

Course Syllabus
TRT1301 – Oriental Orthodoxy Unveiled
Trinity College
Toronto School of Theology
January to April (Winter/Spring) 2022

Instructor Information

Instructor: Andrew N.A. Youssef, PhD Student
Office Location: Larkin Building, Office 335
E-mail: andrewyoussef.abdelmalek@mail.utoronto.ca
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: TRT1301
Course Format: Online – mostly asynchronous with 3 synchronous sessions over Zoom
Course Name: Oriental Orthodoxy Unveiled
Course Location: Online
Class Times: Asynchronous with 4 Tuesday evening live sessions in weeks 1, 6, and 9 (7pm to 8pm) and week 12 (7pm to 9pm)
The course will be online asynchronous with readings and written seminar-style discussion. Live one-hour sessions in weeks 1, 6, and 9 will provide an opportunity to check in and supplement online discussion; the final class will review the themes of the course in a full two-hour online session.
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

This course explores the faith and beliefs of the Coptic, Syriac, Indian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Armenian Churches collectively known as the Ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches or the pre-Chalcedonian Churches. Hidden behind ancient languages and in mostly Christian minorities, the Oriental family of Orthodox Christianity often goes unnoticed. This course aims to unveil the basic dogmas of Oriental Orthodoxy and the historical development of each communion.

Dogmas in Oriental Orthodoxy are drawn from its Tradition encompassing scripture, liturgical texts, patristic writings, and iconography. The course explores the Trinity, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, sacramental theology, cosmology, ecumenism and Christian life through the lens of Oriental Orthodox Tradition. Elements of convergence and divergence between the six Churches making up the Oriental Orthodox communion will be considered in terms of historical circumstances, liturgical practices, and iconographic canons.

Course Resources

Required Course Material

- Course Reader: “Oriental Orthodoxy Unveiled”

All other assigned readings, whether chapters from books or articles, will be posted on the course website.

Course Website

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>.

Auditing students and regular students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask Sydney Yeung at the Faculty of Divinity of Trinity College (divinity@trinity.utoronto.ca) for further assistance.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

- to gather, analyse and prepare materials for reflection and engaged class discussion, working with both primary and secondary sources
- to develop analytical, comparative, and critical thinking skills, writing short essays and reflection papers
- to prepare and deliver a presentation and lead a class discussion

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

- to describe the fundamental dogmas of Oriental Orthodoxy as expressed by its fathers and liturgical texts
- to identify the philosophical terms employed by Oriental Orthodox Church fathers to better understand its theology
- to compare the ways in which different churches within Oriental Orthodoxy developed their theological milieu amidst differing social circumstances
- to recognize the persecution, theological and political challenges faced by each church within the communion
- to formulate ways in which the Oriental Orthodox can engage other Christians, and other faith traditions in the ecumenical context

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- to manage their own learning
- to demonstrate behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

- to demonstrate qualities and skills necessary for ministry, further study, and community involvement
- to exercise initiative, personal responsibility, and accountability in both personal and group contexts, working effectively with others

Evaluation

Requirements

- (1) Class attendance and Weekly Participation in Discussion forums (15%)
- (2) For students to understand the theological diversity within Oriental Orthodoxy (25%)
 - Students will be required to compare the use of analogy, philosophy, or rhetoric between two Church fathers or modern theologians in two distinct churches of Oriental Orthodoxy. This paper should be between 750-1000 words. Oriental Orthodox students are encouraged to choose two Church fathers or modern theologians outside their tradition.
 - Deadline: Week 4
- (3) For students to identify elements of liturgical diversity within Oriental Orthodoxy (25%)
 - Students will be required to observe two liturgies or vespers from two different Oriental Orthodox Churches online (Links to the services will be provided on Quercus closer to the date of the assignment). Students will be asked to write a paper between 750-1000 words describing the service and elements of convergence and divergence. Students will then be asked to try and look for the common root for an element of the service where convergences appear in liturgical rubrics or commentaries on the liturgical services.
 - Deadline: Week 7
- (4) For students to be able to put Oriental Orthodox theology in dialogue with Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic or Reformed theology (15%)
 - Students will be asked to prepare one or two quotes from a Church father or a modern theologian whose ideas overlap with theological ideas shared by one of the non-Oriental Orthodox Churches. Students will be asked to give a ten-minute presentation on how this quote can be used as a common ground for theological dialogue with the Church of their choice.
 - Deadline: Week 9 – All presentation handouts and slides are to be handed in by the due date. Understandably, presentations will continue for a few weeks depending on class size.

Each student will be given 10 minutes to present how their quotes can open a door for an ecumenical dialogue.

