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|  | **MTG130.5**  **Exploring the Christian Faith** |
| **Semester 1, 2025** |

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| Unit Supervisor Lecturer | Rev.Dr John D’Alton frjohn@scmoi.edu.au  Fr Nicholas Karipoff frnicholas@scmoi.edu.au | | |
| Delivery | Wednesdays 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm (Melbourne time) and 1 hour per week of set work.  24 February – 13 June 2025  Fully Online | | |
| AQF Level | 5 | Credit Points | 6 |

**UNIT DESCRIPTION**

This unit introduces students to the key topics of Orthodox theology, a discipline with spiritual and intellectual dimensions. It presents material of Scriptural revelation and Christian tradition about God and His interaction with the world and humanity. The course explores the historical journey of theological discourse from its beginnings to the present day. Key topics include: the nature of God’s existence and the practical implications of doctrines like the Trinity and the Incarnation, viewed in the context of tension and the theological debates of the early, medieval, and modern Christianity of the East and West.

**PREREQUISITES**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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| **ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS TASK THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:** | **RELATED CONTENT** | **RELATED ASSESSMENT** |
| 1. Outline the essential beliefs, and the main doctrines within the broad theology of the Church, and how these have been prioritised within the Christian consensual tradition | Lectures 1-12  Research | Essay |
| 1. Discuss the significance of key Christian theological positions for the student’s own life and faith | Seminars 1-6  Required reading | Seminar paper 1 |
| 1. Explain the practical relevance of theology for diverse contexts and situations, in ways that are specific and constructive | Seminars 7-12  Required reading | Seminar paper 2 |

**CHANGES MADE SINCE LAST OFFERED** (in response to Student Unit Evaluations)

N/A

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (Students should purchase this/these texts)

Alfeyev. Metropolitan Hilarion, *Orthodox Christianity.*Vol.2: *Doctrine and Teaching of the Orthodox Church*. Yonkers: SVS Press, 2012.

John of Damascus, Saint, *Writings.* Fathers of the Church 37. Ed. F.C. Chase. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1999.

Maximovitch. Saint John, *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*. Trans. Seraphim Rose. Platina: St Herman Press, 1994.

McGrath, Alistair E. (ed.), *The Christian Theology Reader.* 5th Edition. Malden & Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2017.

Pomazansky, Michael, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Exposition.* Trans. Seraphim Rose. 3rd Edition. Platina: St Herman Press, 2009.

Troitsky, New Hieromartyr Hilarion, *Christianity or the Church?* Jordanville: HTP, 1997.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Alfeyev, Metropolitan Hilarion, *The Mystery of Faith: An Introduction to the Teaching and Spirituality of the Orthodox Church*. Trans. & ed. Jessica Rose.  London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002)

*The Apostolic Fathers*. Trans. B. Ehrman. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2005

Behr, J. *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Behr, J., Louth, A., and Conomos, D.(eds.). *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West*. Crestwood, NY:SVS Press, 2003

Boosalis, Harry M., *Orthodox Spiritual Life according to St. Silouan the Athonite*. South Canaan, PA: St Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2000

Clement, Oliver. *On Human Being: A Spiritual Anthropology*. New York: New York City Press, 2000.

Florovsky, Fr Georges, *Collected Works,* *Vol. I: Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*

http://bulgarian-orthodox-church.org/rr/lode/florovsky1.pdf

Florovsky, Fr Georges, *Collected Works,* *Vol III: Creation and Redemption.* Online at:

http://www.bulgarian-orthodox-church.org/rr/lode/florovsky3.pdf

Ford, Mary S. *The Soul’s Longing: An Orthodox Christian Perspective on Biblical Interpretation*.  South Canaan, PA: Saint Tikhon’s Seminary Press: Pennsylvania, 2015.

