Course Syllabus
TRT2311 – Fundamentals of Orthodox Spirituality
Trinity College
Toronto School of Theology
September to December (Fall) 2017

Instructor Information
Instructor: Dr Paul Ladouceur, Adjunct Faculty
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Telephone: (450) 834-7203
Email: 123thabor@gmail.com
Office Hours: To be determined

Course Identification
Course Number: TRT2311 (formerly TRH2451)
Course Name: Fundamentals of Orthodox Spirituality
Course Location: Larkin Building, Room ______ (and online section)
Class Times: Tuesdays and Fridays, 7pm to 10pm (six week irregular schedule)
Prerequisites: None

Course Description
This course will explore Orthodox spiritual theology from both thematic and historical perspectives, drawing on the principal writings that have contributed to its development over the centuries. From a consideration of the goal of Orthodox spirituality as union with God or deification (theosis), the course will examine the contribution of the Old and New Testament; the experience of early Church; monasticism; ancient philosophy; liturgical and sacramental elements; the mystical and contemplative aspects; and patristic theology.

Students will be evaluated on their class participation, a book review, and a take-home exam or essay.

For the online section, classroom lectures and seminars will be recorded and made available to view on the course portal. Participation will be via online discussion forums.
**Expanded Course Description**

Spirituality is primarily faith lived in the search for God and the experience of God, what the ascetic Fathers called *theologia*, beyond "theology" as abstract or theoretical knowledge of God.

This course will explore Orthodox spirituality from both thematic and historical perspectives, drawing on the principal writings that have contributed to its development over the centuries. From a consideration of the goal of Orthodox spirituality as union with God or deification (*theosis*), the course will examine the contribution of the Old and New Testament; the experience of early Church; monasticism; ancient philosophy; liturgical and sacramental elements; the mystical and contemplative aspects; and patristic theology. Among the essential theological elements of Orthodox spirituality is patristic anthropology, man as "image and resemblance" of God; the tripartite nature of man; the imperfect state of humanity; the Incarnation of the Word of God and the salvific role of Christ; and the distinction between the divine essence and divine energies.

On this basis, the Fathers developed an ascetic theology which includes such key notions as the "passions" and the stages of temptation and sin; repentance or conversion (metanoia); the concurrence of divine and the human elements in the spiritual life (synergy); the heart and the guarding of the heart (*nepsis*). These elements of spirituality constitute a framework for the "practice" (praxis) of the spiritual life: the acquisition of virtues, particularly the fulfillment of the commandment of love; communal or liturgical prayer; personal prayer and participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist; fasting; Biblical and spiritual reading; and spiritual direction.

The end of the spiritual journey is the Kingdom of God, which we approach progressively by means of the traditional stages of the spiritual life, purification, illumination and perfection. The Kingdom of God is both present here and now, and yet is hoped for, not yet realised.

Particular attention will be given to several broad themes, such as the development of hesychastic spirituality, the Jesus Prayer the idea of "interiorized monasticism", the domestic church and the theology of laity. Throughout the course, themes will be illustrated and deepened by the readings from the great classics of Orthodox spirituality.

**Course Resources**

**Required Course Readings**

"*My Burden Is Light*: Readings in Orthodox Spirituality to the Fourteenth Century.

One of the books listed in the next section, or the portion of the book indicated.

**Book Review List**

Origen, “Exhortation to Martyrdom” and “On Prayer”. (pp. 41-170).
ISBN: 9780809121984 BR65 OS2 1979 McLennan & Birks & Presbyterian College


Evagrius of Pontus, *The Greek Ascetic Corpus.* (Oxford University Press, 2003). Chapters 1 to 4 and 7 (pp. 1-90 and 136-182). BR65 E92 E54 McLennan


**Recommended General Secondary Sources**


**Course Portal**
This course will make extensive use of the University of Toronto’s Learning Portal also known as ‘Blackboard’.

To access the portal, go to the UofT portal login page at [https://portal.utoronto.ca](https://portal.utoronto.ca) and log in using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the My Courses module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at [http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students](http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students).

Please ensure that you are familiar with how to access the system and navigate through it. The portal will be used in the following ways:

- Keeping an updated version of the course syllabus and calendar
- Providing course readings, bibliographies and other handouts
- Sharing additional online resources
- Communicating class notices and updates
- Issuing assignment guidelines and deadlines
- Accepting assignment submissions
- Providing feedback and grades for all assignments and other course requirements

In addition, for the online section, the portal will be used in the following ways:

- Delivering weekly course lectures and seminars (available also for classroom-based students for review)
- Enabling student participation and interaction in the blogs, discussion forums and other online communications (see course requirements and evaluation below)

Auditors who do not have a UTORid should speak to the instructor to receive guest access to the course portal.
As in the classroom, online communication must be carried out respectfully and civilly at all times. Writing within the online media of blogs, discussion forums is not an excuse for laziness, lack of proper reflection or uncivility. Arguments must be carefully crafted, respectfully presented and grounded in source texts and solid reflection. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will not succeed in this course.

**Course Learning Objectives**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Describe the Biblical and historical foundations of Christian spirituality in general and Orthodox spirituality in particular;
- Summarize and explain key component elements and phases of the Christian spiritual life as described by the principal Eastern Christian teachers and authors;
- Identify and discuss the main Eastern Christian pastoral and spiritual writings and authors to the 14th century;
- Discuss and assess, by a critical reading and review, of one of the major spiritual texts from this period;
- Identify the principal primary and secondary sources pertinent to one of the topics covered in the course.

