AFRICAN FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF THE CHURCH

Time: Thursday 2:00-4:25 p.m.
Place: McGuinn Hall 526

Instructor: Margaret A. Schatkin
Office: Stokes North 437  Phone: 617-552-4604

Course Description
Introduction to the African Fathers and Mothers of the Church, from the post-Apostolic period through the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), and to Saint Bakhita of the Sudan and Sister Thea Bowman. The lives, writings, and teachings of the African Church Fathers and Mothers will be studied in the context of their times, through lectures, readings, films, and discussion.

Statement on Disability Services
If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Disability Services Office (617) 552-3470, disabsrv@bc.edu, regarding all other types of
disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

**Purpose**
1. To introduce students to the disciplines of Patrology and Matrology.
2. To study the lives and writings of the African Church Fathers and Mothers within their historical context.
3. To show the great contribution of Africa to the life and doctrine of the church, in light of the pre-existing culture.

**Formal Learning Goals**
This course supports the following learning goals of the Theology Department, inasmuch as:
1. The fathers and mothers who birthed the ancient church give you something close to the “essence of Christianity.” As Yves Congar has written: “The benefit that the theologian can derive from them far surpasses anything he can get from any other text of argument: from them one gains an education in the *sensus catholicus*, much as one learns his native language from intimacy with the greatest writers of its history.”
2. The early church provides a historical paradigm of inculturation and interreligious dialogue.
3. The African Fathers are cited as authorities in the *Roman Catholic Catechism*. 
Textbooks

All textbooks are on reserve in O’Neill Library. All (except Lugira article) are available in B.C. Bookstore.


Requirements

1. Regular class attendance and participation.
2. As assigned, brief analysis papers on readings, delivered orally. Note that all students are expected to do all the readings, whether or not they are reporting or not.
3. Midterm.
4. Final examination held at the officially scheduled time as published by the Registrar of Boston College.

**Computation of Grade**
1. Attendance, participation, papers
2. Midterm
3. Final examination

**Academic Integrity**
The importance of academic integrity reflects the value and fair use of each individual’s thinking and writing. A reference to the university’s academic integrity policy can be found at this link: http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html.

**Schedule**

**August**
31Th Thursday Meeting 1: Welcome (Margaret at Conference)

Guest lecturer: Dr. Judith M. Gentle, eminent scholar and internationally recognized theologian, will speak on Matrology and the Desert Mothers of the Church

**Reading**
Ellingsen, Chap. 2: “Mothers of the Desert,” pp. 20-29
Meeting 2

**Topic:** Fathers and Mothers of the Church

Introduction and definition of terms.

Definition of the title, “Father/Mother of the Church.”

Patrology and Matrology; Patristics, Matristics, Ancient Christian Literature. The Various Time Periods. The original texts of the Fathers and Mothers.

**Readings**

Jurgens, “Foreword,” Vol. 1, pp. ix-xii

Ramsey, Chap. 1: “Beginning to Read the Fathers,” pp. 1-18

Swan, “Introduction,” pp. 1-4

Swan, “Glossary of selected terms,” pp. 193-200

Swan, “Timeline of the forgotten desert mothers,” p. 170

**Suggested**

September
9/14 Th Meeting 3


**Readings**
Swan, Chap. 1: “The World of the Desert Mothers,” pp. 5-19

**Suggested**

**Film**
Cleopatra

9/21 Th Meeting 4

**Topic:** Introduction to Apostolic Fathers. *Didache* or *Teaching of the XII Apostles.* Charismatic clergy: apostles, prophets, and teachers. Ancient Coptic (Egyptian) version of the *Didache.* Clement the Alexandrian
September

9/21 cont. **Readings**

Ellingsen “Introduction,” pp. xxxii-xxxiii
Jurgens, pp. 1-6
Ramsey, Chap. 6, “Church and Ministry,” pp. 99-113
Ellingsen, Chap. 3: “Clement of Alexandria,” pp. 30-47

**Oral reports**

*Didache*, by section nos. from Jurgens, pp. 1-6
1-5_____
6-10_____

9/28 Th  Meeting 5

**Topic:** Institutional church and Papacy.
Pope St. Clement of Rome (ca. A.D. 70).
Three African Popes: Victor I (ca. 186-201),
Miltiades (311-314), and Gelasius (492-496).
Cyprian of Carthage

**Readings**

Ramsey, Chap. 6, “Church and Ministry,” pp. 113-128.
September


**Oral reports**
Clement of Rome, by section nos. from Jurgens,
pp. 6-13
10a-18_______
19-26_______
26a-29_______

October
10/05Th Meeting 6

**Topic:** Christianity in Africa in the Apostolic and Patristic age: Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, North Africa

Lecture by Professor Aloysius Lugira,
internationally known scholar, teacher, and writer of Christianity in Africa

**Readings**
[copy provided]

Ellingsen, Chaps. 6, pp. 78-81: “Commodianus.”
October

“Jesus and Cultures,” in *The Peoples’ Bible*, pp. 65-76.

