

R 365/ R 465 The Orthodox Church: its history, faith, liturgy and spirituality Spring 2021

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Course Description

This course will be a journey introducing the student to the Orthodox Church, the largest of the Eastern Christian Churches. It will explore the history, faith, liturgy and spirituality of the Orthodox Church. The exploration will be based on lectures, readings, audio-visual presentations, discussion, and personal experience. Special emphasis will be given on primary sources since tradition is greatly valued by the Orthodox Church. My main goal is to make students share my enthusiasm for the history and meaning of the Orthodox Church. I wish to explore -along with my students- Orthodoxy in its historical and modern contexts and invite students to explore how Orthodoxy is lived and practised in Greece. Students will be expected to submit their own reflection notes throughout the course (so as to develop written skills and simultaneously exercise critical thinking), evaluate, orally, many primary sources, gather and interpret research material, reflect critically on religious phenomena during what would hopefully be a passionate class discussion, work independently and collaboratively, taking into account current scholarship, worship and praxis.

Goals and Objectives

1. To familiarize with the rich history, heritage and tradition of the Orthodox Church, in particular, and with the Christian East, in general.
2. To explore the Orthodox Church in its natural setting.
3. To discover the common spiritual foundation and background of Christianity in East and West.
4. To exhibit awareness of your own experience of religious tradition and commitment as well as differences in perspective and opinion.
5. To dispel popular myths and challenge misconceptions about Christianity.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Identify the landmarks of the history of the Orthodox Church.
2. Appreciate critically the influence of Orthodox Christianity in shaping human experience.
3. Understand the place of the Orthodox Church in the world.
4. To compare/contrast the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church with one's own faith tradition.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation. The success of the course depends on your conscious and active participation.
2. Completion of Assigned Readings and Projects. Readings must be completed in advance to facilitate participation and discussion.

3. Course-long project: 7 reflection notes on issues discussed during the preceding two classes (1 page long).
4. Two short Papers (4 to 5 double space 12 times roman pages):
 - a. Observe an Orthodox Divine Liturgy.
 - b. Interview Project.**Guidelines on the two papers to follow**

Grading

Attendance and Participation: 10%

2 Papers: 20% each

Course-long project: 20%

Tests: 15%

Final: 15%

Grades are intended to give you a sense of the quality of a particular piece of work: roughly speaking, a B means that you have done a good job with the writing, the ideas, and the organization of the work; a C conveys that the work lacks some important qualities and has some problems, while an A means that the work is exemplary in some key ways: the writing is particularly clear, the ideas thoroughly treated, the organization of the presentation well considered and effective.

Class Participation: Your attendance and in class writing and analysis – is vitally important to your success in this course.

Use of Laptops In-class or on-site use of laptops and other devices is not permitted. Handouts with all the topics raised will be distributed instead every time we meet.

Attendance Students are expected to report for classes promptly. CYA regards attendance in class and on-site as essential. If you have to miss a class, please inform the Director of Student Affairs.

Policy on Original Work Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. (Check Student handbook, pg. 7)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the V.P. for Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

You will have the opportunity to complete an **evaluation** form for my teaching methods at the end of the course. Should you experience any difficulties before this, please let me know. I promise I will do my best to help you during your studies in Athens. By all means do contact me, if you think I could be of any help.

Required Text

Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, London et al, 1997.

COURSE OUTLINE

The class will be meeting on M/W 1.45-3.20.

Schedule and Class Topics

SESSION 1= **February, 15**

Introduction to Orthodox Christianity. Statistics.

Who are the Orthodox? Why is tradition and early Christian times so important for Orthodox Christianity?

No required reading.

SESSION 2= **February, 17**

The Formation of Scripture.

What is the Christian Canon? How and why was it formed? What are the apocryphal gospels? Why does the Orthodox Church resent them so much? Should we stay away from them?

No required reading. **SUBMIT REFLECTION NOTE**

SESSION 3= **February, 19**

The Early Church. The "Triumph" of Christianity. Persecution and Martyrdom.

