



Orthodox School of Theology
at Trinity College

Trinity College
Faculty of Divinity
A member institution of the
Toronto School of Theology
Federated with the
University of Toronto



Course Syllabus

**TRT2651H – The Orthodox Church, Christianity
and Other Faith Traditions**

**Trinity College
Toronto School of Theology
University of Toronto**

Summer 2020

(last offered Summer 2017)

27 March 2020.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr Paul Ladouceur
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Office Hours: Appointment by e-mail; connection via Zoom
or Skype (e-mail to obtain Skype identifier).

Course Identification

Course Number: TRT2651H
Course Name: The Orthodox Church, Christianity and Other Faith Traditions
Course Location: Online only.
Class Times: Mondays and Thursdays 7:00 – 9:30 p.m. // 19:00-21:30:
May 7, 11, 15 (Friday, exceptionally), (no class May 18), 21, 25, 28.
June 1, 4, 8, 11, 15, 18.
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

This course explores how the Orthodox Church views itself (ecclesiology), relations between Orthodoxy and other Christians (ecumenism), and the role of non-Christian religions in God's plan for salvation (religious diversity). Course material includes lectures by the Instructor, a text book and extracts from books, and articles and essays. Evaluation of student learning for both in-class and online sections will be by two short papers on assigned primary readings (20%), a book review (30%), and a research essay OR final exam (50%).

Expanded Course Description

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware has written that ecclesiology was the most important field of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century and should continue to be a major feature of Orthodox theology in the twenty-first century. Orthodoxy faced major challenges in last century, including intense persecution, the migration of large numbers of Orthodox faithful from traditional Orthodox homelands to countries of Western Christian traditions, the rise of the modern ecumenical movement and the development of interreligious dialogue, as well as internal questions bearing on the nature of the Church, particularly the organisation of the Church outside countries of Orthodox tradition and relations between Church and State.

As a result, Orthodox have been obliged to reflect deeply on such questions as – What is the Church? What identifies the Orthodox Church with respect to other Christian Churches and communities? How should Orthodox react to the ecumenical movement? What is the relationship of non-Christian religions to God's revelation through Jesus Christ?

In this course, Orthodox thinking on the Church will be considered initially from its biblical and patristic foundations, while the major emphasis will be on the ecclesiological perspectives of major modern Orthodox theologians, from the Slavophiles in the mid-nineteenth century to the philosopher-theologians of the Russian religious renaissance and neo-patristic theologians, including the principal Orthodox advocates of eucharistic or communion ecclesiology.

The course will also consider the theological foundations of Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement, as well as the sources and nature of opposition within Orthodoxy to ecumenism. The course will include an overview of Orthodox involvement in major multilateral and bilateral ecumenical endeavours. Finally, the course will consider Orthodox thinking, still in its formative stage, on non-Christian religious traditions, especially in the light of the historical experience of Orthodox peoples living in non-Christian countries and in pluralistic societies.

Course Resources

Required Course Readings

Boris Bobrinsky, *The Mystery of the Church: A Course in Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (Yonkers NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2012). (Required book for review).

Course Reader: *The Spirit of Truth Will Guide You into All Truth (Jn 16:13): Readings in Ecclesiology, Ecumenism and Religious Diversity* (prepared by Dr Paul Ladouceur) (pdf only).

Texts contained in the Course Reader cover ecclesiology, ecumenism and religious pluralism, drawn from patristic and modern Orthodox writers and sources including:

Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, John Chrysostom, Alexis Khomiakov, Vladimir Soloviev, Paul Florensky, Sergius Bulgakov, Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Paul Evdokimov, Alexander Schmemmann, John Meyendorff, Dumitru Staniloae, Nicholas Afanasiev, John Zizioulas, Athanasios Yannoulatos, Georges Khodr; Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs of 1848, Encyclicals of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Statements from Orthodox dialogues with the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and the Oriental Orthodox Churches; writings of Orthodox opponents to ecumenism and religious pluralism.

Recommended Books

Students are encouraged to consult the full works from which extracts are provided in the Course Reader.

Recommended general survey of Christian ecclesiology: Cyril Hovorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). PDF can be downloaded via the UofT Library catalogue: <https://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?12028748&uuid=640f5857-ae47-45de-8e99-b074814b9195> - UTRid required).