Gregory of Nazianzus, Saint, *Five Theological Orations.* Online at:

<https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/36303/1/Gregory%20of%20Nazianzus%20Theological%20Orations.pdf>

Grillmeir, Aloys, SJ, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*. 2 vols; tr. John Bowden, John Cawte and Pauline Allen; London/Louisville: Mowbray/Westminster, 1975 & 1995.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti, *Christology: A Global Introduction*. 2nd ed; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.

Lossky, Vladimir, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Third Printing, 1991.

Louth, Andrew *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*. London: SPCK 2013.

Matthewes-Green, Frederica. *The Lost Gospel of Mary: The Mother of Jesus in Three Ancient Texts*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press,  2007.

Maximus the Confessor, St. *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*. Trans. Paul M. Blowers, and Robert Louis Wilken. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003.

Meyendorff, John, and Tobias, Robert (eds),  *Salvation in Christ: A Lutheran – Orthodox Dialogue.* Augsburg Fortress, 1992.

Mileant, Bishop Alexander, *Orthodox Christian Booklets.* Online at: https://www.fatheralexander.org/

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series. Online at: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nicene\_and\_Post-Nicene\_Fathers

Symeon the New Theologian, St. *The First-Created Man*. Platina, Calif. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994. Fourth edition, 2013.

Young, Frances M. (with Andrew Teal), *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background.* Second Edition. London: SCM Press, 2010.

Further resources, including recommended texts, websites and an extended bibliography, are listed on the unit site.

**SEMESTER PROGRAM**

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| **Week beginning OR actual Date** | **Week** | **Lecture Topic** | **Seminar topic** | **Readings** |
| **26th Feb** | **Week**  **1** | Course topics; b. Content and method of Christian theology | An overview of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (325-381 AD) | Pomazansky, Ch.1;  Alfeyev, 15-50 |
| **5th Mar** |  | NO CLASSES – *First Week of Great Lent* |  |  |
| **12th Mar** | **Week**  **2** | Scripture and tradition as sources of theology  The Early Church about God | The Creed cont’d | Pomazansky, Ch.2;  Alfeyev, , Ch. 5-7;  McGrath*,*3.1 -3.6 |
| **19th Mar** | **Week 3** | The Early Church about God  *(Census date March 17)* | Christian Anthropology | Pomazansky, Part 2, Ch.3;  Alfeyev, 111-179;  McGrath, 3.7-3.16 |
| **26th Mar** | **Week**  **4** | Triadology 1. God the Father and the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit | The Scripture and theology on the Attributes of God | Pomazansky, Ch. 4-5; Alfeyev Ch. 9-12, pp 183 – 258 |
| **2nd**  **April** | **Week**  **5** | Triadology 2. Understanding essence and hypostasis | The Holy Trinity and the Church | Pomazansky, Ch.6; Alfeyev, 261 –299 |
| **16th April** |  | NO CLASSES *– Holy Week* |  |  |
| **23rd April** |  | NO CLASSES – *Bright Week* |  |  |
| **30th April** | **Week**  **6** | Christology 1. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Man | The Church as the life in Christ | Pomazansky, Ch.7; John of Damascus, *Writings. An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Book III, Ch. I-VII |
| **24th April** | |  | | --- | |  | |  |   **Week**  **7** | Christology 2. The Incarnation | Christ sharing the pain of humanity | John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition* . Book IV, Ch 1 – 11;  McGrath, 1.24 (Karl Barth); 1.27  (Vladimir Lossky); 1.35(Dumitru Staniloae)  . |
| **7st May** | **Week**  **8** | Christology 3. The dogma of Redemption | Medieval and modern understanding of Salvation | McGrath, Ch.1: 1.1- 1.11 |
| **14th May** | **Week**  **9** | Christology 4. Theotokos Mary: Her place in Christology and Ecclesiology | The meaning of the Eucharistic liturgy | Maximovich, *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God* |
| **21st May** | **Week**  **10** | Ecclesiology. The Church as a theanthropic organism | The meaning of Baptism | Troitsky, *Christianity or the Church?*;  McGrath, 4.20 (Martin Luther on Christ) - 7.12. & 7.13  (and the Church) |
| **21st May** | **Week**  **11** | Eschatology. The entry of eternity into the fabric of history | Comparative Christology and Ecclesiology | Pomazansky Ch. 8-9;  Alfeyev, 301-329 |
| **28th May** |  | NO CLASSES – *(Ascension of Our Lord eve)* |  |  |
| **4th June** | **Week**  **12** | Comparative theology. The role of culture and history | The Church and postmodernity. Challenges and opportunities | Pomazansky Ch. 10;  Alfeyev, 331 - 369 |
| **11th**  **June** | **Week**  **13** | Review and revision |  |  |