(5) Oral Examination (20%)

- Duration: 20 minutes
- Students will be asked to prepare answers for five questions which will be given to them in advance. They will be asked two out of the five questions. They are to be prepared to hold a conversation with instructor for approximately 10 minutes for each topic.
- Deadline: By appointment during the exam week (via Zoom).

More information and grading rubrics will be given to students closer on each assignment three weeks before each assignment's due date.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A RANGE: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, and broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base
B RANGE: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work. Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. A 2% per day penalty applies (up to a maximum of 20%) for late work. This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a

recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your

course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Anti-harassment policy. As we all adjust to online classes and lectures, and increasingly participate in virtual learning environments, students are reminded of the expectation that we all demonstrate respect for one another. As outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, the University of Toronto does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities especially when based on grounds protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The University of Toronto recognizes its commitment to human rights, equity and inclusion and acknowledges the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has on various parts of our community. COVID-19 is not isolated to people of any particular ethnic origin, place of origin or race. Equity, diversity and respect must remain integral as we continue to transition during these challenging times. The institution will monitor and address discriminatory comments or behaviour including on U of T's online platforms and classrooms.

In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, no person shall engage in a course of vexatious conduct that is directed at one or more specific individuals, and that is based on the race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age marital status, family status or disability. This includes:

- Racial slurs or "jokes"
- Insults due to racial identity
- Online posts of cartoons or pictures, in a workplace or school that degrade persons of a particular racial group
- Name-calling due to race, colour, citizenship, place of origin, ancestry, ethnic background or creed
- Pseudonyms or handles that are inappropriate about ancestry, colour, citizenship, ethnicity, place of origin, race, or religion.

The University of Toronto's Equity Offices remain available to students to provide support on equity issues that arise as a result of COVID-19. Students are encouraged to support one another and the University's commitment to human rights and our values of diversity, inclusion, and respect in managing any inappropriate comments or disruptive behaviours. If you experience or witness inappropriate comments or behaviours in your classes, you are encouraged to contact your instructor. If you can, take and share a screenshot of the inappropriate content with your instructor so they can follow-up with you and address the conduct.

Course Schedule

The course will be online asynchronous with readings and written seminar-style discussion. Live one-hour sessions in weeks 1, 6, and 9 will provide an opportunity to check in and supplement online discussion; the final class will review the themes of the course in a full two-hour online session.

Part I: Oriental Orthodox theology:

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Week 1 Live Session over Zoom (1 hour)	Theological Categories: From Karygma to Theologia	Course Syllabus Course Reader: Pgs. 9-12
Week 2	Christology	2 Maccabees 7 Excerpts from Joseph Telushkin's <i>Hillel: If Not Now, When?</i> Course Reader: Pgs. 13-24
Week 3	Tradition (Scripture, liturgical texts, councils, Church fathers, icons)	<i>Sola Scriptura or Sola Traditione? The Orthodox Theology of Tradition as a Solution to the Reformation Debate about Theological Authority</i> by Mark Aziz Course Reader: 25-35
Week 4	Trinitarian Theology <i>Assignment 2</i>	"Quotations from the Works of St. Severus of Antioch in Peter of Callinicus' magnum opus 'Contra Damianum'" by Rifaat Ebied Course Reader: 36-41
Week 5	Ecclesiology and Ecumenism	Excerpts from <i>Paulos Gregorios: A Reader</i> Course Reader: 42-58
Reading Week		

Week 6 Live Session over Zoom (1 hour)	Sacramental Theology <i>Assignment 3</i>	The Catechetical Lectures by Cyril of Jerusalem Course Reader: 59-78
Week 7	Anthropology and Cosmology	Excerpts from <i>The Human Presence, Ecological Spirituality and the Age of the Spirit</i> by Paulos Gregorios Course Reader: 79-118
Week 8	Mariology and Sainthood	<i>On the Mother of God</i> by Jacob of Serug Course Reader: 119-138

Part II: Oriental Orthodox history:

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Week 9 Live Session over Zoom (1 hour)	Early Church History Armenian Church History <i>Assignment 4</i>	Course Reader: 139-142, 178-186
Week 10	Coptic Church History Ethiopian Church History Eritrean Church History	Course Reader: 143-164
Week 11	Syriac Church History Indian Church History	Course Reader: 165-177
Week 12 Live Session over Zoom (2 hours)	Review Questions and Answers Concluding Remarks	

** Week 3 – Week 8 Readings require students to read a primary reading in addition to the course reader. Students are not required to read the entire book. Rather, they are required to read one or two chapters of the assigned book through the library’s resources/the scans provided on Quercus and use this reading to inform their initial post on the discussion forum. Students will not be permitted to use

the course reader as the basis for the initial post on the discussion forum though they are free to draw from it but only as a supporting evidence.

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change in accordance with the regulations in the TST *Basic Degree Handbook*.