

**St Vladimir's Seminary**  
**Elective Course Descriptions – Spring 2027**

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**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. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: None*

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

**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. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: None.*

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

**ETHICS 301**

Credits: 3 credits

THE VERY REV. DR PHILIP LEMASTERS

*Introduction to Orthodox Ethics.* This course invites students to engage in critical reflection on the moral life in light of the belief, worship, and practice of the Orthodox Church. It addresses perennial questions of theological ethics and practical challenges facing Orthodox Christians today. For example, students will engage the relationship between virtue and deontology and also reflect on applied topics including marriage and sexuality, peacemaking and violence, human rights and political action, and responsibility toward those in economic need. Students will read patristic homilies, canon law, and social teaching documents, and will also reflect on the relationship between the Divine Liturgy and the moral identity and praxis of communicants. They will also analyze the arguments of influential 20-21<sup>st</sup> century figures, including St. Maria (Skobtsova) of Paris, Christos Yannaras, Vigen Guroian, and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., on what it means for Orthodox Christians to live faithfully in contemporary society. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: None*

**Synchronous online: Tuesdays, 9:15am-12:00pm**

**Onsite: April 2, May 18 (7.5 hours) *Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.***

**LITURGICAL THEOLOGY 330 (430)**

Credits: 3 (3) credits

THE RIGHT REV. DR VASILY (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. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

**Synchronous online: Thursdays, 6:45-9:30pm**

**Onsite: April 2-3 (7.5-10 hours) *Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.***

### PATRISTICS 311 (411)

Credits: 3 (3) credits

THE VERY REV. DR BOGDAN BUCUR

*Pillars of the Early Christian Ascetical Tradition: Readings from Anthony the Great, Evagrius Ponticus, Ps.-Macarius, and Diadochus of Photikē.* In this course, we will read fourth- and fifth-century patristic texts that came to be recognized as “classics”—that is, as normative and authoritative sources for the ascetical and contemplative life in ancient and medieval Christianity, and, to this day, in the Orthodox Church. We will examine the theological background of these writings, the circumstances of their composition, and their reception in both ecclesial and academic contexts, while maintaining a primary focus on their doctrinal and spiritual content. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

**Thursdays, 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. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: None.*

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

### SACRED ARTS 301

Credits: 3 credits

DR ROSSITZA SCHROEDER

*Introduction to the Sacred Arts of the Orthodox Church.* This course considers the context and content of the sacred arts of the Orthodox church. We will study the theoretical postulates of the Byzantine iconophiles as well as the practical concerns of contemporary twenty-first century artists and will examine the meaning and message of church architecture, icons and their materials. The interaction between matter and spirit, ritual and sacred space, icon and viewer will be at the center of our weekly readings and discussions. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: None.*

**Synchronous online: Tuesdays 6:45-9:30pm**

**Onsite: April 2-3 (10 hours) *Attendance at all onsite sessions is mandatory.***

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 338 (438)

Credits: 3 (3) credits

DR PETER BOUTENEFF

*Orthodox Identity and Difference.* This course seeks to explore what it means to be an Orthodox Christian today, in a secular and pluralistic society that in many respects appears to challenge the historic institutions and values of the Orthodox Church. Initial readings and lectures will trace the ways in which Orthodoxy has responded to challenges posed by the modern world from the 18th century onward, whether by way of reaction or by adoption and adaptation. Student presentations and discussion sessions will focus on specific contemporary issues, such as the role of the Church in public life, the challenge of ecumenism and inter-faith relations, problems in inter-Orthodox relations, the issue of “modernism,” and the place of the Church in post-Communist Eastern European society. *Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: Second-year standing in the M.Div. or M.A. program.*

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