**Programme Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Outcomes: Knowledge of the Area of Concentration</th>
<th>Course Elements</th>
<th>Programme Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students successfully completing this course will be able to:</td>
<td>This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:</td>
<td>This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of the Basic Degree Learning Outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Describe the Biblical and historical foundations of Christian spirituality in general and Orthodox spirituality in particular | Lectures / seminar discussions  
Take-home final exam or essay | Religious heritage  
Cultural context  
Capacity for ministry  
Personal and spiritual formation |
| Summarize and explain key component elements and phases of the Christian spiritual life as described by the principal Eastern Christian teachers and authors | Lectures / seminar discussions  
Take-home final exam or essay | Religious heritage  
Cultural context  
Capacity for ministry |
Evaluation

Requirements – Classroom Section

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

- **Class participation (20%)**: in addition to weekly attendance and participation, students will either introduce one of assigned readings from the Course Reader (“My Burden Is Light”), or make an oral presentation on the book selected for the Book Review.

- **Book Review (30%)**: students will prepare a book review on one of the books listed above, or the portion of the book indicated. In addition to the main text, you should also read any Prefaces, Introductions etc. and consult the references, footnotes and bibliography (secondary material). The book review should be a minimum of 2,000 words and a maximum of 3,000 words.

- **Take-home final exam OR essay (50%)**: Students may choose between a take-home exam OR an essay.

  1. **Take-home exam**

     The take-home exam will have ten questions, of which students are required to answer five. The questions will be based on both the book of readings and material covered in class. Students may use other sources as well to prepare their answers, such as one or more of the recommended general secondary sources mentioned above, as well as the sources of the various readings contained in the book of readings.

     Answers to the questions must be type-written and should be at least **300 words and no more than 500 words**. All citations, including any material taken from internet, should include proper references (footnotes) to the source cited (author, title, publisher, year, page number).
2. *Essay*

The subject and the initial bibliography for the written essay will be selected during the course in consultation with the instructor. The essay should be a minimum of 3,000 words and a maximum of 4,000 words.

Examples of essay topics:

1. The life, writings and teachings of one of the major authors contained in the book of readings (other than the author whose book the student is reviewing).
2. One of the topics covered in the lectures.
3. A topic pertaining to the subject of the course of special interest to the student.

**Requirements – Online Section**

The online section will follow the same requirements as the classroom, apart from class participation being online. In addition to ongoing participation online in the discussion forums throughout the course, students will either introduce one of assigned readings from the Course Reader ("My Burden Is Light"), or make a written presentation/blog on the book selected for the Book Review.
Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalents</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Grasp of Subject Matter</th>
<th>Other qualities expected of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A RANGE: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, and broad knowledge base.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Profound and Creative</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B RANGE: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.</td>
<td>Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZ</td>
<td>0-69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>Failure to meet the above criteria</td>
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Policy on Late Assignments

The instructor reserves the right to deduct up to 2.5% of the final assignment grade for each week that an assignment is late. Students are generally granted a ‘grace week’ provided the instructor is informed of any special circumstances before the assignment deadline.

This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty advisor 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 (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.

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/behaviorac.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 credit students are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up a utoronto email address which is entered in the ROSI 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.

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 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.
**Course Schedule**

*Subjects and dates are tentative.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE OUTLINE</th>
<th>RELATED READINGS AND ORAL BOOK REPORTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLASS 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Course requirements and outline.</td>
<td>Course Outline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is spirituality?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The goal of Orthodox spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CLASS 2</strong></td>
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</table>
| | 11. John Chrysostom (p. 161)  
| | 12. Theodore of Mopsuestia (p. 167A) |
| 3. Monasticism. | 3. Desert Fathers (p. 27).  
| | 14. Palladius (p. 196) |
| **CLASS 3**    |                                       |
| 5. Liturgy. | 27.1. Nicholas Cabasilas (p. 326). |
| 6. The Greek Heritage. | 2. Origen (p. 8).  
| | 7.1. Evagrius Ponticus - Foundations (p. 79).  
| | 7.4 Evagrius Ponticus – On Prayer (p. 89). |
| **CLASS 4**    |                                       |
| 7. Theological Elements: The Trinity, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church. |                                       |
| 8. Patristic Anthropology: |                                       |
| 1) Image and Resemblance. | 6. Ephrem the Syrian (p. 77). |
| 2) Humans Are Composite Beings |                                       |
| **CLASS 5**    |                                       |
3) The Faculties (or Parts or Powers) of the Soul

4) The Mind (*noûs*) and the Heart.

5) Synergy.

9. The Stages or Modes of the Spiritual Life.

**CLASS 6**

**III. PURIFICATION.**

| 1. The Passions. | 7.2 Evagrius Ponticus - Practicos (p. 83) |
| 2. Stages of Temptation and Sin. | 20.1 Maximus the Confessor (p. 251). |
| 5. Attention (nepsis) or Custody of the Heart. | 22. Hesychius of Batos (p. 281). |

**CLASS 7**

| 6. The Acquisition of Virtues. | 7.3 Evagrius Ponticus - Vices-Virtues (p. 88A). |

**CLASS 8**


**CLASS 9**

| IV. ENLIGHTENMENT. |
| 2. Contemplation of God in Creation. |

**CLASS 10**

| 3. Spiritual Understanding of Scripture. |
| 4. Apophatic Knowledge of God. |
| 15. Pseudo-Dionysius (p. 200). |

**CLASS 11**

<p>| V. PERFECTION. |
| 1. Detachment and Inner Peace (apatheia). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Pure Prayer.</td>
<td>18.2. Isaac the Syrian (p. 235).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CLASS 12</strong></td>
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Please note that this syllabus is subject to change in accordance with the regulations in the TST Basic Degree Handbook.