

UNIVERSITY OF INDIANAPOLIS, ATHENS

HISTORY OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH REL-410-9-01-SUI08

SUMMER I 2008

Instructor: Ms. F.N. Brison-Chraniotis

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Class Schedule: Monday – Friday 0900 - 1150

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1200 – 1300

Required Text:

Ware, Timothy. *The Orthodox Church (New Edition)*. London: Penguin, 1997

Supplemental reading: To be provided in class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The *History of the Orthodox Church* aims to acquaint the student with the historical development of the Orthodox Church from the early Byzantine period to the contemporary age.

This course is structured in such a way as to present the Orthodox Church as a living organism that evolves through time, one that is impacted by events in the socio-political terrain which it inhabits, while at the same time impacting the socio-cultural space in which it is embedded. In such terms, this survey of the historical development of the Church becomes a platform from which we may observe the diverse ways in which Orthodoxy has influenced social life, giving rise to a unique form of expression that is wholly and unmistakably Orthodox.

By the end of this course, not only will you be familiar with the evolution of the Orthodox Church as an institution, but you will also comprehend the theological viewpoint of the Church and the ways in which it differs from both, other bodies within the broad corpus of Christianity as well as other religious systems.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The requirements of this course will focus greatly on your responses to the material, your analyses of important issues, and your contributions to class discussions.

The requirements of this course are as follows:

I. HISTORY RESPONSE PAPERS:

There will be **three (3)** reflective responses for the history module of this course. These responses require you to pool the information together from your reading, research, and class lectures for a comprehensive paper, and are your opportunity to demonstrate your ability to critically assess important issues that arise from the material of this course. These responses should be 3-4 pages in length, and though reflective in nature, should nonetheless adhere to the citation rules where necessary.

1. Understanding Orthodoxy

- What is Orthodoxy? How did it come to define itself in this way? Why was it necessary for the “Orthodox” standpoint to assert itself in the 3-4th centuries C.E.? In your own words, relate the religious climate of the early Church period, explaining the reasons that led the early Church Fathers to differentiate their ‘orthodox’ position from those other positions they considered **un-orthodox**. In your opinion, was this clarification of its identity crucial to the development of the Church? Why or why not?

2. Politics and the Great Schism

- From the moment that the Pope allied himself to Charlemagne, King of the Franks in 800 C.E., the course of the unified Church’s development was significantly altered. What were the consequences of this political-religious alliance, and how did it contribute to the Great Schism of the Church in 1054? In your own words, what was the most important, or decisive factor for this legendary separation, and how did this impact Byzantium (Orthodoxy) in the East?

3. the Crusades and Orthodoxy

- Having examined the role of politics in the Great Schism, you can now observe the Crusades in their proper light; they were a time of fervent religious sentiment, yet they also represent a time of raging power struggles. As the first Crusade is launched a few short years after the Great Schism, please examine the first four Crusades from an Orthodox point of view, and explain in your own words how the Crusades affected Byzantium, and hence, Orthodoxy.

II. ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVES

There will be **two (2)** responses that offer you the opportunity to investigate aspects of Orthodoxy from a different vantage point, and allow you to comprehend the contributions of Orthodoxy to social life.

In order to facilitate a more ‘hands on’ approach that will allow you to observe directly the particular elements of these assignments, we will take short fieldtrips within the area to enhance your overall experience. Again, these responses should be 3-4 pages in length, and though reflective in nature, should nonetheless adhere to the citation rules where necessary.

1. **BYZANTINE ART**

- Consider the turbulent history behind icons and iconography in general. Icons not only were politically divisive – they continue to be theologically divisive. What is the Orthodox position on icons, and what does iconography strive to accomplish, according to Orthodox thought? How do you view the Byzantine tradition of iconography, and what does it express to you?

2. **BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE**

- Consider the Orthodox view of “**ecclesia**” or Church. What does it mean, exactly, and how does Orthodoxy embody that principle within the physical space of Byzantine architecture? How does this architecture convey both meanings of the word “Orthodoxy”, and how does it express the Orthodox view of the true relationship between God and humanity?

EXAMINATIONS:

While there are no formal examinations for this course, there will be two short papers for midterm and final exam, respectively. These responses require that you demonstrate your command of important issues/topics in Orthodoxy, and that you synthesize the information from your readings and class lectures to delve deeply into the questions you are called to answer. These responses should be 5 pages in length, and must uphold the proper citation rules/bibliography guidelines where necessary.

