



Roots of the Orthodox Tradition RGH2430H

Click here for the full [RGT2430H syllabus](#) (PDF) for the next academic year. The materials contained on this web-site complement the full syllabus. [*Being revised* for Jan. 2005].

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BRIEF SYLLABUS

Outline:

A study of the life and works of major patristic authors who shaped and influenced the Eastern Christian tradition, including Ignatius, Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, the Cappadocians, Maximus the Confessor, Symeon the New Theologian, Nicholas Cabasilas, Gregory Palamas. Lectures-seminar, reflection papers, major paper. [Cross-listed to Theology].

Tentative Course Evaluation, Requirements & Due Dates:

- a. Reflection paper #1 = 25%
- b. Class Presentation = 10%
- c. Research Essay = 45%
- d. In-Class/Seminar participation 20%

Course Texts:

1. John Meyendorff. *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. NY: Fordham, 1979.
2. Jaroslav Pelikan. *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*. Vol. 2. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Chicago: Chicago, 1974.
3. Course pack photocopies & on-line readings (more details at first class).

On-line resources:

1. On-line Powerpoint summary presentation of [major figures in the Eastern Orthodox 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 patristics; historical-critical method; Tradition and doctrine; NT witness; kerygma and doctrine.

2. Apostolic & Apologetic Literature- (0-150)

- Ignatius: ministry and ecclesiological themes in Eastern Christianity; Irenaeus: christology, cosmology and soteriology.

Maps: Review this map of [the growth of Christianity](#) and this [early Byzantium map](#) (PDF) to give you a sense of the world of Jesus, and the early Christian writers. It is *very important* for you to get a sense of "ancient geography."

3. Alexandria: Clement, Origen, and Athanasius

- Origen & Scripture, philosophy and cosmology; Athanasius and christological terminology; the Imperial Church; the early councils; early monasticism.

4. The Armenian and Syriac Traditions (350-400) and John Chrysostom

- Aphrahat; Bardaisan; Ephraim the Syrian; Jacob of Edessa; Philoxenus.

5. Cappadocians and Their Influence (350-400)

- the Cappadocians and Hellenism; christology & pneumatology; spirituality; eschatology; Macrina.

6. Christology Unfolds, the Theotokos and Eastern Schisms (431-500)

- Theodore Mopseustia; Nestorius; Ephesus (431); Cyril; Chalcedon (451); modern Assyrian and Oriental Orthodox churches.

7. Pseudo-Dionysius, Later Councils and Maximus Confessor (500-700)

- monotheletism and cosmology; Constantinople II (553) and III (680).

8. Iconoclastic Crisis and the Triumph of Orthodoxy at Nicea II (700-787)

- John of Damascus; Theodore the Studite; Theodore Abu Q'urrah; icons and christology.

9. Ninth to Eleventh Centuries

- Photius, the filioque and primacy; crises in E & W; importance of Byzantine monasticism.

10. The Later Byzantine Hesychastic & Liturgical Traditions (1100-1400)

- Symeon the New Theologian; Gregory Palamas; the sacking of Constantinople.

11. Attempts at Ecclesial Communion & the Last Flourishing of Byzantium (-1453)

- Nicholas Cabasilas; councils of Lyons, Florence and the fall of Byzantium.

12. The Spread of Christianity to Kievan-Rus' (800-1600)

- Cyril & Methodius; the conversion of Rus'; encounter and unions with the west.

13. Conclusion

- overview of themes; later developments.