**ASSESSMENT TASKS**

**Due Dates Summary:**

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| **Assessment** | **Words** | **Value** | **Due Date** |
| 1. Seminar paper 1 | 1250 | 25% | A week after presentation in class |
| 1. Seminar paper 2 | 1250 | 25% | A week after presentation in class |
| 1. Essay | 2500 | 50% | Week 11 |

**Task Description:**

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| **ASSESSMENT TASK 1**  **Title of Assessment**  **Seminar paper 1**  25% of total assessment  *Due: One week after oral presentation*  *Words: 1250* |
| **Instructions**  Students will select one of the topics listed for weekly seminars and write a 1250-word paper that also will be presented orally in class. Discussion will focus on the significance of key Christian theological positions for the student’s own life and faith The written papers will be submitted for marking within seven days. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  The Seminar paper is designed to show the students’ grasp of the issues covered in their reading, lectures, and tutorial work. They are expected to show comprehension and analytical skills, as well as the ability to argue their case and communicate to a live audience, an important practical skill, as also to reflect on the experiential and personal implications of dogma. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 2**  **Title of Assessment**  Seminar paper 2  25% of total assessment  *Due: Seven days after class presentation.*  *Words: 1250* |
| **Instructions**  The students will select one of the topics listed for weekly seminars and write a 1250-word paper that also will be presented orally in class. Seminar paper 2 will focus on the practical relevance of theology to personal and ecclesial situations. The written paper will be submitted for marking within seven days after presentation.  **Rationale and Expectations**  More research and analysis are expected of students in the second Seminar paper than the first paper. It is assumed that by the second half of the semester they have acquired some familiarity with the theological issues, terminology, and method, enabling them to explain the practical relevance of theology for diverse contexts and situations. Their presentations should show this in a concrete and positive manner. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 3**  **Title of Assessment**  **Essay**  **%**  **50% of total assessment**  *Due: Week 11*  *Words: 2500* |
| **Instructions**  A structured composition of 2500 words on any area covered by the unit. The precise formulation of each topic will be facilitated by discussions of students with the lecturer. The Essay will concentrate on the core aspects of the course which deals with the Scriptural revelation being fathomed by the Church in the historical process of doctrinal formulation. Students should begin selecting and researching their Essay topic as early as possible to give themselves enough time to submit their written work at the end of week 11. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability in researching primary and secondary sources and to analyse the problems posed by the topic. They must align their work with learning outcome 1 which expects them to know not only the essential beliefs and the main doctrines of the Church but also to comprehend the historical dynamics of the process of prioritisation within the Christian consensual tradition. Students are expected to produce an elegant synthesis in harmony with the accepted norms of Patristic tradition. |

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ASSESSMENTS**

Please refer to this Unit’s website tile *Assignments* (hyperlink) for further information about assignments, assessment criteria, grading scale, and the process for late submission of assignments.

Refer to the [*Student Academic Toolkit*](https://learn.tabor.edu.au/course/view.php?id=3718)for information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, referencing, formatting, and for relevant links to Tabor and faculty policy. If you are unsure, consult your lecturer or program coordinator for advice.