

Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2023
[Previous Value](#) Autumn 2022

Course Change Information

What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)

Adding new TCT Theme (one of the initial courses proposed for the new theme)

What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?

Course is a good fit for TCT Theme

What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?

(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?

N/A

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	History
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	History - D0557
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	3227
Course Title	Gnostics and Other Early Christian Heresies
Transcript Abbreviation	Gnostics
Course Description	Examines the early Christian philosophical movement known as "the Gnostics" whose beliefs, based on the stories of the Bible, Platonist philosophy, and the new revelation of Jesus, shocked other Christians.
Previous Value	<i>Examines the early Christian philosophical movement known as "the Gnostics" whose beliefs, based on the stories of the Bible, Platonist philosophy, and the new revelation of Jesus, shocked other Christians. Sometimes taught at distance.</i>
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Previous Value	<i>Yes, Greater or equal to 50% at a distance</i>
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites	Prereq or concur: English 1110.xx, or permission of instructor.
Exclusions	
Electronically Enforced	Yes

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code	54.0101
Subsidy Level	Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank	Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

Required for this unit's degrees, majors, and/or minors

General Education course:

Historical Study; Global Studies (International Issues successors); Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Previous Value

Required for this unit's degrees, majors, and/or minors

General Education course:

Historical Study; Global Studies (International Issues successors); Historical and Cultural Studies

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

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|---|--|
| Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will gain an understanding of the Gnostic school of thought and related groups in second- and third-century Christianity.• Students will gain an understanding of the relationship between culture and religion. |
|---|--|

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Content Topic List | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before Genesis• Adam and Eve• Platonic myth of creation• The Bible and Plato• The Myth of Basilides• The Soul's Fall and the Divine Twin• The Spirituality of Gnosis• The Zenith of Mythologizing |
|---------------------------|--|

Sought Concurrence	No
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Previous Value

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST
3227 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette
Chantal
09/06/2022

Attachments

- HIST 3227 Syllabus.docx: Syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Getson, Jennifer L.)
- HIST3227_TCT_SubmissionDoc.docx: GE Form
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Getson, Jennifer L.)

Comments

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Getson, Jennifer L.	06/28/2022 02:57 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Soland, Birgitte	06/28/2022 04:19 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	09/06/2022 02:39 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Cody, Emily Kathryn Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin, Deborah Kay Hilty, Michael Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Steele, Rachel Lea	09/06/2022 02:39 PM	ASCCAO Approval

SYLLABUS: HIST 3227 GNOSTICS AND OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN HERESIES AUTUMN 2022

Course Overview

Classroom Information

Format of Instruction: In Person Lecture

Meeting Days/Times: Tuesdays and Thursday 9:35–10:55

Location: TBA

Instructor

Instructor: Professor David Brakke

Email address: brakke.2@osu.edu

Office: 230 Dulles Hall

Phone number: 614-292-2174

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:15–2:15 in person; Wednesdays 2:00–3:00 via Zoom (link on Carmen course homepage); and in person or via Zoom by appointment

Course Description

“Gnosticism” was the first great Christian “heresy”; indeed, it prompted the creation of the idea of “heresy.” But who were the Gnostics? And what did they teach? And what’s a heresy? Manuscripts discovered in the twentieth century now enable us to read works from the Gnostics themselves. This course will explore the writings and teachings of the Gnostic school of thought and related groups in second- and third-century Christianity. The Gnostics taught that this world is a mistake, created by an evil and ignorant god, and that Jesus has come to rescue people from it. They presented their teachings in an elaborate myth that drew from the Bible and Platonist philosophy. Other groups, like the Valentinians, presented their own variations of the Gnostic myth, and “proto-orthodox” Christians developed their theologies and notions of heresy in response to Gnostic views. We will read such “heretical” works as *The Secret Book According to John*, *The Gospel of Judas*, and *The Gospel According to Thomas*, as well as writings by opponents of the Gnostics, including Irenaeus of Lyons and Origen of Alexandria.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

- Identify, compare, and contrast the teachings and practices of diverse early Christian movements of the first three centuries CE.

