

LMU Spring 2025

COURSE TITLE: Eastern Christian Traditions (4 units)

COURSE NUMBER: THST 3220/ CATH 3220 / MDGK 3998

SECTION DAYS/TIMES: T/TH 8:00-9:40am

INSTRUCTOR: Fr. Cyril Hovorun

CORE ATTRIBUTES: INT: Faith & Reason

FLAG: Engaged Learning

GLOBAL IMMERSION TRIP (Travel Dates: February 23-March 1, 2025)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

- 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 countries like Greece, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Syria, Iraq, China, Ethiopia, Armenia, etc. It opens the 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 to the present. The course offers contextual theology: it dwells on the cultural contexts of the Eastern churches and their relations with the state and society in their respective milieux.
- The course offers a comprehensive insight into Christian teaching about God and the Incarnation as seen from the Eastern perspective. It also explores Eastern Christian tenets about the visible world (cosmology) and what the Eastern churches have to say about modern environmental problems (ecotheology). Particular attention is paid to who, what, and how human beings are (anthropology) in the view of Eastern theologians.
- The course analyzes Eastern concepts of the church (ecclesiology), critically assesses Eastern churches' identity policies, including nationalism, and explains some theological and ideological underpinnings of the war in Ukraine and other recent military conflicts. Its particular focus is on the movement towards the restoration of Christian unity, known as ecumenism.
- The course pays considerable attention to Eastern Christianity's spiritual practices, such as monasticism, Jesus prayer, holiness, theosis, etc. It exemplifies these practices with stories about Eastern Saints.

Trip Description:

Rome around 700 was a “Byzantine” city, or, as Per Jonas Nordhage put it, “Constantinople on the Tiber.” The students will explore the early Christian monuments of the “eternal city” with a focus on its “Byzantine” layer. This will include visiting the following museums and churches:

- Musei Vaticani
- Le Terme di Diocleziano
- Crypta Balbi
- Santa Maria Maggiore
- Santa Prassede
- Santa Sabina
- San Clemente
- Santa Maria Antiqua
- Santa Maria in Cosmedin