What is martyrdom and why is it so important for the Orthodox Church?

Readings:

1. Gillian Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society*, p. 38-59.
2. Despina Iosif, "Christian Aloofness and Participation"
3. Knut Schaferdiek, "Christian Mission and Expansion"

SESSION 4= **February, 22**

The Byzantine Empire. Constantine.

Was emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity sincere? Why is the issue still thorny?

Reading:

Charles Matson Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, p. 1-14.

SESSION 5= February, 24

TEST (all the material we have covered so far. Critical thinking required most)

SESSION 6= March, 1

The Great Schism

Why isn't the Church one? Will it ever reunite?

Readings:

1. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapter 3: Byzantium II: The Great Schism).
2. "Common Declaration by Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Bartholomew I." Thursday, November 30, 2006

SESSION 7= March, 3

The desert Fathers. Monasticism and Asceticism. The Jesus Prayer.

What is monasticism? What is asceticism? Why does the Orthodox Church find them so admirable?

Reading:

Gillian Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society*, p. 60-77.

SESSION 8= March, 5

Orthodox Christian Monastic Communities.

Which are the most important Orthodox monastic centers?

Reading:

Douglas Burton-Christie, "Towards a Desert Hermeneutic"

SESSION 9= March, 8

Visit to 11th century Ag. Ioannis Theologos Monastery in Papagos. Chance to interview nuns on their daily schedule

No required reading. **SUBMIT REFLECTION NOTE**

SESSION 10= March, 10

The Orthodox Body. Christian Orthodox Views on Women.

How are women seen in Orthodoxy? How is the body to be treated?

Readings:

1. The Diary of Perpetua.
2. The Life of Pelagia.

SESSION 11= March, 17

Food. Fasting. Prayer. Feasts.

What is prayer? What is fasting? How is prayer connected to fasting? How is food to be approached? Why is fasting prescribed? Which feasts are connected to prayer and fasting?

Reading:

Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapter 15: Orthodox Worship III: Feasts, Fasts, and Private Prayer)

SESSION 12= March, 22

TEST (all the material we have covered so far. Critical thinking required most)

SESSION 13= March, 24

The Exercise of Power in the Orthodox Church. Offices. Synods.

How is the Orthodox Church run? Who exercises power? Which are the Orthodox offices? What is a Synod?

Reading:

Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapter 2: Byzantium I: The Church of the Seven Councils).

SESSION 14= March, 29

The Fall (1453) - The Great Church in Captivity. The Orthodox Church in the Twentieth Century.

How did the Turks treat the Orthodox and why?

Readings:

1. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapter 5: The Church under Islam)
2. Steven Runciman, "The Church and the Infidel State"

3. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapters 7 and 8 - The Twentieth Century I and II).

SESSION 15= **March, 31**

Sacraments. Services. Hymnography.

Which are the Orthodox Sacraments? Services? How is piety expressed inside a church?

Reading:

Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapter 13: Orthodox Worship I: The Earthly Heaven and chapter 14: Orthodox Worship II: The Sacraments)

SESSION 16= **April, 5**

Church Visit: we will attend service at Ag. Spyridon Church in Pangrati. How prevalent are saints inside an Orthodox Christian church? Can you locate the chi-ro symbol? Can you locate the ex votos? Can you locate any depictions of pillar saints?

No required reading. **SUBMIT REFLECTION NOTE**

SESSION 17= **April, 12**

TEST

SUBMIT 1ST PAPER

SESSION 18= **April, 14**

Art-Icons-Architecture

Which are the typical characteristics of Christian Orthodox Art?

Reading:

George Galavaris, "The Icon in the Life of the Church"

SESSION 19= **April, 19**

Agia Sophia.

Which is the most important Orthodox church and why? Can you predict its future use?