- Trace the social and political history of the Roman empire from 100 to 250.
- Recognize the differing understandings of God, salvation, and community that developed during this period and their enduring legacies.
- Understand the obstacles to and the benefits of analyzing class and gender in late ancient history.

General Education

GE Theme: Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations

General Expectations of All Themes

GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze and important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.
- 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

GOAL 2: Successful student will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in the future.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.
- 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

Specific Expectations of Courses in Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations

GOAL 1: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1.1 Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.

- 1.2 Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.
- 1.3 Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.
- 1.4 Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.

GOAL 2: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals’ experience within traditions and cultures.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 2.1 Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.
- 2.2 Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues..

Course Materials

Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures (2nd edition, 2021)*
Robert Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*

Additional readings will be made available on Carmen. You will also need a copy of the Christian Bible (Hebrew Bible [Old Testament], Apocrypha, and New Testament). The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) is highly recommended. If you do not own a Bible, *The HarperCollins Study Bible* is a good investment.

Grading and Instructor Response

Graded Activities

You have four graded components of varied activities. You need to read both primary and secondary sources closely and engage in discussions about them. You will be asked to synthesize and analyze information about early Christianity in quizzes and exams. And you will reflect on and engage with key ideas through papers.

1. Attendance, preparation of readings, and participation (20%). You should do the assigned readings for each class session and bring them to class. A handout of daily discussion questions will help you to focus your reading and prepare you for our discussions. You should also bring your own questions and insights about the readings.

2. Midterm examination on Tuesday, October 11 (25%). The test will be administered via Carmen and will be timed (80 minutes), but you can take the test at any 80-minute period during the 24 hours of the day. Class will not meet.

3. Two short papers (4–6 pages) due on September 21 and November 16 (30%). Assignments for these papers will be distributed well in advance of the due dates. No research will be required.

4. Final examination on XXX, administered via Carmen during the week of December 7 (25%).

The midterm and final examinations will be administered via Carmen. The exams will be timed and must be completed in a single sitting only once, but they will be available over multi-day periods. They will consist of a mix of short and longer essay questions, and you will be able to use your notes and textbooks.

Grading Scale

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+ = 65–69
D = 60–64
E = under 60

When averages are calculated, numbers are rounded up from .5. For example, 89.5 = 90.

Instructor Feedback and Response Time

Email is usually the best way to reach me, and you can expect a response within 24 hours. My office hours (whether in person or on Zoom) do not require an appointment, but I can meet at other times by appointment.

You can expect evaluation of and feedback on papers and tests within seven days.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Class Time and Preparation

You should always bring to class the assigned readings. You should have read them and their introductions closely before class, making use of the handout of discussion questions. In class we will devote some time to historical background and the remainder of our time to analysis of and discussion of the sources

GS = Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*

I. Introduction

August 23: Orientation

“General Introduction” (GS xv–xxviii)

August 25: A First Encounter with the Gnostic Myth

The Secret Book According to John (GS 25–61)

“Historical Introduction” to Classic Gnostic Scripture (GS 5–23)

II. The Paths to the Gnostic Myth

August 30: Two Creation Stories: Genesis and Plato’s *Timaeus*

Genesis 1–8 in the Septuagint version (Carmen)

Plato, *Timaeus* 26e–45b, 89d–92c (Carmen)

September 1: Weaving Together Moses and Plato

Philo of Alexandria, *On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses*
(excerpts) (Carmen)

September 6: Paul and the Problem of the Law

Romans and Galatians (in the New Testament)

Marcion, *Antitheses* (Carmen)

September 8: The Gospel of John and Separation from Judaism

Gospel According to John (in the New Testament)

The Writings of Basilides (GS 607–636)

