

St Vladimir's Seminary Elective Course Descriptions – Fall 2026

CANON LAW 342

Credits: 3 credits

THE VERY REV. DR ALEXANDER RENTEL

Contemporary Issues in Canon Law. Interdisciplinary examination of the conciliar movement from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries leading to the Holy and Great Council in Crete in 2016. The course will seek to understand the theological presuppositions of the movement and measure these presuppositions against the canonical tradition. Special attention will be paid to the Council in Crete, its decisions and message. *Prerequisite: None.*

Thursdays, 2:00-4:45pm

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY 390 (490)

Credits: 3 (3) credits

THE REV. DR MARK ROOSIEN

Mystagogy. This course examines the church's practice of mystagogy, or, initiation into the mysteries. The main questions of the course are these: what is mystagogy? What are the mysteries we are initiated into, and how do preaching, reading, and writing help initiate us into them? How has the church practiced mystagogy through its history? How do we do mystagogy well today? First, we will examine the mystagogical preaching of the fourth century, focusing on the works of Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose of Milan. Next, we will examine the major early Byzantine liturgical commentaries of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor, and Germanos of Constantinople. Later Byzantine commentaries (Ps-Gregory of Nazianzus, Nicholas Cabasilas, Symeon of Thessaloniki) will also be read. At each juncture, we will consult the latest historical and theological research on these authors. The course will conclude with the two most effective modern mystagogues of our time: Archimandrite Vasileios (Gondikakis) and Alexander Schmemmann. *Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

Mondays, 2:00-4:45pm

NEW TESTAMENT 330

Credits: 3 credits

THE RIGHT REV. DR VAHAN HOVHANESSIAN

Formation of the Biblical Canon: Patristic Witness and Contemporary Debates. This course explores the historical emergence and ecclesial recognition of the biblical canon, emphasizing the role of apostolic Tradition, patristic testimony, conciliar discernment, and liturgical usage. The canon is presented as the Church's inspired recognition of Scripture through her life in the Holy Spirit, rather than as a purely historical or administrative construct. While grounded in a patristic understanding of the "rule of faith," the course also engages contemporary scholarly debates regarding canon formation, clarifying how the Church's lived experience of the Word safeguards the boundaries and unity of the Holy Scriptures. *Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

Thursdays, 9:15am-12:00pm

OLD TESTAMENT 325 (425)

Credits: 3 (3) credits

DR MICHAEL LEGASPI

Wisdom. In this course, we will study books of the Old Testament commonly referred to as the "wisdom literature" of the Old Testament: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Job, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon. In each case, we will seek to understand not only what is distinctive about each book but also how each contributes to a broader, Scriptural conceptualization of what wisdom is. In addition to close study of the books themselves, we will also consider their characteristic vocabulary, literary structure, and

historical backgrounds—as well as patristic homilies and commentaries and the use of wisdom texts in the liturgical life of the Church. *Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

Thursdays, 9:15am-12:00pm

PATRISTICS 315 (415)

Credits: 3 (3) credits

THE REV. DR BOGDAN BUCUR

Exegesis of Theophanies and Doctrinal Articulation in Early Christianity. This course will consider whether the articulation of doctrine during the first four centuries of the Christian era may be viewed as largely coextensive with the early Christian exegesis of biblical theophanies. Students will investigate the literature emerging from the major polemical contexts in which early Christian doctrine was forged—anti-Jewish, anti-dualistic, anti-modalistic, anti-subordinationist—along with a number of catechetical and doxological materials, seeking to understand why and in what ways recourse to Old Testament theophanies was deemed relevant to the various arguments set forth. *Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

Thursdays, 2:00-4:45pm

PATRISTICS 368

Credits: 3 credits

DR TIKHON PINO

St Nicholas Kavalas and Late Byzantine Theology. This course explores the personality and thought of St Nicholas Kavalas, the premier representative of the lay hesychast tradition in the Orthodox Church. A learned figure of the Palaiologan Renaissance and a close friend of St Gregory Palamas, Kavalas is celebrated especially for his sacramental spirituality, wedding the mysticism of fourteenth-century monasticism with a deeply liturgical vision of the Christian life. He is equally famed for his effusive orations in praise of the Mother of God, as well as for his engagement of polemical issues dividing Greek East and Latin West. In this course, students will study the life and writings of Nicholas Kavalas not only as contributions in their own right, but as a window into the world of late Byzantine theology. They will explore the reception of patristic source material and concepts, the impact of the Barlaamite controversy and Palamite theology, and the relationship between Orthodox theology and Scholasticism. *Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

Hybrid (online-residential) course. Synchronous: Thursdays, 6:45-9:30pm. **Onsite:** Fri, Oct 30 – Sat Oct 31. *Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.*

SACRED ARTS 360

Credits: 3 credits

DR PETER BOUTENEFF

The Music and Faith of Arvo Pärt. Arvo Pärt draws on his Orthodox Christian roots to compose music that seizes people of all faiths and of none. Through an in-depth study of his music and the sources that directly influence it, this course seeks to deepen appreciation of Pärt's oeuvre as well as give insight into missional questions about Orthodox tradition and contemporary culture. *Prerequisite: None.*

Mondays, 2:00-4:45pm

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 321

Credits: 3 credits

DR SRDJAN MAKSIMOVIC

Eco-Theology: Orthodox Christianity, Creation, and Environmental Responsibility. This introductory course examines Orthodox Christian approaches to creation, ecology, and the human vocation within the created world. Beginning from the Christian *ethos*, in which right belief and right action, *orthodoxia* and *orthopraxia*, are inseparable, the course explores the resources of Orthodox Christianity for a faithful, critical, and constructive engagement with contemporary ecological concerns. Through close attention to Scripture, patristic theology, liturgical texts, contemporary Orthodox theologians, and modern environmental ethics, students will consider how the Church's vision of creation calls for a conversion

from exploitative patterns of life toward moral, sustainable, and reverent ways of inhabiting the created world. Special attention will be given to climate change, food and agricultural concerns, consumerism, environmental injustice, science, asceticism, sacramentality, and stewardship. The course will also consider contemporary critiques of Christian anthropocentrism and ask how Orthodox theology can shape a responsible Christian response to the environmental crisis. *Prerequisite: None.*

Mondays, 2:00-4:45pm