SEMESTER: SPRING 2024
COURSE TITLE: Eastern Christian Traditions
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: 3220
TIMES/DAYS: MW 8:00-9:40 AM
INSTRUCTOR: Cyril Hovorun
CORE AREA: Faith & Reason
FLAGGED: Engaged Learning

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

- The course explores various eastern editions of Christianity: Byzantine (Chalcedonian), Oriental (non-Chalcedonian), Eastern Syriac (Nestorian), and Eastern Catholic (Uniate), as they have developed in the countries like Greece, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Syria, Iraq, China, Ethiopia, Armenia, etc. It opens a door to sometimes closed eastern Christian communities in the United States and Los Angeles.
- These traditions are presented through their historical developments from Late Antiquity up to our days. The course offers a piece of contextual theology: it dwells on the cultural contexts of the eastern churches and their relations with state and society in their respective milieux.
- The course offers a comprehensive insight to the Christian teaching about God and Incarnation, as they are seen from the Eastern perspective. It also explores the Eastern Christian tenets about the visible world (cosmology) and what the Eastern churches have to say about modern environmental problems (ecotheology). A particular attention is paid to who, what, and how are human beings (anthropology), in the view of Eastern theologians.
- The course analyzes Eastern concepts of the church (ecclesiology). It critically assesses the identity policies of the Eastern churches, including nationalism. It explains some theological and ideological underpinnings of the war in Ukraine and other recent military conflicts. A particular focus of the course is on the movement towards restoration of Christian unity known as ecumenism.
- The course pays considerable attention to the spiritual practices of the Eastern Christianity, such as monasticism, Jesus prayer, holiness, *theosis* etc. It exemplifies these practices with stories about Eastern Saints.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Group 1: Remembering, understanding, and applying:
- to sketch the structures of the Eastern churches and summarize their doctrines;
- to understand, and possibly to speak the theological language of the Eastern Christian traditions, including its basic terms, such as theosis, synergy, symphony, etc.
Group 2: Analyzing and evaluating:
- to participate in debates on theological issues;
- to recognize styles in iconography, architecture, and church music.
Group 3: Creating:
- to render concepts of the Eastern Christian traditions in modern vocabulary;
to integrate concepts from the Eastern Christian traditions to the Western theological and cultural frameworks.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

No

REQUIRED TEXTS

Eastern Christianity in Its Texts (Bloomsbury, 2022: https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/eastern-christianity-in-its-texts-9780567682901/).