III. The Gnostic School of Thought

September 13: God, Creation, and Salvation in Gnostic Thought

The Secret Book According to John (GS 25–61)

“Saturninos (According to St. Irenaeus)” (GS 209–212)

“The Gnostics (According to St. Irenaeus)” (GS 213–219)

September 15: Gnostics and Other Christians: *The Gospel of Judas*

The Gospel of Judas (GS 62–76)

“Other’ Gnostic Teachings (According to St. Irenaeus)” (GS 220–233)

September 20: Rewriting Genesis

The Revelation of Adam (GS 77–92)

The Reality of the Rulers (GS 93–107)

Targum of Palestine (Pseudo-Jonathan) on Genesis I–V (Carmen)

September 22: Gnostic Worship of the Parent and the Barbēlō

First Thought in Three Forms (GS 118–136)

The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit (The Egyptian Gospel) (GS 137–161)

The Three Tablets of Seth (GS 196–208)

September 27: Gnostic Mysticism: Journeys into the Mind of God

Zōstrianos (excerpts) (GS 162–185)

The Foreigner (excerpt) (GS 186–195)

“The Gnostics (According to Porphyry)” (GS 234–236)

Plato, *Symposium* 210A–212A (Carmen)

Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 9–10, 28 (Carmen)

2 Enoch (Carmen)

September 29: The Feminine Voice of the Divine

The Thunder—Perfect Intellect (GS 108–117)

Thought of Nōrea (Carmen)

October 4: The Hypothesis of a “Sethian” (Gnostic) System and “the Immovable Race”

Hans-Martin Schenke, “The Sethian System According to the Nag Hammadi Manuscripts” (Carmen)

Hans-Martin Schenke, “The Phenomenon and Significance of Gnostic Sethianism” (Carmen)

Frederick Wisse, “Stalking Those Elusive Sethians” (Carmen)

October 6: Sexual Slander and Ritual Cannibalism: The Reports from Epiphanius of Salamis

“The Sethians (According to St. Epiphanius)” (GS 185–190)

“The Archontics (According to St. Epiphanius)” (GS 191–198)

“The Gnostics (According to St. Epiphanius)” (GS 199–214)

October 11: Midterm Examination

Have a relaxing Autumn Break!

IV. The School of St. Thomas

October 18: God and the Self in *The Gospel According to Thomas*

“Historical Introduction” to the School of St. Thomas (GS 535–541)

The Hymn of the Pearl (GS 543–554)

The Gospel According to Thomas (GS 555–588)

October 20: The Development of Thomas Christianity

The Book of Thomas the Contender Writing to the Perfect (GS 589–600)

V. Valentinus and the Valentinian School

October 25: Valentinus's Reformation of Gnostic Myth

"Historical Introduction" to the Writings of Valentinus (GS 275–280)

"Valentinus' Myth (According to St. Irenaeus)" (GS 281–285)

Valentinus, Fragments of Lost Works (GS 286–303)

Valentinus, *Summer Harvest* (GS 304–307)

Valentinus (?), *The Gospel of Truth* (GS 308–327)

October 27: Irenaeus's Account of the Valentinian Myth

"Historical Introduction" to the School of Valentinus (GS 331–339)

"Ptolemy's Version of the Gnostic Myth (According to St. Irenaeus)" (GS 341–374)

November 1: A Valentinian's Version of the Valentinian Myth

The Tripartite Tractate (GS 379–435)

November 3: Authority and Theology among Valentinians

Ptolemy, *Epistle to Flora* (GS 436–447)

Treatise on Resurrection (Epistle to Rheginus) (GS 448–458)

November 8: Valentinian Ritual: The Mysteries of the Faith and the Bridal Chamber

The Gospel According to Philip (GS 459–500)

Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpts from Theodotus* (GS 501–529)

VI. Responding to *Gnōsis* and Creating "Orthodoxy" and "Heresy"

November 10: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons, and the Invention of Heresy

Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 57–105

November 15: Irenaeus of Lyons and the Invention of Catholic Tradition

Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 106–143

November 17: Irenaeus of Lyons and an Orthodox Vision of God

Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 144–186

November 22: Origen of Alexandria and a "Proto-Orthodox" Myth

Origen, Excerpts from *On First Principles* (Carmen)

Have a happy Thanksgiving!

