

## St Vladimir's Seminary Elective Course Descriptions – Fall 2023

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### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 204

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR J. SERGIUS HALVORSEN

*Christian Education and Discipleship.* The work of the Church is to make disciples of all nations, teaching all that Jesus commanded (Mt 28:19-20). This course explores the relationship between discipleship and education through critical reflection on applied practice. Topics covered in the course include, but are not limited: to college ministry; adult education; inquirers classes; preparing catechumens for reception into the Church; the dynamics of religious conversion; volunteer management; and cultivating a spirit of discipleship within an Orthodox Christian Community. To the extent possible, students will integrate class work with work in parish settings during the course. *Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

**Tuesdays, 2:00pm-4:45pm**

### CHURCH HISTORY 379

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR. VARGHESE M. DANIEL

*Introduction to the History of Indian Christianity.* The two-thousand-year history of Christianity in India, especially of Orthodox Christianity, is generally unknown to many in the West and even in the East. This general introduction focuses on the historical figures and events, including relations with foreign Churches, that have shaped the history of Indian Christianity. The origin, development, and witness of the Indian Churches worldwide, especially the Malankara Churches in America, will also be treated. *Jurisdictional requirement for M.Div. candidates of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. Prerequisite: Church History 110 or permission of instructor*

**Wednesdays, 9:15am–12:00pm**

### ETHICS 305

Credits: 3 credits

DR MATTHEW S. VEST

*Christian Morality and Bioethics.* This course examines topics in bioethics within the context of the canon of faith in the Orthodox tradition. Students will be introduced to basic concepts and language pertaining to issues such as: marriage and sexuality, abortion, IVF, surrogacy, genetic engineering, transgenderism, physician assisted suicide, end of life ethics, and more. Orthodox ethical teaching, stemming from theological presuppositions, will be contrasted with common secular theories of bioethics. Throughout the course, the aim is not to develop a list of ethical norms or theoretical principles external to the Church but rather to seek moral-ascetical paths of virtue amidst the challenges and opportunities of highly technologized modern medicine. *Prerequisite: None.*

**Hybrid (online-residential) course, beginning online Monday, August 28. *The onsite intensive will be held Monday, October 30 through Friday, November 3. Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.***

### OLD TESTAMENT 418

Credits: 3 credits

DR. MICHAEL LEGASPI

*Interpreting the Book of Job: Traditional and Critical Approaches.* Though often understood in terms of theodicy, divine inscrutability, and the problem of evil, this seminar examines the book of Job in light of Orthodox tradition and the ways that we encounter Job in patristic thought. We will read and interpret the text, with a view to understanding its distinctive presentation of piety, suffering, and spirituality. We will also study the book's historical and textual backgrounds, as well as contemporary scholarship, to understand better how this particular text is treated in academic biblical studies and in the wider culture. By considering a broad array of approaches to the book of Job, we gain a clearer, theologically sharper perspective on this crucial part of

Scripture. *Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of the Academic Dean*

**Tuesdays, 2:00pm-4:45pm**

#### PATRISTICS 442

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR BOGDAN BUCUR

*The Recurrent Monarchian Challenge in Early Christianity.* This seminar will study the recurrent challenge posed, throughout the first four centuries, by authors who argued that a doctrinal system rooted in the Christological exegesis of theophanies, wedded to the notion of a preexistent Logos, and confessing three distinct yet equally divine hypostases, effectively constitutes a ditheistic or tritheistic betrayal of the biblical faith in one God. After considering various models of binitarian monotheism during the Second Temple era and the later rabbinic critique of the "two powers in heaven" heresy, we will discuss the polemical references to unidentified Christians or Jews in the mid-second century, to Praxeas, Sabellius, Noetus, and Paul of Samosata in the third century, to Marcellus of Ancyra and Photinus of Sirmium, in the fourth and fifth centuries. *Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of academic dean.*

**Wednesdays, 9:15am-12:00pm**

#### SACRED ARTS 374

Credits: 3 credits

DR HARRISON RUSSIN

*Composing and Arranging Music in the Orthodox Tradition.* Fr Sergei Glagolev wrote, "what must be iconically recognizable in liturgical music, it seems to me, is both the sense of continuity and familiarity. This does not mean there is no room for creative composition." Taking Glagolev's statement as our directive, this course will explore the creative space between continuity and creativity through an analysis of three aspects of liturgical music. The ultimate aspect is the composition and arrangement of music for Orthodox liturgical services; helping to buttress that goal is, on the one hand, an examination of the history of these liturgical services and texts and, on the other hand, musical analysis of the inherited tradition of Orthodox music (primarily, but not limited to, the Slavic and Byzantine traditions). *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.*

**Wednesdays, 9:15am-12:00pm**

#### SPIRITUALITY 423

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DN DR MARK THERRIEN

*The Holy Page and the Holy Man: Recovering Ancient Wisdom for Contemporary Issues in Spiritual Life and Scripture Reading.* Within the academic world, there is general recognition among many today that Biblical Studies is facing a crisis as a field. At the same time, western Christian culture today is also facing a general spiritual malaise that seems only to be worsening. The fact that we Christians in the West face these problems in tandem is perhaps not entirely unsurprising since, for the fathers, the tasks of becoming 'spiritual' or 'holy' (i.e., fully enlivened by God's Holy Spirit) and interpreting Scripture were considered to be intimately interrelated. By way of trying to set forth some possible ways of addressing these two problems (as well as the theological questions implicated therein), in this course we will be reading some of the classic works that helped to generate our contemporary views on these topics, as well as classic works of the fathers that deal with Scriptural exegesis and spiritual life (e.g., Origen, Augustine, Cassian, Maximus, etc.). How are Scriptural exegesis and asceticism related? How does Scripture help to fashion the saint as a new kind of human being who has been enlivened by God's spirit? And how do we respond to the secularization of the Scriptural text and the abandonment of asceticism in contemporary life? These will be some of the questions that we attempt to answer in this course. *Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of academic dean.*

**Mondays, 9:15am-12:00pm**