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Basic Degree Level Outcomes

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

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

- the ability to distinguish primary sources from secondary sources;
- the ability to provide a plausible analysis of a primary source in theological studies according to its genre, purpose, assumptions or tendency, and intended audience;
- the ability to give an accurate summary of the substance of a secondary source in theological studies, to give a plausible account of its place in the discussions or controversies of an academic or faith community, and to evaluate whether its approach to solving a problem is appropriate
- the ability to pose a clear substantial question for reflection or research;
- the ability to gather information in theological studies;
- the ability to write an academic essay with a clear thesis statement, an expository outline dependent on the thesis statement, a selection of primary evidence appropriate to the exposition, persuasive interpretations and arguments, and reference to alternative possible interpretations of the primary evidence;
- the ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside theological studies;
- an understanding of the limits to his or her own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge and how these might influence analyses and interpretations;
- qualities and skills necessary for ministry, further study, and community involvement;
- the ability to exercise initiative, personal responsibility, and accountability in both personal and group contexts;
- the ability to work effectively with others;
- the ability to manage his or her own learning;
- behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility.

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

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Describe and explain the main themes and issues of Orthodox thinking on the Church, both using specialized theological language and formulations, and employing less technical language for a general public with little familiarity with theological language;
- Understand and describe the main patristic and modern trends in Orthodox ecclesiology, especially the ecclesiology of the Russian Slavophiles, Vladimir Soloviev, Sergius Bulgakov, Georges Florovsky, Nicholas Afanasiev, John Meyendorff, Alexander Schmemmann, John Zizioulas and Boris Bobrinskoy.
- Understand and describe the main features and history of modern Orthodox thinking on relations between Orthodoxy and non-Orthodox Christian churches and communities, especially the ecumenical theologies of the Slavophiles, Sergius Bulgakov, Georges Florovsky, and of Orthodox opponents to ecumenism.
- Describe the principal bilateral ecumenical dialogues in which the Orthodox Church is engaged.
- Understand and describe the main patristic and modern trends in Orthodox reflection on non-Christian religions, and especially the thinking of Georges Khodre, Athanasius Yannoulatos and Seraphim Rose.
- Discuss and assess, following a critical reading and review, Boris Bobrinskoy's book *The Mystery of the Church: A Course in Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*.

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- employ insights gleaned from Orthodox thinking on the Church in their own spiritual life and formation, especially their participation in the life of the Church.

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- articulate and apply the wisdom of Orthodox thinking on the Church to their pastoral ministry or service within the Church, and in public fora.

Evaluation

Requirements –Online

The final grade for the course will be based on the following:

Introductions to Selected Readings from the Course Reader	20%
Critical review of Boris Bobrinskoy, <i>The Mystery of the Church</i>	30%
Research Essay OR Final Exam (take-home)	50%

All written assignments must be delivered by e-mail no later than **July 31, 2020**.

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

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

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); 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 and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week 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 to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Policy on Late Assignments

Arrangements must be made in advance for work submitted after the deadline. If circumstances (such as medical or compassionate difficulties) require that work be turned in late, contact the instructor at the earliest possible juncture to agree on a new time-line and other details.

Students who for exceptional reasons (for instance, 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.

General Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students 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* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/content/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. Students 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 or sending by e-mail.

Obligation to check e-mail. At times, the course instructor may send out important course information by e-mail. To that end, students must provide the instructor with a current valid e-mail address and check this address regularly for communications concerning the course.

Course Outline

I. ECCLESIOLOGY.

The Church in Scripture and Patristic Thought.

What is the Church?

Eucharistic Ecclesiology.

Characteristics of the Church.

Ministries of the Church.

Institution and Hierarchy in the Church.

II. ECUMENISM.

Theology of Ecumenism.

The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism.

Opposition to Ecumenism in Orthodoxy.

III. RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY.

Orthodox Approaches to Religious Diversity.

Modern Orthodox Thought on Religious Diversity.

Orthodoxy and Theologies of Religious Diversity.

Registered students will be provided a more detailed outline and course schedule at the beginning of the course.

This syllabus is subject to change in accordance with the regulations in the TST *Basic Degree Handbook*.

Prepared by Dr Paul Ladouceur
April 2020.