Eastern Christian Doctrines
RGT3563H

Click here for the full
RGT3563/6563H syllabus (PDF)
for the next academic year. The
materials contained on this web-site
complement the full syllabus.

Brief Syllabus

*** N.B. Offered every second year. Next offering: 2006/7. ***

Description: A comprehensive synthesis of primarily the Byzantine
Orthodox doctrinal tradition. Themes include: the sources of Tradition,
creation, eschatology, anthropology, soteriology, Christ, the Holy
Spirit, the Trinity, liturgy and sacraments, ecclesiology and East-West
ecumenism. Lectures, seminars, short papers, research paper.
(Offered every second year). Prerequisite: Three courses from the
Theological or Historical Departments.

Course Evaluation, Requirements & Due Dates:
TBA

a & b. Reflection papers:
Reflection papers are based on the reading or topic listed below, and
should be between 1.5-2 pages. See "essay requirements" below.
   i. First paper: Due: TBA
   ii. Second paper: Due: TBA

c. Research Essay: TBA
The research paper is to be 8-10 pages, and should conform to the
"essay requirements" listed below. The essay topic can be either on
the theological history and development of iconography, or a
theological interpretation of any icon(s) of your choosing. Keep in
mind that such an icon(s) should yield enough information for an 8-10
page essay. Please provide a black-and-white photocopy of the icon
and its source/location. Due: Week 11 (Nov. 27).
d. In-class participation in lectures and tutorials:
Lectures will be the first hour of the class, while the tutorials will
immediately follow the lecture. Students will be expected to discuss
and critique the readings during the lecture and tutorial sessions.
Essay Requirements:
Research Essays must include a title page, an introductory/thesis paragraph, the main body of text (ideas, arguments, critique), endnote or footnotes, a concluding/summary paragraph, and a bibliography. The research essays are composed of synthesis and critical analysis of a theme/idea/event in systematic theology and/or historical theology, and are presented from an objective point of view. The level of discourse for research essays is "systematic theology." All written work is to be typed and double-spaced, and is based in 12 pt. font. Reflection Papers include the same elements as a research paper, with the addition of some subjective (personal, spiritual and pastoral) reflections, but no title page and bibliography.

Course Texts:
2. Selected articles and chapters (course-pack; more info in first class).

On-line resources:
2. On-line Powerpoint summary presentation of the history and ecumenical relations of the various Eastern churches (from my presentation at the World Youth Day, Toronto).
3. Selected images of icons used in course lectures.
4. Table Comparison of Iconophile and Iconoclast doctrines.
5. Information on assignments and researching.
6. Other course syllabi and links to resources in Eastern Christianity (via the Wabash Centre).

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Introduction
- methodology and researching in Eastern Christianity; the churches of Eastern Orthodoxy.
2. The Sources of Tradition
   - the nature of revelation; foundations; biblical exegesis and inspiration; ecumenical councils and canon law; development of doctrine.

3. Creation, Anthropology & Eschatology (I)
   - Genesis; Enuma Elish/Gilgamesh myths; the fall and sin; divine energies-grace; man-woman and their relationship to God and the world; eschatology; the economy of salvation.

4. Creation, Anthropology & Eschatology (II)
   - continuation of creation themes; the notion of person in patristic theology; Maximus the Confessor; being in communion.

5. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (I)
   - the early councils; the Assyrian and Oriental Orthodox traditions; Christology; Mary as Theotokos; the gifts of the Spirit; relationship between christology and pneumatology.

6. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (II)
   - [continued as above]; filioque.

7. The Triune God
   - the development of triadology in the early church; the notion of person; divine energy/grace; trinitarian communion; hesychasm.

8. Sacramental and Liturgical Theology (I)
   - the notion of sacrament-mysterion; the liturgical cycle and lex orandi-lex credendi; icons.

9. Sacramental and Liturgical Theology (II)
   - relationship to Baptism and Chrismation; eucharistic ecclesiology.

10. Ecclesiology (I)
    - the development of institutions; canonical sources; papal and patriarchal primacies; eucharistic or communion ecclesiology;
11. Ecclesiology (II)
- as above.

12. East-West Ecumenism
- the historical estrangement between East and West; attempts at reunion in the middle ages; the Eastern Catholic churches; modern Orthodox-Catholic ecumenical dialogue.

13. Conclusion
- modern orthodox authors and their theology; summary of the course.