

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2026
Course Title	INTRODUCTION TO ORTHODOXY: HISTORY, THEOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY, AND MISSION
Course Code	THEO 0556/SPIR 0556 1S
Date	From January 12, 2026 to April 13, 2026 Every Tuesday
Time	From 6:45 PM to 9:35 PM
Delivery Format	SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	The classes will be LIVESTREAMED on TUESDAY from 6:45 to 9:35 PM.
Instructor	REV. PISHOY SALAMA, PhD Email: Psalama@Tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the major theological contributions of Orthodoxy to the global Church through historical events, councils, and the writings of early and contemporary theologians. It will also focus on the role of the Orthodox Church in ushering a new paradigm in Christian spirituality through its monastic movement and the focus on the contemplative lifestyle. Furthermore, it will shed a significant light on the role of the Orthodox Church in Christian witness and global missions to reach many nations with the message of salvation. While Orthodoxy as a whole will be explored in this course, special focus will be given to the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Orthodoxy is one of the most ancient Christian traditions in the world, tracing its origins back to the Apostolic era. The Orthodox Church has made significant theological, spiritual, and missiological contributions throughout the history of Christianity. From the foundational councils that determined the canonicity of the Scriptures and belief in the Holy Trinity, to the

spirituality of the monastic movement, martyrdom, and global missions, the Orthodox Church has been an active participant in formalizing Christian beliefs and practices. A study of Orthodox history, theology, spirituality, and mission is essential to understanding God's work throughout history and will enrich the global Church.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Acquire comprehensive knowledge of the significant contributions of Orthodoxy in determining major theological beliefs.
2. Develop a holistic approach to theological studies through integrating Orthodoxy as one of the major pillars of Christianity.
3. Critically examine the writings of several Orthodox theologians and theological texts, both ancient and modern.
4. Distinguish and synthesize various Eastern and Oriental Orthodox traditions that have impacted the lives and witness of countless generations.
5. Integrate the significant contribution of Orthodox spirituality and its impact on the practice of faith and life in the postmodern era.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Malaty, Tadros Y. *Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church*. Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, 1993.

McGuckin, John A. [*The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine and Spiritual Culture*](#). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Ware, Timothy. *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*. 3rd Revised Edition. Penguin Books, 2015.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends [STEPBible](#) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Discussion Forums (20% of the final grade).

It is expected that students will attend all online sessions (except by permission). Furthermore, students must complete all **assigned readings** and **upload a reflection no more than one paragraph** one day prior to each scheduled session, critically reflecting on their understanding of the readings. Students must also **upload at least one comment** on the reflection of other students for **any six sessions** throughout the course. All short reflections will consider the course outcomes of critically acquiring a deeper knowledge and understanding of Orthodoxy as it is imbedded in a broader Christian context.

2. Mid-term project (25% of the final grade, Due: Mar 3).

Engaging one of the subjects discussed in the first six weeks of the course. This paper should dig deeper into one of the topics explored during the first half of the course to demonstrate a clear understanding of the chosen subject. The topics will reflect the student's knowledge of the contribution of Orthodoxy to the global Christian faith in fulfillment of Learning Outcomes 1, 2, or 3. Students are expected to reflect critical thinking and utilize at least five resources on their topic chosen from the class readings and bibliography. 5 – 7 pages.

3. Orthodox Church Visit (20% of the final grade, Due: Mar 17)

Students are expected to visit an Orthodox Church of their choice throughout the semester and write a reflection paper of no more than 750 words that outlines their observations on the Church's spirituality, traditions, liturgical practices, or history. The reflection paper should demonstrate a unique characteristic of the Orthodox Church that aligns with Learning Outcomes 2 and 5.

4. Final research paper (35% of the final grade, Due: Apr 7).

Exploring a major theme of the course that includes Orthodox theology, history, martyrdom, spirituality, and mission in fulfillment of all Learning Outcomes 1 to 5. Students registered in SPIR 0672 should focus on a topic relevant to spiritual formation in the Orthodox tradition. At least 8 resources must be consulted to produce a grounded research paper. Students are to consult with the instructor about their intended research topic prior to engaging in it. 8 – 10 pages.