VII. “Gnosticism”: Theoretical and Historical Questions

November 29: What’s a “Gnostic” Text?

On the Origin of the World (Carmen)

The Gospel of Mary (Carmen)

December 1: The Sethian Hypothesis and the Gnostic School of Thought

David Brakke, “Identifying the Gnostics and their Literature” (Carmen)

Bentley Layton, “Prolegomena to the Study of Ancient Gnosticism”
(Carmen)

December 6: Alternative Approaches to “Gnosticism”

Michael A. Williams, “Was There a Gnostic Religion? Strategies for
a Clearer Analysis” (Carmen)

Birger A. Pearson, “Gnosticism as a Religion” (Carmen)

Antti Marjanen, “Gnosticism” (Carmen)

XXX: Final Examination

Other Course Policies

Academic integrity policy

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university’s Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- Committee on Academic Misconduct web page (go.osu.edu/coam)
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions)

Student Services and Advising

University Student Services can be accessed through BuckeyeLink. More information is available here:

<https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/>

Advising resources for students are available here: <http://advising.osu.edu>

Copyright for Instructional Materials

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Statement on Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu

Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive Learning Environment

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression,

national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the land that The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. I/We want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that has and continues to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

More information on OSU's land acknowledgement can be found here:

<https://mcc.osu.edu/about-us/land-acknowledgement>

Your Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learn, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. No matter where you are engaged in distance learning, The Ohio State University's Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) is here to support you. If you find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, on-demand resources are available at go.osu.edu/ccsondemand. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614292-5766, and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org. The Ohio State Wellness app is also a great resource available at go.osu.edu/wellnessapp.

Accessibility Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Requesting Accommodations

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on

your disability including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Accessibility of Course Technology

This course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system). If you need additional services to use this technology, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- Canvas accessibility (go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility)

GE Theme course submission documents

Overview

Each category of the General Education (GE) has specific learning goals and Expected Learning outcomes that connect to the big picture goals of the program. Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for **all** GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course.

The prompts below provide the goals of the GE Themes and seek information about which activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) provide opportunities for students to achieve the ELO's associated with that goal. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter—listing “readings” without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form.

Course and Subject No.: HIST 3227

Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

Goal 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

This course provides an advanced study of the Traditions, Cultures and Transformations theme through the in-depth study of the emergence of diversity within early Christianity during the first three centuries C.E. The rise of “Gnosticism” presents a prime example of the issues that this theme explores: the influence of a new “big idea,” the interactions among dominant cultures and sub-cultures, changes and continuities over time within a culture and society, diversity within and across cultures, and the significance of categories of race, ethnicity, and gender. It is advanced because students read a range of primary sources and subject them to analysis, and they consider various competing scholarly interpretations of these sources.

Goal 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

For each of the ELOs below, please identify and explain course assignments, readings, or other activities within this course that provide opportunity for students to attain the ELO. If the specific information is listed on the syllabus, it is appropriate to point to that document. The ELOs are expected to vary in their

Course subject & number

“coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking.	This course will build skills in critical and logical thinking about traditions, cultures and transformations through <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading of primary sources and analyses of them in class-based discussions• Completion of two short papers that ask students to analyze primary sources critically either through comparison of two or more sources on a single theme (e.g., the role of women in the community, appropriations of Platonism and Judaism) or through the discernment of change and continuity over time (likewise on a single theme, e.g., the nature of authority, perspectives on gender and authority, ideas about God)• Completion of two tests in which students demonstrate comprehension of the course readings and materials
ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.	Students explore different approaches to the materials through the inherently multidisciplinary study of religion. They encounter conflicting scholarly perspectives explicitly on the days listed as Oct 4, Nov 29, Dec 1, and Dec 6. Paper assignments and exam questions invite students to identify, describe, synthesize and assess these differing views.
ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.	The papers encourage students to reflect on what they studied and to integrate what they have learned with new material. After each paper and test, students are invited to respond with a one-paragraph self-assessment of what they can work on for future assignments. The class discussions model self-critical reflection on how we read and analyze sources and how we adjudicate among competing interpretations.

