



**FIFTH SUMMER SCHOOL
FOR ORTHODOX CLERGY AND LAY THEOLOGIANs
FROM UKRAINE**

VOLOS, GREECE
JULY 7 - 21, 2024



VOLOS ACADEMY FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

**FIFTH SUMMER SCHOOL
FOR ORTHODOX CLERGY
AND LAY THEOLOGIANS
FROM UKRAINE**

“Thessalia” Conference Center
Volos, Greece
July 7 – 21, 2024

The Fifth Summer School
for Orthodox Clergy and Lay Theologians from Ukraine
is supported financially
by the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs
of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs,
the Holy Metropolis of Demetrias
and the Holy Metropolis of Peristeri.

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Ivan Honchar Museum, Kyiv, Ukraine, 2013
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As a preface

The Fifth Summer School, just as in the previous years, is addressed to Orthodox clergy and lay theologians from Ukraine. The major goal of the programme is to familiarize the participants with the new socio-cultural challenges (secularism, globalization and religious pluralism, open society etc.) By participating in the training, participants will gain access to resources, physical and digital libraries, and the most recent literature on topics related to the organization and functioning of a Church in the contemporary and highly demanding European environment, as well as a sufficient overview of the most recent developments (representative figures, agenda etc) in the contemporary Orthodox theology of the second half of the 20th and the early 21th century. As the Summer School will take place in Volos, the participants will have an excellent opportunity to come to direct contact with the life and functioning of one of the most vivid and modern dioceses in Greece, the Metropolis of Demetrias, which has been a crossroads of dialogue between cultures and religious traditions for many decades.

It is the fifth summer school of this kind, and the third one that takes place *in situ* (the Schools of 2021 and 2022 were held online). The picture below comes from the year 2019, when the programme ended with a visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.



Timetable

SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2024

19:30 Inaugural Meeting

MONDAY, JULY 8, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Prof. Dr. Paul Ladouceur** (Orthodox School of Theology at Trinity College, University of Toronto; Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Université Laval, Canada):

*God and the World:
Modern Orthodox Theologies of Creation.*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr. Nikos Kouremenos** (Research Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies):

*Influence of Greek Theologians in 18th Century Ukrainian Territory:
The Cases of Eugenios Voulgaris and Nikiforos Theotokis I*

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Prof. Dr. Paul Ladouceur** (Orthodox School of Theology at Trinity College, University of Toronto; Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Université Laval, Canada):

*A Book of Life:
The Philokalia and the Philokalic Revival*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Maria Constantina Terss (Terzopoulou)** (PhD Candidate & Instructor, Art & Art History Department, Stanford University, CA, USA; Adjunct Professor, Hellenic College Holy Cross, Boston, MO, USA; ASCSA Senior Associate Member, American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece):

Iconoclasm & Iconophilia as Medieval Geopolitical & Sociocultural Markers

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Maria Constantina Terss (Terzopoulou)** (PhD Candidate & Instructor, Art & Art History Department, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA; Adjunct Professor, Hellenic College Holy Cross, Boston, MO, USA; ASCSA Senior Associate Member, American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece):

*Icons as Diplomacy:
The Cultural Embodiment of Values through Word, Image & Emotion*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr. Nikos Kouremenos** (Research Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies):

*Influence of Greek Theologians in 18th Century Ukrainian Territory:
The Cases of Eugenios Voulgaris and Nikiforos Theotokis II*

13:30-17:00 Lunch Break, free time

17:00-19:00 **Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis** (Deputy Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Hellenic Open University, Greece)

*Towards a Theology of Toleration:
An Eastern Orthodox View*

Brief Presentation of the European infrastructure programme RESILIENCE

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Rev. Dr. Vasileios Thermos** (Professor, Supreme Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens, Greece; Psychiatrist for children and adolescents)

Spiritual life and psychological life: a mutual interaction.

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Rev. Dr. Vasileios Thermos** (Professor, Supreme Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens, Greece; Psychiatrist for children and adolescents):

Youth of 21st century and Orthodox Conscience

FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Prof. Dr. Dimitrios Moschos** (Theological Faculty, University of Athens, Greece; Member of the Board of Directors of Volos Academy):

History of monasticism as means of rethinking Society and Christian Community in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages - Middle Byzantium

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Prof. Dr. Dimitrios Moschos** (Theological Faculty, University of Athens, Greece; Member of the Board of Directors of Volos Academy):

The Evolution of Greek speaking Orthodox Church and Theology since 19th century

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2024

08:00-10:00 Divine Service

10:00-19:00 All day excursion (Xenia monasteries, Nea Anchialos)

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024

07:30-19:00 All day excursion (Milies, Tsagarada)

MONDAY, JULY 15, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Prof. Dr. Gayle Woloschak** (Professor, Departments of Radiation Oncology, Radiology, and Cell and Molecular Biology, Northwestern University, USA; St Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary, Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA, Ecumenical Patriarchate):

Medical and Pastoral Issues of Concern for Orthodox Christians I

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Prof. Dr. Gayle Woloschak** (Professor, Departments of Radiation Oncology, Radiology, and Cell and Molecular Biology, Northwestern University, USA; St Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary, Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA, Ecumenical Patriarchate):

