

# Christian Beliefs / THEO 252-01

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Monday, 6:00-8:30pm

Fall 2010

Location: Xavier 122

Office: 1<sup>st</sup> First floor Adorjan lobby

Office Hours: By appointment

## **Course Description:**

This course aims at providing a comprehensive understanding of Christian faith by investigating the historical development and interrelation of its main tenets *as expressed in the Nicene Creed*. Attention will be given to how Christian beliefs arise from, and themselves give distinct shape to, Christian practices in the Church and the world.

## **Driving Questions:**

Who/what is God, if God exists? What is the Christian view?

Who is/was Jesus?

How is faith relevant for life today?

Can anyone know the answers to the above questions? If so, how do they know?

## **Skills developed/acquired:**

Clear communication

Critical thinking

Formulation of a written thesis

Development of a written argument

Formulation of pertinent questions

Analytical/critical reading

The ability to find, cite, and use appropriate essays and articles

The ability to analyze the topics of the course (theology proper, Christology, etc.) and their relationship to each other.

## **Core Course Values:** (basis for written work and presentations)

Clarity of self-expression

Accuracy

Relevance

Respect

Honesty

Compassion (especially as expressed in openness and empathy toward opposing viewpoints)

Readiness to listen

Inquisitiveness

Creativity

Diligence

### **Contacting the Instructor**

**Email:** I will probably not reply to email before 9am or after 5pm.

Please limit to simple questions OR setting appointments to meet in person

Bring all other inquiries and issues to the instructor in person.

**In person:** Office hours by appointment or immediately after class.

### **Academic Assistance:**

Any students who feels that they may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course as outlined in the syllabus due to the presence of a disability should contact the Office of Disabilities Services: 314-977-8885, Suite 331 in the Academic Resources Center, Busch Student Center. Other tutoring is also available at the center. Confidentiality will be observed.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering soliciting information on examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes *unless the examination is explicitly open-note as per the instructions of the professor*. Violations should be reported to your course instructor, who will investigate and adjudicate them according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the university.

The usual penalty for the first offense in the course is failure of the particular assignment. A second offense can result in failure of the course. These actions are subject to the discretion of the instructor.

The Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts & Sciences can be found at <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

### **Texts**

**Luke Timothy Johnson.** *The Creed*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.

(LTJ on course schedule.)

**St. Athanasius.** *On the Incarnation*. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996. (Athanasius on course schedule.)

**The Bible.** Any academic study bible, such as the NIV Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, Catholic Study Bible. (Book name and chapter numbers given on course schedule.)

### **Format:**

Interactive lecture

Large- and small-group discussion

Debate-style council simulation

Student presentations

## Coursework

- 40% Interaction exercises Each student will produce **8 of the following**:
- reaction essays (5-8) New topics given every class based on the topic and readings for the following week. Finished essay should be approximately 1 full page. **Due via email 24 hours prior to the next class meeting.**
  - presentation (0-1) Individuals or groups of up to 4 students. 10-15 minutes. Pertinent to one of the course topics. **Proposal due to instructor by September 13.**  
  
Possibilities: Voice alternative views within Christianity. Compare/contrast course topics with beliefs in other religions. Apply theological issues to life. (Ex. what it means to be a Christian [insert career].)  
  
All presentations should prepare for Q&A.
  - council speaker (0-2) Only four students from the class will have the opportunity to serve in this capacity, two representing the proponents of Johannine Christology, and two representing its opponents. **Counts as two interaction exercises. Volunteer by September 13. Council is on September 20.**
  - food to share (0-1) Bring to one course meeting enough food to share with at least 10 people. **Sign up on August 30.**
- 10% Proper citations Correctly use and cite secondary sources in **at least 4** reaction essays (different sources in each essay; non-course text print sources only). **Internet sources do not count toward the 4, but may be used to provide information to bolster the author's claims, so long as they are cited and do not include Wikipedia.** Choose either Chicago or APA.
- 20% Midterm Administered in class on **October 11**  
Objective (fill-in, multiple choice, etc.), closed note
- 30% Final **Handed out November 29**  
**Due December 6**  
All essay, open note, open book, take-home

## Grading Scale

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D 60-69
A 94-96	B 84-86	C 74-76	F 0-59
A- 90-93	B- 80-83	C- 70-73	

**Attendance Policy:**

Every absence beyond two unexcused absences will result in the loss of one full letter grade.

**Course Schedule** with due dates of readings.

\*Reaction essays due via email 24-hours *prior* to the dates with asterisk

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|----|---|---------------|
| 1. | <b>Introduction</b>   | August 23     |
| 2. | <b>Origins, Development, and Function of the Creed</b><br>LTJ preface, 1 - 2<br><i>Food sign-up</i>                   | August 30*    |
| -  | LABOR DAY – NO CLASS  | September 6   |
| 3. | <b>“One God...”</b><br>LTJ 3<br><i>Presentation proposals due (required for all hoping to present)</i>                | September 13* |
| 4. | <b>Do-It-Yourself Ecumenical Council (Simulation)</b><br>John 1-21  | September 20* |
| 5. | <b>“One Lord Jesus Christ”</b><br>LTJ 4<br>Matthew 5-7<br>Athanasius 25-47  | September 27* |
| 6. | <b>The Incarnation</b><br>LTJ 5<br>Luke 1-2<br>Athanasius 48-55   | October 4*    |
| 7. | <b>“He Ascended ... and Will Come Again”</b><br>LTJ 6<br>Revelation 20-22<br>Athanasius 56-63, 95-6<br><i>MIDTERM</i> | October 11*   |
| -  | FALL BREAK – NO CLASS   | October 18    |
| 8. | <b>The Holy Spirit</b><br>LTJ 7<br>Romans 8   | October 25*   |
| 9. | <b>TBA</b>  | November 1    |

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|-----|---|--------------|
| 10. | <b>“One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church”</b><br>LTJ 8<br>1 Corinthians 1-3 | November 8*  |
| 11. | <b>Creedal Christianity</b><br>LTJ 9  | November 15* |
| 12. | <i>Shadowlands</i> (film)   | November 22* |
| 13. | <b>Review</b><br>Take-home <i>FINAL</i> distributed                             | November 29* |
| 14. | <i>FINAL DUE</i> (and on-line course evaluation due soon)                       | December 6   |