Goals and ELOs of “Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations”

GOAL 1: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

GOAL 2: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals’ experience within traditions and cultures.

Course subject & number

Enter your ELOs in the Table below, editing and removing rows as needed. There should be at least one ELO for each goal, and they should be numbered to correspond to the goal (e.g., ELO1.1 is the first ELO for Goal 1, ELO 2.2 would be the second ELO for the second goal).

For each ELOs, please identify and explain course assignments, readings, or other activities within this course that provide opportunity for students to attain the ELO. If the specific information is listed on the syllabus, it is appropriate to point to that document. The number of activities or emphasis within the course are expected to vary among ELOs. Examples from successful courses are shared below.

<p>ELO 1.1 Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.</p>	<p>The course explores how religious beliefs of one early Christian group influenced and changed the culture of wider Christianity and thus the Roman empire on several issues of historical and contemporary interest, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value of the created world • the roles of women and the importance (or not) of the household and family • ethnicity
<p>ELO 1.2 Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.</p>	<p>The course studies the impact of the Gnostics’ “big idea”—that the god who created this world is a lower hostile ruler and that true divinity utterly transcends this creation. This assertion and the opposition to it profoundly shaped the eventual orthodox teachings of Christianity, with lasting effects for European and West Asian cultures.</p> <p>Sample discussion/exam questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Christian theologians of the second century believed that somehow God is both one and multiple. Explain why they thought about God in this way and how the claims of the Gnostics shaped their views. Include in your answer Marcion, the Valentinians, and the proto-orthodox Irenaeus of Lyons. • Gnostic teaching challenged the early Christian belief that the salvation brought by Jesus included resurrection of the dead or “repose” of the dead. How is this concept understood in the <i>Gospel According to Thomas</i>, Valentinianism, and Irenaeus of Lyons? In each case you should place this idea within the context of the relevant overall theological perspective.
<p>ELO 1.3 Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.</p>	<p>Students investigate at least two such major interactions. First, they examine the emergence of the Christian sub-culture within Judaism, the interactions between them, and their gradual separation. The readings and class sessions listed for Aug 30–Sep 8, Sep 20 address this issue specifically. Second, they study how the Gnostic, Thomasine, and Valentinian Christian sub-cultures interacted with the wider Christian movement. This thread runs throughout the entire course, but it receives particular attention in the readings and class sessions listed for Sep 15, Oct 6, Oct 20, Nov 3, Nov 10–22. Students study how a more dominant culture came to label a sub-culture as “heresy.”</p>

