

EARLY CHRISTIAN STUDIES CERTIFICATE

Co-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 22 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.

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

Early Christian Studies Certificate: 22 Credits

Code	Title	Credits
Requirements		
<i>Core</i>		8
BITH 346	Ancient Faith for the Modern World	
BITH 371	Early Christianity: From Rome to Byzantium	
Extended Integrative Paper		
<i>Cross-Disciplinary</i>		2
To prepare for their integrative paper in Ancient Faith for the Modern World, 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 Ancient Faith for the Modern World. Approval is required. ¹		
<i>Electives</i>		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	
BITH 385	Triune God	
BITH 388	Person and Work of Christ	
BITH 389	Holy Spirit and Last Things	
BITH 396	Roman Catholic Theology	
BITH 398	Eastern Orthodox Theology	
<i>Textual</i>		4
BITH 327	Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers	
BITH 483	Augustine	
BITH 484	Thomas Aquinas	
GREK 342	NT and Patristics	
GREK 343	Septuagint	
<i>Other</i>		
BITH 354	Women in the World of the NT	
ARCH 325	Archaeological Field Work	
or ARCH 326Archaeological Field Work: Tel Shimron, Israel		
ART 352	Medieval & Byzantine Art	
PHIL 311	History of Philosophy - Ancient and Medieval	
<i>Other (approval required)</i> ²		
BITH 339	Topics in Perennial Theological Questions	
BITH 377	Topics in Christian Thought	
BITH 381	Topics in Spiritual Classics	
BITH 393	Topics in Christian Thought	
BITH 394	Topics in Christian History	
BITH 482	Advanced Topics in Christian Thought	
BITH 489	Advanced Topics in Christian Thought	
GREK 334	Advanced Koine Reading	
GREK 487	Topics in Greek Language and Literature	
GREK 489	Topics in Greek Language and Literature	
GREK 495	Independent Reading	
LATN 333	Advanced Latin Readings	
LATN 487	Topics in Latin Language and Literature	
LATN 489	Topics in Latin Language and Literature	
LATN 495	Independent Study	

2 Early Christian Studies Certificate

PHIL 454	Historical Seminar
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¹ Students are encouraged to consider opportunities in the following contexts:

- Wheaton in the Holy Lands
- Tel Shimron Excavations
- Semester in Jerusalem
- Human Needs and Global Resources
- Peace and Conflict Studies Certificate
- Wheaton Center for Faith, Politics, and Economics
- Wheaton in Chicago

² With approval from the Certificate program coordinator.