ROOTS OF THE
ORTHODOX TRADITION (RGH2430HF)

PROF. JAROSLAV SKIRA
REGIS COLLEGE

office hours: drop-in
(appointment preferred)
416.922.5474 x.258
jerry.skira@utoronto.ca
www.utoronto.ca/regis/jskira

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,
Simeon the New Theologian, Nicholas Cabasilas, Gregory Palamas. Lectures-
seminar, reflection papers, major paper. [Cross-listed to the Theology
Department].

Course texts:
1. John Meyendorff. Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes. NY:
3. Selected photocopies [details to be announced in class].

The textbooks available through Crux Bookstore [behind Wycliffe College] at an approx.
10-20% discount.

Course Evaluation, Requirements & Due Dates:
 a. Reflection paper #1 20%
b. Reflection paper #2 20%
c. Research Essay 40%
d. In-Class/Seminar participation 20%

a Reflection Paper #1: Due: The day of the corresponding lecture/tutorial reading.
The reflection paper is to be based on both the lecture and primary source readings for
only one of the Weeks between #2 to #6 (you choose) and should be between 1.5-2
pages. See "essay requirements" below.

a Reflection Paper #2: Due: The day of the corresponding lecture/tutorial reading.
The reflection paper is to be based on both the lecture and primary source readings for
only one of the Weeks between #7 to #12 (you choose) and should be between 1.5-2
pages. See "essay requirements" below.

c. Research Essay: Due: Week # 11 (Dec 1).
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 theology of an
author(s), theological doctrine(s), or event(s) from the period under study.
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.

**Advanced Degree student requirements:** All of the above, but with a research essay of 15-18 pages.

**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. The goal of these is to get you to think pastorally and creatively, and to say the most in the least amount of space. Do not forget the "reflection" aspect!


**COURSE OUTLINE**

1. Introduction
   - methodology and researching in patristics; tradition and doctrine; NT witness; kerygma and doctrine.

   **Note:** There are a number of reference works on Eastern Orthodox Christianity (and which I don’t repeat for each section). These should be consulted for additional information and bibliographic entries, not only for each individual author, but also for concepts and definitions. They are:


2. Apostolic & Apologetic Literature—The Beginnings of the Church (0-150)
- Ignatius: ministry and ecclesiological themes in Eastern Christianity; Irenaeus: christology, cosmology and soteriology.

**Readings:**

**Primary:**
- Irenaeus. *Against the Heresies*. Book II.9-11; Book 3.1-5.1.

**Additional Selected Sources:**
3. Alexandria: Clement, Origen, and Athanasius
- Origen & Scripture, philosophy and cosmology; Athanasius and christological terminology; the Imperial Church; the early councils; early monasticism.

Readings:

Primary:
Athanasius. The Incarnation of the Word of God. Chp. 1.1-5; Chp. 2.6-9; Chp. 3.11-13, 16-18.

Additional Selected Sources:
Florovsky, G. "Origen, Eusebius and the Iconoclast Controversy." Church History 19 (1950) 3-22.

4. The Armenian and Syriac Traditions (350-400) and John Chrysostom
- Aphrahat; Bardaisan; Ephraim the Syrian; Jacob of Edessa; Philoxenus.

Readings:

Primary:

Additional Selected Sources:


5. Cappadocians and Their Influence (350-400)
- the Cappadocians and Hellenism; christology & pneumatology; spirituality; eschatology; Macrina.

Readings:


Primary:


Additional Selected Sources:


Livingstone, Elizabeth A, ed. *Athanasius and His Opponents, Cappadocian Fathers, Other Greek Writers after Nicea*. Studia patristica 32. Louvain: Peeters, 1997. [conference proceedings with a variety of essays on the Cappadocians].


6. *Christology Unfolds, the Theotokos and Eastern Schisms (431-500)*
   - Theodore Mopseustia; Nestorius; Ephesus (431); Cyril; Chalcedon (451); modern Assyrian and Oriental Orthodox churches.

**Readings:**


**Primary:**


**Additional Selected Sources:**


7. Pseudo-Dionysius, the Later Councils and Maximus the Confessor (500-700)
- monotheletism and cosmology; Constantinople II (553) and III (680).

Readings:

Primary:

Additional Selected Sources:
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.

Readings:
Meyendorff. *Byzantine Theology*. Chp 3: "Iconoclastic Crisis."

Primary:

Additional Selected Sources:
Baggley, John. *Festival Icons for the Christian Year*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's, 1999.


Florovsky, G. "Origen, Eusebius and the Iconoclast Controversy." *Church History* 19 (1950) 3-22.


9. Ninth to Eleventh Centuries
- Photius, the *filioque* and primacy; crises in E & W; importance of Byzantine monasticism.

Readings:

Primary:

Additional Selected Sources:

10. The Later Byzantine Hesychastic & Liturgical Traditions (1100-1400)  
- Symeon the New Theologian; Gregory Palamas; the sacking of Constantinople.

Readings:

Primary:

Additional Selected Sources:
11. Attempts at Ecclesial Communion & the Last Flourishing of Byzantium (-1453)
- Nicholas Cabasilas; councils of Lyons, Florence and the fall of Byzantium.

Readings:
Meyendorff. Byzantine Theology. Chp 8: "Encounter With the West."
(cont'd: 280-289).

Primary:

Additional Selected Sources:


13. The Spread of Christianity to Kievan-Rus' (800-1600) & Conclusion
- Cyril & Methodius; the conversion of the Slavs; encounter and unions with the West; overview of themes; later developments.

Readings:

[Optional Readings on Slavic Christianity]:

Additional Selected Sources:
Runciman, Steven. *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarch of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence*. Cambridge:


SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

PRIMARY SOURCES - COLLECTIONS OF WORKS

Christian Classics Ethereal Library: http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ [note: there are some typographical errors with the texts].
The Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann, 1914-.
Sources chrétiennes [SC]. Paris: Cerf, 1942-present. [indexed according to author; French trans. of Latin/Greek texts].

SECONDARY SOURCES

Behr-Siegel, Elisabeth. The Place Of The Heart: An Introduction to Orthodox Spirituality. Trans. Steven Bingham ; with a contribution "The power of the name, the Jesus prayer in Orthodox spirituality" by Bishop Kallistos Ware of Diokleia. Torrance, Calif.: Oakwood, 1992.
Behr-Siegel, Elizabeth & Ware, Kallistos. The Ordination of Women in the Orthodox Church. Geneva: WCC, 2000.
Clendenin, Daniel, ed. *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995. [Selected essays from, for eg, Florovsky, Lossky, Ware, etc., on topics such as Liturgy, Tradition, Councils, Fathers, Trinity, Ecumenism].