	<p>Sample discussion/exam questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at passages where Paul discusses the Jewish Law, especially in Galatians chapter 3 and Romans chapters 3–7. Are his characterizations of the Law positive, negative, or a mix? How might they be taken in a “Gnostic” direction? • Consider especially chapters 1, 6, and 8–9 of John. How would you characterize the relationships between Jesus and God, between Jesus and other Jews, and between Jesus and the Jewish tradition (e.g. Moses)? • How would you characterize Basilides’s attitude toward Jews and the Jewish tradition? Which of his ideas do you find most interesting or puzzling? Which most closely resemble the <i>Secret Book</i>? • What does Justin Martyr mean by “heresy”? Why do Marcion and Valentinians qualify for this label in his view? • What rhetorical strategies does Irenaeus use to denigrate the “heretical” teachers and groups he describes? What practical measures does he recommend to isolate them? • Compare and contrast Origen’s view of church tradition and “orthodoxy” with that of Irenaeus.
<p>ELO 1.4 Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.</p>	<p>The course studies the changes and continuities within the Christian sub-culture (and thus within the wider Roman culture) from the first through the third centuries. Specific examples include doctrinal development, changes in authority structures and organizational forms, ideas about “orthodoxy” and “heresy.”</p> <p>Sample discussion/exam questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Marcion’s reading of Paul reflect the changing composition of Christian groups in the second century? • What signs do you see in Valentinus’s <i>Fragments</i> and <i>Summer Harvest</i> that he knew and revised the Gnostic myth and/or the <i>Gospel According to Thomas</i>? • Using <i>Gospel of Philip</i> and Clement’s <i>Excerpts</i>, try to figure out what rituals the Valentinians practiced and what they thought these rituals meant and accomplished. How did their practices alter earlier Christian practice?
<p>ELO 2.1 Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.</p>	<p>The course thematizes comparison among the diverse Christian groups of the first three centuries: the Gnostics, Thomas Christians, Valentinian Christians, and “proto-orthodox” Christians. It finds the explanations for similarities and differences in their diverse ways of appropriating their shared heritage of the Jewish Bible, the New Testament, and Platonist philosophy.</p> <p>Sample discussion/exam questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you see the influence of Plato’s <i>Timaeus</i> in the Gnostic <i>Secret Book of John</i>? What are the important contrasts between these two books on points where they overlap?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Philo reconcile the creation accounts in Genesis with the <i>Timaeus</i>? Compare his decisions with those in the <i>Secret Book</i>. • Compare Plato's <i>Symposium</i>, the Jewish <i>2 Enoch</i>, the Platonist <i>Didaskalikos</i>, and Gnostic works on the nature of <i>gnōsis</i> with God, how it is achieved, and who can get it. • Compare the <i>Gospel of Thomas</i> with the Gnostic literature we have read. What ideas are similar and different? Would you call <i>Thomas</i> "Gnostic"? • Compare and contrast Origen's view of church tradition with that of Irenaeus. • How does Origen understand God as both one and multiple? How is his view similar to and different from that of the Gnostics and Valentinians? • Compare and contrast Origen's views on the Bible and its interpretation with those of Ptolemy the Valentinian.
<p>ELO 2.2 Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues.</p>	<p>Gender is a thread that runs through the course, even when it is not visible on the syllabus. Gnostic and Valentinian myths feature immortals and divine beings who are gendered male, female, and androgynous: the significance of such gendering receives constant scrutiny. In turn, proto-orthodox teachers emphasized the exclusively masculine nature of the divine (Father and Son). Likewise, it appears that women played significant roles in Gnostic and Valentinian groups, giving rise to sexually slanderous charges from their opponents. Race and ethnicity are complicated issues in the study of antiquity, but they too are a thread throughout the course because Gnostics called themselves "the immovable race" and used ethnic categories to plot their religious world (e.g., kinship genealogies). These rhetorical strategies appear throughout the course and receive careful analysis.</p> <p>Sample discussion/exam questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider <i>Gospel of Thomas</i> 21, 22, 37, and 114. How would you put together the references to stripping naked, being children, making two one, and male and female? • What are the <i>Timaeus</i>'s distinct teachings about the creation and nature of this universe, the origin of the human soul and body, sex and gender? • How does Philo handle issues of sex and gender? • Looking back at all the Gnostic literature we have read, how would you characterize the function(s) of gender in Gnostic thought? • What does the <i>Gospel of Judas</i> mean by "the mighty race" and "the corrupt races"? How does racial terminology support a sectarian identity? • Both <i>Reality</i> and <i>Revelation</i> call the saved people "offspring" or a "seed." How do their presentations of this idea differ? • Does the use of the term "immovable race" suggest that one's fate is genetically determined?