10/12 Th Meeting 7

**Topic:** Origen of Alexandria and his Legacy

Guest Lecturer: Fr. Robert J. Daly, S.J., internationally recognized world expert on Origen

**Readings**
Ellingsen, Chap. 5, “Origen,” pp. 63-77

**Oral reports/Readings**
Origen, *On Fundamental Doctrines*, Jurgens, pp. 190-200, by section numbers
443-450________
451-455________
456-461________
462-466________
467-70________
October 10/19Th  Meeting 8

**Topic:** Cyril of Alexandria and the birth of Christology and Mariology in Egypt

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Judith Marie Gentle, internationally acclaimed Mariologist, author, and lecturer

**Readings**


Swan, “Mary and Euphemia, Two holy sisters called daughters of the gazelle,” pp. 91-93.

10/26Th  Meeting 9

**Topic:** Sr. Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A

Guest lecture by: Dr. Ines M. Maturana Sentoya, Director, Bowman AHANA & Intercultural Center, Boston College

**Film**

*Sister Theo: Her Own Story*
November
11/02 Th Meeting 10

**Topic:** Tertullian of Carthage (160-250), ancient North Africa: founder of western Christianity

**Readings**
Ellingsen, Chap. 4: “Tertullian,” pp. 48-62
Jurgens, “Tertullian,” pp. 111-61

**Oral Reports**
From Tertullian, in Jurgens, pp. 112-18, cited by section nos.:

*Apology* 274-276
*Apology* 276a-277
*Apology* 278-280
*Apology* 281a-281b
*Apology* 282-285

**Film**
*Carthage: A Journey Back in Time*

11/09 Th Meeting 11

**Topic:**
The Scillitan Martyrs
The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas

**Readings**
The Scillitan Martyrs (Xerox copy)
November 11/09 cont.

Readings cont.
*The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*, translated by R.E. Wallis (ANF 3:697-706) [copy provided]

Oral Reports
From the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas:
- Preface, p. 699
- Chap. 1, pp. 699-700
- Chap. 2, pp. 700-702
- Chap. 3, p. 702
- Chap. 4, pp. 702-03
- Chap. 5, pp. 703-704
- Chap. 6, pp. 704-706

Film
*Passion of Saint Perpetua: Martyr of the Faith*

11/16 Th Meeting 12

**Topic:** Athanasius of Alexandria, Anthony, and the monks of Coptic Egypt.

**Readings**
Readings Cont.

Oral Reports
Athanasius, Ad Afros epistola synodica: To the bishops of Africa; letter of ninety bishops of Egypt and Libya.” [From NPNF 4:488-494; copy provided].
By section numbers:
1-3_______
4-6_______
7-9_______
10-11_______

11/23Th Thanksgiving Holiday

11/30Th Meeting 13


Readings
Readings cont.
Chap. 35, “The End of Roman Africa,” pp. 419-426
[scan]

On the ethnicity of Augustine:
Serge Lancel, “Entre africanité et romanité: le chemin d’Augustin vers l’universel,” in

Film
St. Augustine, a documentary by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR

Oral Reports
From Ramsey, Chap. 12:
“Paganism,” pp. 229-32
“Resurrection,” pp. 232-37
“Apokatastasis,” pp. 237-41
“Millenarianism,” pp. 241-46

December
12/7Th Meeting 14
Topic: St. Josephine Bakhita of the Sudan: a natural knowledge of God
December  
12/7 cont.

Readings
Tertullian, *The Soul’s Testimony* (ANF 3: 175-180)  
[copy provided]
Zanini, *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint*

Film

Oral Reports
From Tertullian:
Chap. 1, pp. 175-176 _________
Chap. 2, p. 176 __________
Chap. 3, pp. 176-77 _________
Chap. 4, pp. 177-178 _________
Chap. 5, pp. 178-79 _________
Chap. 6, p. 179 _________

12/     Final exam at the officially scheduled time TBA