No required reading. **SUBMIT REFLECTION NOTE**

SESSION 20= **April, 21**

Byzantine Museum Visit. Were early Christians influenced by pagan art? And to what extent? Are there any icons on display influenced by the apocryphal tradition? Does the museum house typical Orthodox art?

No required reading. **SUBMIT REFLECTION NOTE**

SESSION 21= April, 26

Demonology. The Afterlife.

Can demons be useful? How is the afterlife envisaged?

No required reading **SUBMIT REFLECTION NOTE**

SESSION 22= April, 28

The Orthodox Church Today. Orthodoxy and Current Issues. And Open Discussion Session.

Are there any controversial issues that trouble the Orthodox Church today?

Readings:

1. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapter 9: The Twentieth Century III).
2. Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos, "Toward Global Community".
3. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (chapter 16: the Reunion of Christians).
4. Yannoulatos, "Globalization and Religious Experience"

SUBMIT INTERVIEW

SESSION 23= May, 5

Showing of a Religious Movie and Discussion.

Why is this movie so distasteful for pious Orthodox Christians worldwide?

No required reading. **SUBMIT REFLECTION NOTE**

SESSION 24= May, 7

Showing of Students' Visual Material. Review and Questions.

Students will be expected to show any relevant visual material as a fun way to revise before the final exam.

No required reading.

Guidelines for Papers/Projects

Observe an Orthodox Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy (Mass) is central to the life of the Orthodox Christian. The purpose of this paper is to expose you to its celebration and to record your reactions to it. I know that you do not understand the language, that you are not familiar with the Byzantine rite and ritual. I want you to observe! Look at the building, describe it and try to see how it functions; observe the service and try to discern its structure, describe its characteristics (what sticks out for you), note what you like and what you do not like and why; look at the people and how they act in the church. When and where did you visit? Reflect on how this service compares to a Mass/Service in your own faith tradition?

Keep in mind that unless you are an Orthodox Christian, you may not receive communion. You may, however, receive the antidoron at the end of the service

Interview Project

97% of Greeks identify themselves as Orthodox Christians. What does that mean? How serious are they about their faith? How much does faith influence their daily lives and the decisions they make? In this project you will explore these questions by interviewing a Greek male or female. Be polite, introduce yourself and explain what you are doing (what is the purpose of this interview). 9 out of 10 will agree to give you the interview. The majority of young people speak English. Do not be shy – approach them. If they allow you to record, it is great; if not, keep notes and IMMEDIATELY after the interview put everything down.

In part one of the project, you need to present the interviewee (age, sex, occupation – anonymity is protected) and a transcript of the dialogue that took place. In part two you will write your reaction/commentary to what was said in the interview. Here are some questions you could ask. Do not limit yourself to these questions.

1. Faith-wise, how do you identify yourself?
2. Is faith part of your identity?
3. Does faith play a role in your life?
4. What is your relationship with the official Church?
5. Do you go to church? How often? If not, why not? What would make you go?
6. Which of the various practices of the Church do you follow (fasting, philanthropy, etc.) and to what extent? Are there any you consciously refuse to practice?
7. Do you have icons in your home? What is their role (just pieces of art, or prayer items)?
8. Do you believe in miracles?
9. What do you like about the Orthodox Church, what do you not like about it, what would you like to see changed?
10. Do you stay updated on activities of the Orthodox Church?
11. Do you discuss issues related to faith and the Church with your friends and family?
12. Is there a language issue in the Church?
13. If you could be with the Patriarch for 10 minutes what would you tell him?

