

EARLY CHRISTIAN STUDIES CERTIFICATE

Coordinators: Professor George Kalantzis, Associate Professor Gregory Lee

The Certificate in Early Christian studies is an interdisciplinary program that fosters the study of early Christianity as a source of wisdom for contemporary issues. It provides the most rigorous and integrative academic opportunity at Wheaton College for undergraduates to explore how theology relates to the world today.

Early Christianity is the most fertile source of theological reflection and spiritual renewal after the Bible. It marks the era of the martyrs, the monastics, the formation of orthodoxy, the conversion of the Roman Empire, and the synthesis of theology and classical learning. Christians throughout the centuries have drawn on the early church to generate new expressions of faithfulness. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer were all students of early Christianity who appropriated its teachings and practices to face the challenges of their day. The early church continues to attract interest across Christian traditions for how it embodied intellectual creativity, spiritual vitality, and concrete action in the midst of great social and political change.

The Certificate's academic home is the School of Biblical and Theological Studies, but it draws from several other departments, including Art, Anthropology, History, Christian Education and Ministry, Modern and Classical Languages, and Sociology. Students from any major are eligible for the Certificate.

The Certificate requires 24 total credits. All students are required to complete 2 credits of a cross-disciplinary course or experience, and to take a 4-credit seminar called Ancient Faith for the Modern World. The Certificate culminates in a 2-credit Early Christianity Senior Seminar where students will participate in the publication of annotated early Christian texts through a unique collaboration between The Wheaton Center for Early Christian Studies and a major publisher.

Core Values:

Academic Rigor: Wisdom and insight emerge from sustained reflection. The Center trains students to study the early church according to the highest scholarly standards.

Focus and Breadth: The Center expands students' proficiencies by concentrating their attention on a specific period of history. As students explore interconnections across a range of early Christian phenomena, they develop interdisciplinary skills and creative perspective to address contemporary issues.

Theology and Practice: The early church faced many of the same challenges Christians encounter today. By integrating action and reflection, the early church modeled how Christians can live out their faith in the present.

Human Flourishing: The goal of Christian thought and practice is life in God in all its fullness. By attending to the whole person, the early church nurtured the kind of formation Christian liberal arts also seeks to develop. The Center especially promotes the restoration of human flourishing in places of hardship and need.

Requirements

Requirements for a Certificate in Early Christian Studies are 24 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
Core Requirements		10
BITH 371 or BITH 372	Early Christianity: From Rome to Byzantium Historical Theology	4
BITH 346		4
BITH 491	Early Christianity Senior Seminar	2
Cross-Disciplinary		2
To prepare for an integrative project through the Early Christianity Integration Seminar, students must complete a 2-credit cross-disciplinary course or experience. Students may fulfill this requirement through a non-BITH course, an internship, or a global or experiential opportunity. This requirement must be completed before or concurrently with the Integration Seminar. Approval is required. ¹		
Electives		12
Students must complete at least 4 credits in each of two areas: Doctrinal and Textual. Students may apply for the opportunity to write a thesis for 2 or 4 elective credits (BITH 499).		
<i>Doctrinal</i>		4
BITH 382	Church	2
BITH 385	Triune God	4
BITH 388	Person and Work of Christ	4
BITH 389	Holy Spirit and Last Things	4
BITH 396	Roman Catholic Theology	4
BITH 398	Eastern Orthodox Theology	4
<i>Textual</i>		4
BITH 327	Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers	2
BITH 483	Augustine	4
BITH 484	Thomas Aquinas	4
GREK 342	NT and Patristics	4
GREK 343	Septuagint	4
<i>Other</i>		
BITH 354	Women in the World of the NT	2
ARCH 325 or ARCH 326	Archaeological Field Work Archaeological Field Work: Tel Shimron, Israel	4
ART 352	Medieval & Byzantine Art	4
PHIL 311	History of Philosophy - Ancient and Medieval	4
<i>Other - approval required²</i>		
BITH 377	Topics in Christian Thought (Doctrinal or Textual)	2
BITH 393	Topics in Christian Thought (Doctrinal or Textual)	4
BITH 489	Advanced Topics in Christian Thought (Doctrinal or Textual)	2
BITH 482	Advanced Topics in Christian Thought (Doctrinal or Textual)	4
BITH 381	Topics in Spiritual Classics (Textual)	2
BITH 394	Topics in Christian History (HP; Textual)	4
BITH 339	Topics in Perennial Theological Questions (PI; Doctrinal)	4
GREK 334	Advanced Koine Reading (Textual)	2,4
GREK 487	Topics in Greek Language and Literature (Textual)	2
GREK 489	Topics in Greek Language and Literature (Textual)	4
GREK 495	Independent Reading (Textual)	1-4

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LATN 333	Advanced Latin Readings (Textual)	2,4
LATN 487	Topics in Latin Language and Literature (Textual)	2
LATN 489	Topics in Latin Language and Literature (Textual)	4
LATN 495	Independent Study (Textual)	1-4
PHIL 454	Historical Seminar (Textual)	2
PHIL 455	Historical Seminar (Textual)	4

¹ Students are encouraged to consider opportunities in the following contexts:

- Wheaton in the Holy Lands
- Wheaton in Israel (Tel Shimron Archaeological Survey)
- Human Needs and Global Resources
- Peace and Conflict Studies Certificate
- Wheaton Center for Faith, Politics, and Economics
- Wheaton in Chicago

² With approval of the coordinator of the Certificate program.