

St Vladimir's Seminary
Elective Course Descriptions – Spring 2025

BIBLICAL LANGUAGES 200

Credits: 3 credits

DR JOHN BARNET

Reading Biblical Greek. This course completes the introduction to the fundamentals of New Testament Greek grammar. By the end of this semester students should be able to: 1) recognize the distinguishing lexical features of verbs, nouns, and adjectives; 2) identify their grammatical form and syntactical function; 3) recall basic vocabulary, based on the frequency of occurrence in the New Testament; 4) competently read New Testament Greek aloud, using modern pronunciation; and 5) parse and translate selected passages of the Greek New Testament. *Prerequisite: Biblical Languages 100 or permission of instructor.* [Required course for Theological Scholarship & Research concentration]

Monday, 9:15a–12:00p**BIBLICAL LANGUAGES 301**

Credits: 3 credits

DR MICHAEL LEGASPI

Introduction to Biblical Hebrew. Advanced scriptural study requires knowledge of biblical languages. Though Greek has been preeminent in the Orthodox churches, knowledge of Hebrew is essential to Old Testament study. This course introduces students to the language of the Old Testament. Topics include Hebrew phonology and morphology, as well as basic vocabulary and the fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew syntax. By the end of the course, students will be able to read simple biblical passages in the Hebrew, consult Hebrew grammars and lexicons intelligently, and make better sense of references to Hebrew words in scholarly literature. *Prerequisite: None*

Wednesday, 2:00–4:45p**CHURCH HISTORY 361**

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR ANTHONY ROEBER

Orthodox Christianity in North America. This course, structured along the lines of a graduate colloquium because of the mix of in-person and remote meetings, is limited to eight students. It follows the chapters of the book *Orthodox Christians and the Rights Revolution in America*. We examine different kinds of rights claims, pluralism, marriage and gender, and four shifting stages of mission and evangelism from the Russian Mission to the First Peoples. The course traces the dilemmas faced by both Oriental and Eastern Orthodox created by “diaspora” identities. We engage the debates over autocephaly, and the inadequate number of bishops, priests, and deacons in both Oriental and Eastern Orthodox communities. The Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor’s response to the challenges of secularism, the Orthodox philosopher Charles Malik’s analysis, and the Reformed philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff’s critiques of rights claims in society at large and within the Orthodox Church also inform our discussions. The course requires rigorous reading, active participation, and writing a critical paper of no less than 20 double-spaced typewritten pages on a topic to be approved by the instructor.

Prerequisite: Church History 110. [Two in person class sessions during the first week of classes, six weeks of synchronous online education, a 14-hour onsite intensive week during March 11-15, followed by one week of synchronous online education]

Wednesday, 9:15a–12:00p**CHURCH HISTORY 420**

Credits: 3 credits

DR IONUȚ-ALEXANDRU TUDORIE

Confessing the Orthodox Faith (15th-18th centuries). A seminar course focused on a close reading of the most authoritative texts produced after the Fall of Constantinople (May 29, 1453) and during the long process of building confessional identity of the Eastern Orthodox Church (16th-17th centuries), including: “The Confession of Faith of Gennadios II” (1455/1456), “The Replies of Jeremias II to the Augsburg Confession”

(1576/1579/1581), “The Confession of Faith of Metrophanes Kritopoulos” (1625), “The Minutes of the Synod in Constantinople” (1638) in response to “The Eastern Confession of the Christian Faith” by Kyrillos Loukaris (1629/1633), “The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church” by Peter Mohila (1638/1642), “The Confession of Dositheos II” (1672), and “The Theological Dialogue between the Nonjuror Anglicans and the Eastern Church” (1716-1725). The scrutiny into this long process of confession-building of the Eastern Orthodox Church would reveal the obvious shift from the Byzantine-Latin polemical discourse to the “symbolic books” that explored new ways of “answering the questions that were never asked before.” *Limited Enrollment. Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of the Academic Dean.*

Monday, 2:00–4:45p

ETHICS 305

Credits: 3 credits

DR MATTHEW S. VEST

Christian Morality and Bioethics. This course examines topics in bioethics within the context of the canon of faith in the Orthodox tradition. Students will be introduced to basic concepts and language pertaining to issues such as: marriage and sexuality, abortion, IVF, surrogacy, genetic engineering, transgenderism, physician assisted suicide, end of life ethics, and more. Orthodox ethical teaching, stemming from theological presuppositions, will be contrasted with common secular theories of bioethics. Throughout the course, the aim is not to develop a list of ethical norms or theoretical principles external to the Church but rather to seek moral-ascetical paths of virtue amidst the challenges and opportunities of highly technologized modern medicine. *Prerequisite: None. Hybrid (online-residential) course, beginning online Monday, January 13 The onsite intensive will be held Monday, March 10 through Friday, March 14. Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.*

LITURGICAL MUSIC 311

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. NICHOLAS A. FINE

Introduction to Byzantine Notation. This class is an introduction to the neumatic notational system of the Psaltic Art of the Orthodox Church (Byzantine chant) in English. Students will learn all of the symbols necessary for reading Byzantine chant scores, and will receive an introduction to modal theory and ornamentation practice. This is a practical class, focused on learning how to chant from notation; it is not a theoretical or historical overview of Byzantine chant. Students will be chanting at every class session, and will be required to submit recordings of themselves each week. Students are therefore required to meet briefly with the instructor and demonstrate current vocal ability in order to gain his permission to enroll in the class. *Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.*