The research papers will be evaluated based on:

- Primary and secondary resources used in the course readings and bibliography
- Critical thinking
- Clarity of thought
- Structure and content
- Accuracy
- Comprehensiveness

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
1. Discussion Forums & Response	Weekly & any six weeks	20 %
2. Midterm Project	Mar 3	25 %
3. Orthodox Church Visit & Reflection	Mar 17	20 %
4. Final Research Paper	Apr 7	35 %
Total Grade		100 %

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 (Jan 13): The Rich History of Orthodoxy

- Early History of Orthodoxy
- Orthodox Church Families

Reading:

On First Principles by Origen (Book I & II)

McGuckin, Chapter 1: *The Pilgrimage of the Orthodox through History*, pp. 5-23.

Week 2 (Jan 20): Significant Theological Contributions

- First Theological Schools
- Defending and Expressing our Common Faith Through Church Councils and Creeds

Reading:

The Catechetical Lectures by Cyril of Jerusalem (Lectures 1-11)

Malaty, *The School of Alexandria*, pp. 37-50.

Week 3 (Jan 27): Major Orthodox Theological Voices

- Origen
- Athanasius of Alexandria
- Cyril of Alexandria
- John Chrysostom
- Gregory of Nyssa

Reading:

The Catechetical Lectures by Cyril of Jerusalem (Lectures 12-23)

St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*.

Week 4 (Feb 3): Orthodox Spirituality

- The various Monastic Movements
- The Spread and Impact of Monasticism on Western and Global Christianity

Readings:

St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Antony*.

Malaty, Tadros. "The Coptic Church and the Monastic Movement." In *The Coptic Church*, 56-68. Melbourne: Church of Alexandria, 1978.

McGuckin, John. "Traditions of Orthodox Prayer and Spirituality." In *Incarnate Love: Essays in Orthodox Ethics*, 345-354. 2nd ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020.

Week 5 (Feb 10): The Church of the Martyrs

- The Sacrificial Life of Early Christians
- The Persecuted Church under Various Political Structures
- The Persecuted Christians: A Model of Church Growth and Perseverance to the Global Church

Reading:

The Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Romans

The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas

Malaty, *The Coptic Church Before the Council of Chalcedon*, pp. 26-36.

February 17-20: Reading Days, NO CLASS

Week 6 (Feb 24): Orthodox Theology and Liturgy

- Liturgical Theology
- Sacramental Theology
- Ecclesiology

Reading:

Ware, *Orthodox Worship, II: The Sacraments*, pp. 281-306.

Schmemmann, Alexander. *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*. 2nd expanded ed. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.

Week 7 (Mar 3): Visual Theology of the Art

- Iconography
- Iconoclasm
- Hagiology

Reading:

Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon* (Volume I), Ch. 1-3.
McGuckin, *The Holy Icons: Doors to the Kingdom*, pp. 354-363.
Youssef, *Oriental Orthodoxy Unveiled*, Ch. 9.

Week 8 (Mar 10): Contemporary Orthodox Theologians

- Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov, Florovsky
- Pope Shenouda III, Fr. Matthew the Poor, Habib Guirguis
- Bishop Kallistos Ware, Fr. John Behr

Readings:

Behr, J. (2013). *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity*, Introduction & Ch.1.
Gavrilyuk, Paul. "Sergii Bulgakov." In *The Orthodox Christian World*, edited by A. Casiday, Chapter 35. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012.
Mikhail, Maged S. A. "Matta Al-Miskîn." In *The Orthodox Christian World*, edited by A. Casiday, Chapter 37. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012.

Week 9 (Mar 17): Orthodox Mission during the Early Centuries of Christianity

- Coptic Mission to Africa and Europe
- Syriac Mission to Asia

Reading:

Briquelet Chatonnet, Françoise, and Muriel Debié. "Missionary Communities: Syriac Christianity in Asia." In *The Syriac World: In Search of a Forgotten Christianity*, 2023. New Haven: Yale University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.2543557.11>.
Geffert, Bryn, and Theofanis G. Stavrou. 2016. *Eastern Orthodox Christianity : The Essential Texts*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 178-191.

Week 10 (Mar 24): Contemporary Orthodox Mission and Church Planting

- Orthodox Mission and Church Planting in Eastern and Western Europe
- Orthodox Mission and Church Planting in Africa
- Orthodox Mission and Church Planting in Australia, North and South America.

Readings:

Oleksa, Michael. "The Orthodox Mission in America." *International Review of Mission* 80, no. 320 (1991): 75-88.
Noble, Tim. "Rights of the Indigenous People and the Orthodox Mission to Alaska." *International Review of Mission* 101, no. 2 (2012): 164-183.
Ogren, David. *The Coptic Church in South Africa: The Meeting of Mission and Migration*, 1–7.

