

Department of Religion and Philosophy
Catawba College
Fall, 2009
Dr. Kenneth W. Clapp

RELPH 2535 - Christian Beliefs Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

"A non-denominational study of basic Christian doctrines." (CATALOG)

The purpose of this course shall be to help students explore the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. This will be done by guiding students in examining the concept of the elements of the Trinity with particular emphasis upon the person and role of Christ. This material and information will provide students an understanding of the beliefs of one of the major influences shaping many aspects of the lives of a large percentage of members of the human race

Primary ideas will be presented in lecture form with ample classroom time provided for discussion of the lecture material and the assigned reading. Students will select topics for more detailed study and will use the papers they write on these topics as a basis for class presentations on the topics.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND MEANS OF ASSESSMENT

- 1) Students will read and understand primary works in religion and philosophy.
 - ...two written assignments in which students demonstrate sufficient understanding of the key documents representing the Christian faith and the theological development of the doctrines of faith
 - ...one or more final exam questions which demonstrate the above
- 2) Students will analyze how these works reflect, respond to, or shape social, political, religious, and or intellectual contexts.
 - ...a paper in which students demonstrate sufficient understanding of the key documents and doctrines of the Christian faith as these doctrines relate to and shape various contexts
- 3) Students will write about these works from rhetorical, aesthetic, analytical, or ethical perspectives.
 - ...shorter paper requiring students to analyze the primary documents representing the doctrine of the Trinity, and comparing them with a secondary source's interpretation of them
 - ...longer paper in which students are required to research and analyze the primary documents related to one of the key theological subjects in Christian history, and to describe the various historical developments of that subject, using insights from literature

REQUIRED READING

THEOLOGY: THE BASICS by Alister E. McGrath, 2004, Blackwell Publishing

Other readings that are listed in the syllabus will be available from the permanent reserve shelf in the library and/or the Lilly Center Coffeehouse library.

COURSE COMPONENTS

The following course components are required of each class member:

- 1) Attendance and participation in all classes and class projects;
- 2) A mid-term examination;
- 3) A final examination;
- 4) A paper of 4-6 pages in which you address one of the topics listed under "Topics for Research" or other topic approved by the professor.
- 5) Participation in the preparation of a class presentation on the topic chosen for your research paper.
- 6) A report of 2-3 pages detailing the ways in which you see the Christian doctrines outlined in the course being expressed in the life of the Catawba community.
- 7) A paper of 2-3 pages on the doctrine of the Trinity.

EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to demonstrate a serious desire to learn and to show respect for themselves and for others in the class. This means that students arrive on time and are prepared to be fully engaged in the class, whether in oral discussions, written work or listening attentively. All work is to be submitted at the time stipulated in the syllabus. The professor reserves the right not to accept late work. If assignments are accepted late, the professor reserves the right to subtract points. If a student must miss a class due to illness or emergency, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the professor of the reason for the absence. When an absence is deemed legitimate, the professor will determine how the student may make up missed work. Absence from more than 8 classes, regardless of reason will result in failing the course. Students are expected to be attentive and to participate fully in discussions and class projects. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of the schedule of tests and assignments as stipulated in the syllabus. Students should dress in a way that reflects respect for themselves and the academic endeavor in which they are engaged. This means no head gear worn in the classroom, no inappropriate slogans or wording on apparel (slang, profanity, sexual references), and no overly revealing clothing. Students are expected to respect the viewpoints of other members of the class, refraining from making verbal attacks or derogatory comments.

The only electronic devices that are permitted in the classroom are lap top computers that may be used for the taking of notes. Cell phones, i-phones and similar devices should not be brought into the classroom and definitely should not be operative if they are in the classroom. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in electronic devices being confiscated.

Students are expected to adhere to the Catawba College honor code in all situations.

Students may expect the professor to keep them informed of any changes in the syllabus and to be available for individual conferences and beyond the classroom assistance as long as the student is showing an effort to take full advantage of what is offered in the classroom. The professor is available for consultation Monday through Thursday from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and at other times by appointment. If there is an urgent need, students are welcome to contact the professor at any

time. Appointments can be made by calling Mrs. Rice at 4488 or Dr. Clapp can be contacted at 4446 or 704-213-3128

EVALUATION

The following scale will be used for grading: A...93-100, A-...90-92, B+...87-89, B...83-86, B-...80-82, C+...77-79, C...73-76, C-...70-72, D+...67-69, D...63-66, D-...60-62, F...59 and below.

The following weights will be applied to the course components: class participation 5%; progress tests (2 at 10% each) 20%; mid-term examination 15%; final examination 20%; research paper 20%; group project 5%; paper on Trinity 10%and, reflection paper 5%.

CONFERENCES WITH PROFESSOR

Students are encouraged to consult the professor on an individual basis any time they wish to discuss their progress in the course or to pursue questions or clarification of material presented, or to discuss other concerns of interest to them. It especially is recommended that students consult with the professor in the process of designing the outline for the research paper and determining sources for that paper. You may locate the professor in the "Pastor's Study" on the lower level of Omwake-Dearborn Chapel or by calling 4446 (study) or 704-213-3128 (home).

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Readings (McGrath unless noted)
August 22	Intro to course	
August 27	Revelation	<u>The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible</u> , vol. IV, pp. 55-58
August 29	Authority	<u>The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible</u> , vol.I, pp. 319-320
September 3	The Role of Faith	pp. 1-16
September 5	God	pp. 17-34
September 10	Creation (Topic for research paper due)	pp. 35-51
September 12	The Fall	
September 17	The Covenant (Progress Test #1)	
September 19	Jesus Christ	pp. 52-69

- September 24 Incarnation Christian Story, vol. I, pp.97-114
- September 26 Life and Ministry
- October 1 Prophet, Priest and King
- October 3 Salvation pp. 70-86
- October 8 Crucifixion and resurrection
RESEARCH PAPER DUE
- October 10 Salvation pp.70-86
- October 17 Mid-term examination
- October 22 Sin
- October 24 No class (an alternative assignment or activity will take the place of this class)
- October 29 Judgment The Christian Story, vol. I, pp. 119-134
- October 31 Forgiveness pp. 123-137
- November 5 Heaven and Hell The Christian Story, vol. I, pp. 209-221
(Paper on the Trinity due)
- November 7 Student presentations
PROGRESS TEST #2
- November 12 Student presentations
- November 14 Student presentations
- November 19 Student presentations
- November 21 The Church pp. 105-122
- November 26 The Sacraments
- December 3 Consummation
- December 5 Review

RESEARCH PAPER

Students will prioritize their preference for a topic for the research paper, choosing from the

following possibilities or a topic approved by the professor. There will be three or four students with the same topic. Each student will narrow the focus of his or her paper, research and write a paper using an accepted research writing style which includes footnotes and a bibliography.

- 1) The authority of scripture
- 2) Teaching on the Kingdom
- 3) The Messianic hope
- 4) Theories of resurrection
- 5) The sovereignty of God
- 6) Grace
- 7) The role and meaning of faith
- 8) Repentance
- 9) The Holy Spirit
- 10) Reconciliation
- 11) Judgment
- 12) Incarnation

CLASS PRESENTATION

Students who have chosen the same general topic for their research papers will form a group to assimilate the research used in preparing their papers and to prepare a 20 to 30 minute presentation for the class. One member of the group shall be designated as coordinator and shall have the responsibility for supervising the process. All members of the team shall share in the presentation.