Tuesday, 9:15a–12:00p

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY 426

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR VITALY PERMIAKOV & THE REV. DN DR HARRISON RUSSIN

Hymnography of the Triodion. The famous principle formulated by Anton Baumstark (d. 1948) posits that the older liturgical usages are better preserved in more solemn liturgical seasons. The corpus of Byzantine liturgical hymnography, known as the Triodion (or in the Slavic usage, ‘Lenten Triodion’), contains the wealth of ancient hymnographic and liturgical material, illuminating the theology and piety of the Byzantine Orthodox church as it unfolds and is reflected on in one of the most solemn seasons of the year – Lent and Holy Week. This course investigates the origins of the Triodion as a liturgical book, the formation of the various poetic and hymnographic traditions which it comprises, and the connections between theology, liturgy, hymnography, and music that are present in the text of the Triodion. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of the Academic Dean.*

Wednesday, 2:00–4:45p

PATRISTICS 332

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR BOGDAN BUCUR

Ascetical Theologies: Evagrius and the Ps-Macarian Homilies. The Evagrian corpus and the writings circulating under the name of Macarius the Great are generally recognized as fundamental for early Christian and later Byzantine ascetical theology. Although this class will consider the theological background of these writings (Origen, Shepherd of Hermas, Odes of Solomon), the circumstances of their composition, and their reception in both Church and academia, the largest portion of the course will consist in reading and discussing the relevant primary texts. *Prerequisite: Patristics 101 and permission of the instructor.*

Wednesday, 2:00–4:45p**PATRISTICS 380**

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR VARGHESE M. DANIEL

Introduction to the West Syriac Fathers. This course offers an introduction about the life and teachings of the West Syriac Fathers, including Ephrem the Syrian, Jacob of Serugh, Severus of Antioch, Philoxenos of Mabbug, and Isaac the Syrian. Students will learn their spiritual and theological writings and contributions especially to worship and liturgy of Syriac Fathers. All are welcome. *Jurisdictional requirement for M.Div. candidates of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. Prerequisite: None.*

Monday, 2:00–4:45p**PHILOSOPHY 301**

Credits: 3 credits

DR MICHAEL LEGASPI

Introduction to Christian Philosophy. The aim of this course is to introduce students to the study of philosophy by considering key texts, figures, and schools of thought in classical antiquity. Not only is ancient Greece considered the point of origin for philosophy as many people know it today; it was also the source of intellectual traditions, including key concepts and vocabulary, that would play important roles in the development of patristic thought. For this reason, the study of ancient philosophy has particular relevance to the study of Orthodox theology. The course will examine the early history of philosophy, both in its own right and with a view to later developments in Christian thought. The course begins by exploring the nature of philosophy and its relation to Orthodoxy before turning to the works of Plato. We will discuss several Platonic dialogues (Republic, Timaeus, Phaedo, and others) before moving on to selections from the works of Aristotle, Stoics, and representatives of Middle and Neoplatonism. *Prerequisite: None.*

Wednesday, 9:15a–12:00p**SACRED ARTS 343**

Credits: 3 credits

DR PETER BOUTENEFF & DR ROSSITZA SCHROEDER

Creation in the Church's Art and Theology. In this course we will study how the arts of the Orthodox Church consider and portray the redemptive work of Christ as pertaining not only to humans, but also to the whole cosmos. The writings of the fathers and contemporary theologians, and the visual, poetic, and sung arts of the Church will be shown to inform each other to elicit a more profound understanding of the relationship between God, humanity, and the rest of creation, including flora, fauna, and all matter. *Prerequisite: None.*

Monday, 9:15a–12:00p**SPIRITUALITY 377**

Credits: 3 Credits

THE REV. DR ANTHONY GILBERT

Literatures of Martyria. Whether in the early centuries or the modern era, the Orthodox Church is (must be) a suffering Church. Tertullian said that the seed of the Church's growth is the blood of Christians, but much ink has also been spilled. This course will explore a number of literary genres associated with the spiritual practice of bearing witness (*martyria*), understood broadly as suffering for Christ, including epistolary exhortation, ascetic instruction, liturgical prayer, hagiography, *acta martyrum*, apocalyptic vision, lyric poetry, prose fiction, and radio, seminar, and conversational transcripts. Such literatures of *martyria* strive to elucidate, defend, and

reflect on acts of suffering as forms of faithful witness. Remarkably, those who open themselves to following the pattern of the Lord's voluntary death often embody unique spiritual qualities: joy, courage, love. Immersing ourselves in the primary (& sometimes *samizdat*) literature - from the early centuries to confessors under the Soviets - and taking side glances at theologies of sacrifice, historiographies of ecclesial growth, and theorizations of non-violent resistance, this course will not only unpack the nexus of spiritual and apologetic texts surrounding *martyria*, but also explore the ways that such literature, and the diverse spectrum of holy figures whom it reveals, can prove pastorally fruitful today in secular contexts in which faithful Orthodox witness increasingly bears personal and social costs. *Prerequisite: None. Hybrid (asynchronous online-residential) course, beginning online Monday, January 13. The onsite intensive will be held Monday, March 10 through Friday, March 14. Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.*

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 422

Credits: 3 credits

Dr Eugenia Torrance

Theology of Creation. This course considers contemporary questions in the doctrine of creation with a special emphasis on the relationship between theology and the sciences. We will begin with methodological questions, comparing theological ways of knowing nature (through revelation and natural contemplation) with scientific ones. We will attempt to apply methodological insights to three controversial topics in contemporary Orthodox theology: the eternity of the world, the Fall, and miracles. For each topic, we will begin with classic Patristic authors (Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Maximus the Confessor, and Gregory Palamas) and bring them into dialogue with contemporary Orthodox theologians such as Georges Florovsky, Sergius Bulgakov, Dumitru Staniloae, John Zizioulas, and Christopher Knight. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of the Academic Dean.*

Thursday, 2:00–4:45p. Online and in person, with scheduled Friday morning in-person sessions.