Week 11 (Mar 31): Orthodoxy in Contemporary Church Context

- The Relationship Among the Orthodox Church Families
- Global Orthodoxy and Catholicism

- Orthodoxy and the Various Protestant and Evangelical Churches
- The Contributions of the Orthodoxy to the Ecumenical Movement

Reading:

FitzGerald, Thomas. "How to Understand Christian Unity (Ecumenism) in Relation to Orthodox Identity? – A First Theological Approach." In *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education*, edited by Pantelis Kalaitzidis et al, 1-15. Fortress Press, 1517 Media, 2013. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1ddcpjz.8>.

Hovorun, Cyril. "Official Texts on Ecumenism – A Systematic Introduction." In *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education*, edited by Pantelis Kalaitzidis et al, 1-15. Fortress Press, 1517 Media, 2013. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1ddcpjz.9>.

McGuckin, John. "The Role of Orthodoxy in World Christianity Today – Historical, Demographic and Theological Perspectives – An Introduction." In *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education*, edited by Pantelis Kalaitzidis et al, 1-15. Fortress Press, 1517 Media, 2013. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1ddcpjz.7>.

Sokolovski, Augustin. "Ecumenism of Faith and Ecumenism of History: Distorted Images of Ecumenism in the Today's Orthodox Perspective." In *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education*, edited by Pantelis Kalaitzidis et al, 1-15. Fortress Press, 1517 Media, 2013. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1ddcpjz.10>.

Alemezan, Nareg. "The Oriental Orthodox Family of Churches in Ecumenical Dialogue." *The Ecumenical Review* 61, no. 3 (October 2009): 315-327. DOI: 10.1111/j.1758-6623.2009.00029.x.

Week 12 (Apr 7): Orthodoxy in Contemporary World Context

- Current Models of Church Planting and Mission
- Current Models of Engaging Social and Cultural Contexts
- Orthodoxy and Globalization

Reading:

Guglielmi, Marco. *Globalization and Orthodox Christianity: A Global Perspective*. Religions (Basel, Switzerland) 9.7 (2018): 216-226.

Guroian, Vigen. "The Problem of a Social Ethic." In *Incarnate Love: Essays in Orthodox Ethics*, 141-162. 2nd ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alfeyev, Hilarion. *The Mystery of Faith*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2002.

Athanasius. *St. Athanasius on the Incarnation: The Treatise De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*. New ed., rev. London: A.R. Mowbray & Co., 1953.

Behr, John. *Becoming Human: meditations on Christian Anthropology in Word and Image*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2013.

Blane, Andrew, ed., *Georges Florovsky, Russian Intellectual, Orthodox Churchman*. Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993.

Clendenin, Daniel (ed). *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*. Michigan: Baker Books, 1995.

Cunningham, Mary B. and Elizabeth Theokritoff, *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Florovsky, Georges. *Bible Church Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*. Belmont: Norland Publ. Co., 1987.

Kalaitzidēs, Fitzgerald, T., Hovorun, C., Pekridou, A., Asproulis, N., & Werner, D. *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education*. Regnum Books International, 2013.

Lossky, Vladimir. *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*. Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1978.

Louth, Andrew. *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.

Malaty, Fr. Tadros Y. *Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church*. Preparatory edition. Canada, 1987.

McGuckin, John A. *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine and Spiritual Culture*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

McGuckin, John A. *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

Meyendorff, John. *Byzantine Theology*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1987.

Schmemmann, Alexander. *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*. 2nd expanded ed. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.

Staniloae, Dumitru. *The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998.

Malaty, Tadros Y. *Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church*. Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, 1993.

Mattá, al-Miskīn. *The Communion of Love*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984.

Mosebach, & Price, A. L. *The 21: A Journey into the Land of Coptic Martyrs*. Plough Publishing House, 2019.

Ogren, David. *The Coptic Church in South Africa: The Meeting of Mission and Migration*. Hervormde teologiese studies 70.1 (2014): 1–7.

Ouspensky, Léonide. *Theology of the Icon*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992.

Ross, Johnson, T., & Tadros, M. *Christianity in North Africa and West Asia*. Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

Valliere, Paul. *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Ware, Timothy. *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*. 3rd Revised edition. Penguin Books, 2015.

Youssef, Andrew N.A. *Oriental Orthodoxy Unveiled*. Agora University Press, 2022.

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details. Students must review the policies and procedures regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) outlined in [Academic Calendar](#) and consult guidance from their course instructors.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for policies and expectations on Attendance and Classroom Expectations, Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

[Tyndale Library](#) supports courses with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).