

**Early Christian Writings:
Compassion, Witness and Agency**



Grade Distribution: RSRU 2610-004 Spring 08
Professor Jonah Friedman

Class: Dealy 306 **Time:** Mon & Thurs 2:30-3:45
Office: Duane 142 Thurs 3:45-5:00PM (by apt)

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Through engaged reading, discussion, interpretation, critical and creative reflection, we aim to explore in these texts many of the roots that inform contemporary Christian understanding of free-will, sin and redemption, and faith.

Grading distribution:

Scores in three performance areas will determine your course grade:

- 1) 55% *In-class writing; Individual learning and readiness:* Responsiveness, attendance, preparedness, participation, etc.
- 2) 20% *Focus project presentation* (Development, relevance to course, presentation, etc.)
- 3) 25% *Course final exam* (May 5, 2008 – content to be determined through class activity)

Note: Your attendance at every class meeting is essential.

Absences impact the class, and without prior agreement or appropriate documentation, they reduce your grade.

During and outside of class, we will periodically engage in three types of writing response,

- a) 10-minute directed writing: aims to connect between the prior class readings to the present
- b) 10-minute creative reflective writing: aims to draw out key issues through interpretative, story-telling, and or reflection.
- c) Homiletic writing relevant to the liturgical cycle.

In class contribution /participation and writing is evaluated according to the following holistic criteria:

1. (A) Highest – consistently does all or almost of the following:
 - a. Appropriately interprets evidence, statements, questions, etc.
 - b. Identifies the salient arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con
 - c. Thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates major alternative points of view
 - d. Generalizes alternative explanations of phenomena or event
 - e. Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons
 - f. Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead
2. (B) Next highest - does most of the following:
 - a. Appropriately interprets evidence, statements, questions, etc.
 - b. Thinks about issues by identifying relevant arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con
 - c. Offers analysis and evaluation of obvious alternative points of view
 - d. Generates alternative explanations of phenomena or event
 - e. Justifies (by using) some results or procedures, explains reasons
 - f. Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead
3. (C+) Above average - does most of the following:
 - a. Describes events, people, and places with some supporting details from the source
 - b. Makes connections to the sources, either personal or analytic
 - c. Demonstrates a basic ability to analyze, interpret, and formulate inferences
 - d. States or briefly includes more than one perspective in discussing literature, experiences, and points of view of others
 - e. Takes some risks by occasionally questioning sources or by stating interpretations and predictions
 - f. Demonstrates little evidence of rethinking or refinement of one's own perspective
4. (C) Average - does most of the following:
 - a. Responds by retelling or graphically showing events or facts
 - b. Makes personal connections or identifies connections within or between sources in a limited way, or connects with earlier texts.
 - c. Discusses literature, experiences, and points of view of others in terms of own experience
 - d. Responds to sources at factual or literal level
 - e. Includes little or no evidence or refinement of initial response or shift in dualistic thinking
 - f. Demonstrates difficulty with organization and thinking is uneven
5. (C-) Below average - does most of the following:
 - a. Misinterprets evidence, statements, questions, etc. ignoring textual support and or evidence to the contrary
 - b. Fails to identify strong, relevant counter arguments
 - c. Draws unwarranted or fallacious conclusions
 - d. Justifies few results or procedures, seldom explains reasons
 - e. Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.
6. (NI) Needs polish - consistently does all or almost all of the following
 - a. Offers biased interpretations of evidence, statements, questions, information, or the points of view of others
 - b. Fails to identify or hastily dismisses strong, relevant counterarguments
 - c. Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view. Argues using fallacious or irrelevant reasons and unwarranted claims
 - d. Does not justify results or procedures, nor explains reasons