, and those circumstances are not the abovementioned (‘death in the family’ and ‘prolonged illness’), then, and only then, may an incomplete be granted by the professor. And, if the incomplete is to be granted for reasons other than ‘death in the family’ and ‘prolonged illness,’ it will be given with a letter grade penalty. For example, if the final grade earned in the class results in an A, and an incomplete was granted for other reasons besides ‘death and prolonged illness,’ then the final grade to be submitted to the registrar will be a B.

Additional Costs

No additional costs are anticipated for this course.

Course Grading
Evaluation Criteria: (The 'Book Digests,' 'Group Research Papers,' 'Group Rebuttal Papers' & 'Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam')

These 'Book Digests,' 'Group Research and Rebuttal Papers' as well as your 'Final Reflection and Synthesis Exam' require good writing skills. To do well certain things should be accomplished or avoided:

a. Do not simply give me back my notes in a summarization.

b. Make an argument in every paper. To do this you should avoid merely repeating a laundry list of disconnected ideas.

c. Integrate class lectures, discussion and readings of assigned texts, etc., into your papers.

d. Make an intelligible argument in every paper. This requires that you get the basic information correct, that your argument makes sense given the basic information, and that your essay is submitted in a presentable form. To accomplish this, you should:
   1. Avoid misspelled words, run-on sentences, and incomplete sentences.
   2. Avoid "there is" as a subject if possible, and the use of the pronoun "it" without an antecedent.
   3. Avoid complicated subject formations. This can usually be done if you check to see if you have piled up prepositions. For instance, a subject such as "The form of the way of life in Miller's novel about Leibowitz" is too complex and doesn't say anything. Sentences like this is like "language on a holiday."
   4. Avoid complicated verbal formations that hide rather than convey significance. For example, "It is to be understood by anyone who thinks about it that . . ." Use the passive voice as little as possible.
   5. Check to see if your sentences flow upon each other, avoid non sequiturs -- that is, when one sentence does not follow upon a previous one but introduces an unexpected interruption of thought which cannot be accounted for in the context.

My Evaluation of all your written work will use the following criteria:

a. Introduction/Clarity of Thesis (This criterion examines the student's ability to introduce the context, state the practical problem that generated this research, and provide a clear thesis of the essay as well as explain how the paper unfolds.)

b. Presentation (This criterion evaluates writing style, clarity of prose, basic grammatical and spelling competence, sentence and paragraph flow, as well as headers for key sections of the paper.)

c. Description of Sources (This criterion evaluates the student's ability to describe in her or his own language the position of the theologians cited.)

d. Comprehensiveness of Sources (This criterion evaluates the student's breadth of sources used in composing essays.)

e. Critical Engagement with Sources (This criterion examines whether a student's work has taken the step beyond mere description and critically engaged with the sources she or he has drawn upon by subjecting them to a critical theological analysis.)
f. Development of Position and a Coherent Theme (This criterion determines not only if a student has critically assessed the sources and arguments present in an essay, but also if he or she has done this through the development of her or his own coherent position.)

g. Implementation (This criterion examines how well the paper has 'actually' integrated and synthesized the rationale of the thesis, its accompanying implications and the 'way' they are to be embodied and lived out in the Church.)

Summary of Grading for Assignments:

Book Digests will comprise 35 points of the final grade.
Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam will comprise 20 points of the final grade.
Group Research Paper & Presentation will comprise 35 points of the final grade.
Group Rebuttal will comprise 10 points of the final grade.

Grade Scale:
A 100-90
B 89-80
C 79-70
D 69-60
F 59-0

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies, which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Course Assignment Calendar

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
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<td>Group Research Papers Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
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<td>Final Reflection &amp; Synthesis Exam</td>
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Bibliography

An extensive Wesley bibliography by Ken Collins will be placed in the section 'Course Resources' of Moodle. Cf. http://www.asburyseminary.edu