Participation:

CRITERION	25 points	20 points	10 points	5 points
Level Of Engagement In Class	Student proactively contributes to class by offering ideas and/or asks questions more than once per class and/or works consistently on group project the entire time.	Student proactively contributes to class by offering ideas and/or asks questions once per class and/or works on group project for most of the allotted time.	Student rarely contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions and/or works on group project only some of the allotted time.	Student never contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions and/or has trouble staying on task during group project time.
Listening Skills	Student always listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. And incorporates or builds off of the ideas of others.	Student usually listens when others talk, both in groups and in class and rarely incorporates or builds off of the ideas of others.	Student occasionally listens when others talk, both in groups.	Student often interrupts when others speak.
Behavior	Student never displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student very rarely displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student occasionally displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student almost always displays disruptive behavior during class.
Preparation	Student is almost always prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is usually prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is rarely prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is almost never prepared for class with assignments and required class material.
Score	Total		Points	100

Paper:

CRITERION	15 points	11 points	7 points	3 points
Introduction/ Thesis _____	exceptional introduction that grabs interest of reader and states topic. thesis is exceptionally clear, well-developed, and a definitive statement.	proficient introduction that is interesting and states topic. thesis is clear and arguable statement of position.	basic introduction that states topic but lacks interest. thesis is somewhat clear and arguable.	weak or no introduction of topic. paper's purpose is unclear/thesis is weak or missing.
Content knowledge: Quality of Research _____	paper is exceptionally researched, contains 3 peer reviewed articles, the 3 articles relate to the thesis argument in a logical manner. References are correctly cited	information relates to the main topic. Paper, is well-researched in detail and from 3 good sources. References are correctly cited	information relates to the main topic, but few details and/or examples are given. Shows a limited variety of sources. References are not cited correctly	information has little or nothing to do with the thesis. information has weak or no connection to the thesis. References are not cited correctly.
Content application: Support of Thesis and Analysis _____	exceptionally critical, relevant and consistent connections made between evidence and thesis. excellent analysis.	consistent connections made between evidence and thesis good analysis.	some connections made between evidence and thesis. some analysis.	limited or no connections made between evidence and thesis. lack of analysis.
Conclusion _____	excellent summary of thesis argument with concluding ideas that impact reader. introduces no new information.	good summary of topic with clear concluding ideas. introduces no new information.	basic summary of topic with some final concluding ideas. introduces no new information.	lack of conclusion.
Writing _____	Writing is clear and relevant, with no grammatical and/or spelling errors – polished and professional. Reference section properly formatted.	Most ideas are stated clearly and are related to the topic, with only minor grammatical and/or spelling errors. Reference section adequate.	Many ideas require clarification and/or are off-topic or have marginal relevance to the assignment. Many grammatical and/or spellings errors throughout the paper. The paper is very challenging to read due to poor writing flow. Improper reference section.	Paper does not meet the criteria for the assignment (too short or incomplete, too long, and/or completely off-topic). Reference section missing.
Score			Total Points	100

Reflection Notes:

CRITERION	Standard		
Responsiveness to Topic (20 points)	20 – clearly addresses the topic and responds effectively to all aspects of the assignment; 18 – clearly address the topic, but may respond to some aspects of the assignment more effectively than others 16 – addresses the topic, but may slight some aspects of the topic 14 – indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the assignment 12 – suggests an inability to comprehend the assignment or to respond meaningfully to the topic		
Communication of Ideas (20 points)	20 – explores the issues showing thorough comprehension of the text; goes beyond the obvious lass discussion 18 – shows some depth and complexity of thought 16 – may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively; doesn’t demonstrate sufficient comprehension of the text 14 – lacks focus, demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking, or fails to communicate ideas 12 – is unfocused, illogical, incoherent or disorganized		
Organization (20 points)	20 – is coherently organized (i.e. stays on target with the topic), with ideas supported by apt reasons 18 – is well organized and developed with appropriate reasons and examples 16 – is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples 14 – is poorly organized and/or undeveloped; lacks support from the text 12 – is undeveloped; provides little or no relevant support		
Control of Mechanics, Sentence Structure, Grammar, Spelling (20 points)	20 – is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure 18 – may have a few errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure 16 – may have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of mechanics, usage, and sentence structure 14 – is marred by an accumulation of errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure 12 – has serious and persistent errors in word choice, mechanics, usage, and sentence structure		
Score	Total	Points	100