III. MIDTERM RESPONSE

1. **Orthodoxy and the Purpose of Life: (ch.10 - 11)**

- Orthodoxy has a very different understanding of the purpose of human existence when compared to other Christian denominations. In order to fully comprehend this position, one must first understand the Orthodox position on the nature and essence of God. What is **theosis** in the Orthodox mindset, and how does it differ from western conceptualizations of ‘salvation’?

IV. FINAL RESPONSE

1. Orthodoxy and the Environment (ch.11)

- Consider the Orthodox views on “**synergeia**” and “**cosmic redemption**”. How do the two complement each other, and how do they link with the Orthodox perspective on creation? Given this view, what is the Orthodox position on the Environment, and what are the main theological points that Orthodoxy uses to support this position?

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES:

Each assignment must be:

- double-spaced
- justified
- typed in Times New Roman (or other clear font) size 12.
- You must label each of your class assignments clearly with your name, the date, and the assignment title.
- You must use proper bibliography guidelines and/or citation rules.

All assigned work must be completed on time. Under **NO** circumstances will any late work be accepted, as this could result in a lowered grade.

A WORD ON PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism is unacceptable in this course, as it is unacceptable in any course at the university setting. Plagiarism includes

- Handing in work written by another person
- Handing in work that has been copied from a book, journal, or magazine without the proper citations
- Presenting the work of others as your own
- Using material from the Internet without citing the source

In my view, plagiarism **also** includes the substitution of synonyms for particular words while leaving the essential structure of the sentence intact; this means that using another’s work **literally** while changing a word here or there is unacceptable. Your work must be original and your own.

Please note that because this course will focus largely on written assignments it is imperative that you demonstrate proper academic integrity in fulfilling your course obligations. Do **NOT** plagiarize, as it will result in your **immediate** academic withdrawal from the course.

ATTENDANCE:

This course will cover a great deal of information, where lectures and class discussions will supplement the assigned readings. Given the short duration of the course, attendance is crucial. Students are expected to attend **every** class session. No absences will be accepted unless owing to extraordinary circumstances.

You may bring water to class, but food, soft drinks and/or coffee are not allowed in class. Please be courteous and **switch off your cell phones** at the beginning of the session.

GRADING POLICY:

History Responses	3 x 10 = 30%
Orthodox Perspectives	2 x 10 = 20%
Midterm Response	1 x 20 = 20%
Final Response	1 x 20 = 20%
Attendance/Participation	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	
100%	

GRADING SCALE:

A 94-100, **A-** 90-93, **B+** 87-89, **B** 83-86, **B-** 80-82, **C+** 77-79,
C 73-76, **C-** 70-72, **D+** 67-69, **D** 63-66, **D-** 60-62, **F** 59-

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LECTURES / DISCUSSION TOPICS</u>
<u>Tuesday</u>	June 17	Introduction Ch.1: The Beginnings Ch.2: Byzantium, I: The Church of Seven Councils.
<u>Wednesday</u>	June 18	Ch.3: Byzantium II: The Great Schism Ch.4: The Conversion of the Slavs <u>History Response 1 DUE</u>
<u>Thursday</u>	June 19	Ch.5: The Church under Islam Ch.6: Moscow and St. Petersburg Ch.7: 20 th Century I: Greeks & Arabs Ch.8: 20 th Century II: Orthodoxy & Militant Atheists <u>History Responses 2 and 3 DUE</u>
<u>Friday</u>	June 20	Ch.9: The 20 th Century III: Diaspora and Mission Ch.10: Holy Tradition: The Source of Orthodox Faith <u>Byzantine Art & Architecture Responses DUE</u>
<u>Monday</u>	June 23	Ch.11: God and Humankind Ch.12: The Church of God
<u>Tuesday</u> 24	June	Ch.13: Orthodox Worship I: The Earthly Heaven Ch.14: Orthodox Worship II: The Sacraments <u>MIDTERM RESPONSE DUE</u>
<u>Wednesday</u>	June 25	Ch.15: Orthodox Worship III: Feasts, Fasts & Prayer Ch.16: The Orthodox Church and Reunion of Christians Discussion and Conclusion <u>FINAL RESPONSE DUE</u>
<u>Thursday</u> 26	June	
<u>Friday</u>	June 27	

