



Introduction to Oriental Orthodox Theology

30 credits

This is offered as a 30-credit course and is made up of three compulsory courses and one elective course. The compulsory parts are: Liturgy and icons; the Oriental Churches and the rise of the Arab empire; the Oriental Churches in the later Ottoman empire. The elective is chosen from the following: Coptic Orthodox Theology, Tewahedo Orthodox Theology, The Renaissance of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

Students will examine the effects of the formative encounter of the Church with Islam, and particularly the effect this had on the self-understanding of the Church. It took several hundred years for the Oriental Orthodox Churches to adapt to the new situation and during the early Ottoman period the Oriental Churches moved into dialogue with their surrounding culture and formulated a theology based on the new situation. The late Ottoman period, which ends with the Armenian and Syrian holocaust, was crucial for understanding the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the 20th century.

Following this part-time distance course is an ideal way to deepen your knowledge of the Oriental Orthodox tradition in one academic year.

Length: 1 year, 30 ECTS credits

Study pace: Half-time

Type of instruction: Distance learning

Language of instruction: English

Level: University, introductory level

Organizer: Stockholm School of Theology
(University College Stockholm)

DISTRIBUTION OF COURSES

Semester	Course Title	Credits / ECTS
Fall Semester	The Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Rise of the Arab Empire	7.5
	Liturgy and Icons	7.5
Spring Semester	The Oriental Orthodox Churches in the Late Ottoman Empire	7.5
	Elective courses: Coptic Orthodox Theology, Tewahedo-Orthodox Theology, or The Renaissance of the Syriac-Orthodox Church	7.5

THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND THE RISE OF THE ARAB EMPIRE

This course will focus on the relationship between the Oriental Christian Churches in the early days of the Arab empire. The Oriental Orthodox churches were the first Christian churches to encounter the rise of Islam and the Arab empire. The rise of the empire, in the aftermath of the schism in Chalcedon in 451 AD, is remembered as a traumatic event in the histories of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The Oriental Orthodox Churches struggled to find ways to relate to their new situation and the production of apocalyptic texts at this time indicates that many saw this as an existential struggle. Such texts and others produced at that time offer a window into how Oriental Orthodox Christians thought of the early Islamic movement and how the Churches related to each other.

LITURGY AND ICONS

This course introduces the liturgical dimension of the Eastern Orthodox tradition understood as a communal experience of the divine. Special emphasis will be placed on the Divine Liturgy and on icons. Students will learn about how the Divine Liturgy has evolved, its structure and the place of *leiturgia* in the overall theological tradition of the Church.

The theology of icons occupies a prominent place within Orthodox theology. This course therefore also introduces students to the ways in which icons have been understood theologically and how they contribute to the communal experience of liturgy.

THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

This is a course on the modern history of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the Middle East and in Ethiopia from the 17th century until the early 20th century. The course will explore the development of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, identifying different movements and streams of thought that were important, such as the impact of the missionaries from Europe and the USA and their influence. It will also address the issues and internal struggles that the Churches found themselves dealing with in the late Ottoman period and during the fall of the Ottoman Empire. This course focuses on both the general social context of the Middle East during this time period and the specific issues faced by the Churches.

COPTIC ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

Eastern Christian theology has developed within different communities. In the Coptic Orthodox community it developed under the Islamic empire but in the spiritual cradle of Eastern Christianity and its theological and philosophical centre in Alexandria. With its roots embedded in Jewish religious belief, the Coptic culture also adopted aspects of Pharaonic culture. This course will introduce students to the rich resources of this ancient tradition.

TEWAHEDO ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

Eastern Christian Theology has developed within different communities. In the Tewahedo Orthodox community it developed in close relationship with Judaism and Ge'ez was one of the first seven languages the Bible was translated into. As an institution it developed from a dependent relationship with the Coptic Orthodox Church to an autocephalous Church in the 20th century. This course will introduce students to one of the ancient Christian traditions which remains for many largely unknown.

THE RENAISSANCE OF THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX CHURCH

This course examines the development and the spread of Syriac Christianity after the 9th century, the so-called renaissance period of the Syriac Orthodox Church, when Syriac authors produced a great deal of material which interacted closely with Arabic philosophy. The peak of this period ends with the death of Bar Hebraeus in 1286 AD. The course will examine the interaction between Arabic philosophy and the Syriac church fathers, and especially the dependency on Al-Ghazali.

REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must meet general requirements for university studies.

Students from outside Sweden, or students who cannot verify proficiency in English, are required to take an internationally recognized test, e. g. TOEFL, IELTS or equivalent.

COST OF STUDY

Students at Stockholm School of Theology are not required to pay tuition fees if they are citizens of Sweden or another EU country, or if they have been granted permission to live in Sweden. The information about tuition fees for other international students is available on <https://ehs.se/tuition-fees>. However, all students registered for academic programs are required to pay a student union fee, which is 100 SEK per term for distance students.

HOW TO APPLY

Apply through www.universityadmissions.se or www.antagning.se until August 10, 2020.

For all questions related to the program please visit <https://www.ehs.se/eastern-christian-studies> or contact lecturer Gabriel Bar-Sawme at gabriel.barsawme@sanktignatios.org.

Contacts for questions related to the application process can be found [here](#).