

**St Vladimir's Seminary**  
**Elective Course Descriptions – Spring 2024**

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**BIBLICAL LANGUAGES 200**

Credits: 3 credits

DR JOHN BARNET

*Reading Biblical Greek.* This course completes the introduction to the fundamentals of New Testament Greek grammar. By the end of this semester students should be able to: 1) recognize the distinguishing lexical features of verbs, nouns, and adjectives; 2) identify their grammatical form and syntactical function; 3) recall basic vocabulary, based on the frequency of occurrence in the New Testament; 4) competently read New Testament Greek aloud, using modern pronunciation; and 5) parse and translate selected passages of the Greek New Testament. *Prerequisite: Biblical Languages 100 or permission of instructor.* [Required course for Theological Scholarship & Research concentration]

**Tuesday, 9:15a–12:00p**

**BIBLICAL LANGUAGES 301**

Credits: 3 credits

DR MICHAEL LEGASPI

*Introduction to Biblical Hebrew.* Advanced scriptural study requires knowledge of biblical languages. Though Greek has been preeminent in the Orthodox churches, knowledge of Hebrew is essential to Old Testament study. This course introduces students to the language of the Old Testament. Topics include Hebrew phonology and morphology, as well as basic vocabulary and the fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew syntax. By the end of the course, students will be able to read simple biblical passages in the Hebrew, consult Hebrew grammars and lexicons intelligently, and make better sense of references to Hebrew words in scholarly literature. *Prerequisite: None*

**Wednesday, 2:00–4:45p**

**CHURCH HISTORY 361**

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR ANTHONY ROEBER

*Orthodox Christianity in North America.* This course explores the historical contexts in which both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox have wrestled with the problem of proclaiming the Gospel in a pluralistic and increasingly “secular” North American culture that continues to be fascinated by the “spiritual.” Topics will include: tensions between clergy and laity and their respective “rights”; jurisdictional quarrels; the challenge of ecumenical dialogue; debates over “diaspora” and “autocephaly”; the increase in both mixed and disparate marriages; the question of “ethnic identity”; the loss of young members. *Prerequisite: Church History 110.* [Two in person class sessions during the first week of classes, six weeks of synchronous online education, a full onsite intensive week during March 11-15, followed by one week of synchronous online education]

**Wednesday, 9:15a–12:00p**

**CHURCH HISTORY 420**

Credits: 3 credits

DR IONUȚ-ALEXANDRU TUDORIE

*Confessing the Orthodox Faith (15th-18th centuries).* A seminar course focused on a close reading of the most authoritative texts produced after the Fall of Constantinople (May 29, 1453) and during the long process of building confessional identity of the Eastern Orthodox Church (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries), including: “The Confession of Faith of Gennadios II” (1455/1456), “The Replies of Jeremias II to the Augsburg Confession” (1576/1579/1581), “The Confession of Faith of Metrophanes Kritopoulos” (1625), “The Minutes of the Synod in Constantinople” (1638) in response to “The Eastern Confession of the Christian Faith” by Kyrillos Loukaris (1629/1633), “The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church” by Peter Mohila (1638/1642), “The Confession of Dositheos II” (1672), and “The Theological Dialogue between the Nonjuror Anglicans and the Eastern Church” (1716-1725). The scrutiny into this long process of confession-building of the Eastern Orthodox Church would reveal the obvious shift from the Byzantine-Latin polemical

discourse to the “symbolic books” that explored new ways of “answering the questions that were never asked before.” *Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of the Academic Dean.*

**Monday, 2:00–4:45p**

### LITURGICAL THEOLOGY 430

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DN DR VITALY PERMIAKOV

*The Sanctification of Time: Liturgical Year.* The course explores the origins, development, and theological meaning of major feasts and seasons that constitute the liturgical year through which the Church celebrates, weekly and annually, the “mystery of God, that is, Christ himself” (Col. 2:2). Using the historical approach, the course will study the Judeo-Christian origins of the ecclesiastical calendar, the evolution of the weekly cycle – focusing on the Christian feast of Sunday. Further, the course will examine the formation of the main feasts and seasons of the year: Nativity, Theophany, Lent, Pascha, Pentecost, Marian feasts, and the growth of sanctoral commemorations. The latter part of the course will look at the ways in which the ‘calendar problem’ was addressed in the Orthodox Church during the modern period. *Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of academic dean.*

**Wednesday, 2:00–4:45p**

### NEW TESTAMENT 435

Credits: 3 Credits

THE REV. DR GEORGE L. PARSENIOS

*Trajectories Through the New Testament: Paul and the Gospels in their Classical Environment.* This advanced course will interpret the letters of Paul and the New Testament Gospels within their first century literary, rhetorical and philosophical context. Our aspiration is not merely archaeological, however. We will see that leading Church Fathers like Sts. Ignatius of Antioch, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian, and others interact with these same classical realities within the New Testament. The insights of these Church Fathers will show how our historical forays lead more fully into the faith and life of the Orthodox Church. *Prerequisite for M.Div. and M.A. students: Second-year standing, minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and permission of the Academic Dean.* **Hybrid (asynchronous online-residential) course, beginning online Monday, January 15. The onsite intensive will be held Monday, March 11 through Friday, March 16. Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.**

