



# Eastern Christian Doctrines

RGT3563H

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[course syllabi](#)

[assignments](#)

[www links](#)

[home](#)

## 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. For a formatting reference guide, see: Kate L. Turabian. A Manual For Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations. Chicago: Chicago, 1973. For a guide to style, grammar and composition in general, see: William Strunk. The Elements of Style. Rev., intro. and a chapter on writing by E.B. White. 2. ed. New York: Macmillan, 1972. Or, Joseph M. Williams. Style: Toward Clarity and Grace. Chicago: Chicago, 1990.

## **Course Texts:**

1. John Meyendorff. Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes. [BT] NY: Fordham, 1983.
2. Selected articles and chapters (course-pack; more info in first class).

## **On-line resources:**

1. On-line Powerpoint summary presentation of [major figures in the Eastern Orthodox Christian Tradition](#) (from my presentation at World Youth Day, Toronto).
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;

mission; communion of saints & Mary.

## **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.