### PATRISTICS 345

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR BOGDAN BUCUR

*Patristic Variations around the Theme of Visio Dei.* Christianity began as an apocalyptic movement within first-century Judaism. As heirs to the accounts of prophetic visions, which were further emphasized and expanded by the strongly visionary literature of Jewish apocalypticism, early Christians lived, worshipped, read the Scriptures, and learned and taught their faith as participants in a religious symbolic world filled with claims to visionary experiences. At the same time, the apostolic kerygma was insistent on the centrality of the Cross and Resurrection, and on placing visionary language within the theological framework of the Incarnation as granting a unique and incomparable encounter with “the icon of the invisible God.” It is not surprising, then, that the theme of *visio Dei* holds great importance in patristic writings, connecting biblical exegesis, doctrinal articulation, ascetical theories, and liturgical life, and painting the horizon of expectation both in this age and in the age to come. In this class we will be reading a number of significant texts and authors, seeking to understand the varied ways in which the vision of God was referred to in regards to Old Testament visions, the Incarnation, the celebration of the Eucharist, eschatology, and the inner life and ecstatic experiences of the saints. *Prerequisite: Patristics 101 and permission of the instructor.*

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

**PHILOSOPHY 301**

Credits: 3 credits

DR MICHAEL LEGASPI

*Introduction to Christian Philosophy.* The aim of this course is to introduce students to the study of philosophy by considering key texts, figures, and schools of thought in classical antiquity. Not only is ancient Greece considered the point of origin for philosophy as many people know it today; it was also the source of intellectual traditions, including key concepts and vocabulary, that would play important roles in the development of patristic thought. For this reason, the study of ancient philosophy has particular relevance to the study of Orthodox theology. The course will examine the early history of philosophy, both in its own right and with a view to later developments in Christian thought. The course begins with discussion of several Platonic dialogues (*Republic*, *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus*, and others) before moving on to selections from the works of Aristotle, Stoics, and representatives of Middle and Neoplatonism. The course turns in the final weeks to Christian engagement with Greek philosophy, from the New Testament to the Cappadocians. *Prerequisite:* None.

**Monday, 9:15a–12:00p****SACRED ARTS 310**

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DR J. SERGIUS HALVORSEN

*The Sacred Art of Narrative.* We understand the world and our place in the world, through the stories we tell each other, and the stories we tell ourselves. This class explores what makes some narratives sacred, and how sacred narrative works in the context of other sacred arts and the context of Liturgy. Topics covered include: an introduction to narrative theology and an investigation of the sacred art of narrative in scripture, ascetical “sayings,” hagiography and contemporary stories of faith. In addition to investigating narrative as critical readers and listeners, students will also learn about the sacred art of narrative through applied practice as they develop and tell their own stories of faith. *Prerequisite:* None.

**Tuesday, 2:00–4:45p****SACRED ARTS 330**

Credits: 3 credits

THE REV. DN DR HARRISON RUSSIN

*Theology and Vernacular Culture in Medieval Christianity, East and West.* Working primarily in English translations and modern editions, this course will trace “modes” of theology, with a particular eye to understanding how vernacular works were influenced by and in turn influenced the development of theological thought. Each class session will work through a work of music, art or architecture, or literature, oriented toward understanding how that piece displays a particular theological background and in turn has the potential to influence theology. Works to be considered include: various musical settings of the Creed in Greek, Latin, and vernacular languages; medieval English works such as *Piers Plowman*, *Canterbury Tales*, *Julian of Norwich*, and the *Cloud of Unknowing*; Dante’s *Divine Comedy*; Russian lives of saints (particularly lives of Holy Fools); middle Byzantine icons and ekphrasis; and the earliest essays of Renaissance painting. *Prerequisite:* None.

**Thursday, 9:15a–12:00p****SPIRITUALITY 373**

Credits: 3 Credits

THE REV. DR ANTHONY GILBERT

*Literature and Metanoia.* This course will pose the question of the place of literature in Orthodox life and spirituality. How does literature positively augment or exist in tension with a life of faith? God delighted in Adam’s creative naming in Eden, the Lord taught through fictional parables, and the patristic witness from the early centuries onward is that narrative and poetry can play a vital role in the formation of the soul and heart, with St Basil devoting a treatise to pagan literature as a *preparatio evangelica*. Today’s complex social and religious milieu constitutes a rich setting within which various genres of literature can inspire *metanoia* (a term that can be translated both as ‘conversion’ and ‘repentance’). In other words, literature has both led people to the Church, and kept people in the Church. Reading across a variety of Orthodox and non-Orthodox literary authors, theologians, and theorists, we will engage with literature as a mode of divine mimesis, a form of

integral (participatory/experiential) knowledge, a way of purifying and reorienting the mind and heart, and a fruitful catalyst for both evangelism and parish ministry. Authors include Papadiamandis, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Bakhtin, Eliot, Tolkien, Lewis, Kavafy, Seferis, Elytis, Alfeyev, Schmemmann, Yannaras, Auerbach, Milbank, Vodolazkin, and Kingsnorth. *Prerequisite: None.* **Hybrid (asynchronous online-residential) course, beginning online Monday, January 15. The onsite intensive will be held Monday, March 11 through Friday, March 16. Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.**

## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 372

Credits: 3 credits

REV. DR VARGHESE M. DANIEL

*Modern Oriental Theologians.* The theological interpretations of modern theologians from the Oriental Orthodox Churches provide profound insights for the life and mission of the Church, both in ecclesiastical and secular spheres. These interpretations address contemporary challenges on the foundation of Patristics and Liturgical theology, which are fundamental to the Church. This course delves into the prominent modern Oriental theologians of the 20th century, who have contributed significantly to the development of Oriental Orthodox theology. The exploration of their works is vital for understanding the diverse theological perspectives within the Oriental Churches. *Prerequisite: None.*

**Wednesday, 9:15a–12:00p**