Medical and Pastoral Issues of Concern for Orthodox Christians II

TUESDAY, JULY 16, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Dr. Sr. Vassa Larin** (Host of the Online Catechetical Programs “Coffee with Sister Vassa”, USA):

Orthodox Catechesis in the Age of Social Media I

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Rev. Dr. Brandon Gallaher** (Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Exeter, UK):

*Ethnophyletism and Russkii Mir: ‘Heresy’ or a Secular Political Doctrine?
The Diaspora Debate*

17:00-20:00 Excursion to Makrinitza (with visit to the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Vespers and Dinner)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Rev. Dr. Brandon Gallaher** (Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Exeter, UK):

*Orthodox Christianity
and Inter-Religious Encounter*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr. Sr. Vassa Larin** (Host of the Online Catechetical Programs “Coffee with Sister Vassa”, USA):

Orthodox Catechesis in the Age of Social Media II

13:30-17:00 Lunch Break, free time

17:00-19:00 **Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis** (Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies)

New Trends in Greek Orthodox Theology

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Mr. Georgios Vlantis, MTh** (Director of the Council of Christian Churches (ACK) in Bavaria, Germany; Research Associate, Volos Academy, Greece):

Orthodox Engagement in Interchristian Dialogue: Theological Principles

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Mr. Georgios Vlantis, MTh** (Director of the Council of Christian Churches (ACK) in Bavaria, Germany; Research Associate, Volos Academy, Greece):

*The Jubilee of the Council of Nicaea (325)
and its Ecumenical Importance*

13:30-17:00 Lunch Break, free time

17:00-19:00 **Metropolitan Gregorios (Papathomas) of Peristeri** (Professor of Canon Law, Faculty of Theology, University of Athens, Greece; Member of the Board of Directors of Volos Academy)

The Canonical Collections of the Orthodox Church

FRIDAY, JULY 19, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Dr. Ionut Billiuta** (Research Associate, Gh. Sincai Institute, Romanian Academy, Târgu Mureș, Romania):

*Religious Freedom in the Post-Communist Romania:
A Tale of Many Silences*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr. Ionut Billiuta** (Research Associate, Gh. Sincai Institute, Romanian Academy, Târgu Mureş, Romania):

*Religious Freedom in the Post-Communist Romania:
A Church of Many Voices*

13:30-17:00

Lunch Break, free time

17:00-19:00 **Metropolitan Maximos (Vgenopoulos) of Selyvria** (University of London, Ecumenical Patriarchate)

*The Bilateral Dialogue between the Orthodox
and the Roman Catholic Churches:
History and Theology I*

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2024

09:00-11:00 **Metropolitan Maximos (Vgenopoulos) of Selyvria** (University of London, Ecumenical Patriarchate)

*The Bilateral Dialogue between the Orthodox
and the Roman Catholic Churches:
History and Theology II*

:

SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2024

07:30-11:00 Divine Liturgy
Free day and departures

Participants and Abstracts

Dr. Paul Ladouceur

Professor,
Orthodox School of Theology,
Trinity College, University of Toronto;

Montreal Institute of Orthodox
Theology, Université Laval,
Canada



Dr Paul Ladouceur teaches at the Orthodox School of Theology at Trinity College, University of Toronto, and at the Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology, Université Laval. His most recent books are *Modern Orthodox Theology* (T&T Clark, 2019), and, with Brandon Gallaher as co-editor, *The Patristic Witness of Georges Florovsky: Essential Theological Writings* (T&T Clark, 2019). His current major writing projects focus on Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, comparative theology, modern Orthodox spirituality, and the theology of Myrrha Lot-Borodine. Dr. Ladouceur represents the Archdiocese of Canada of the Orthodox Church in America in the Canadian Council of Churches, and is Orthodox Co-Chair of the Orthodox-Pentecostal Academic Dialogue.

God and the World: Modern Orthodox Theologies of Creation

How God, as infinite, eternal, uncreated, immaterial and transcendent, relates to the finite, contingent and material and immaterial created world has long challenged human thought. Orthodox philosophers and theologians from the late nineteenth century onwards proposed different approaches to this challenge. This lecture explores six modern Orthodox theologies of creation: all-unity and cosmism; sophiology or Divine Wisdom; the divine energies, the *logoi* of creation; and panentheism. Some of these theologies have fallen by the wayside, while others are mutually compatible and provide a solid theological basis for dialogue between faith and theology and for an Orthodox theology of the environment.

A Book of Life: The *Philokalia* and the Philokalic Revival

The publication of the Greek *Philokalia* in 1782, followed in 1793 by a partial Slavonic translation, inaugurated a vast and enduring spiritual revival in Orthodoxy, the effects of which are still evident. This lecture examines the context and origins of the *Philokalia*, its content and major themes, and its diffusion throughout Orthodoxy, from the early nineteenth century to the present. Hesychastic spirituality is the central theme of the *Philokalia*, with the Jesus Prayer as its central spiritual practice. The lecture will also examine the spread of the Jesus Prayer in the West beyond the Orthodox tradition.

Dr. Nikos Kouremenos

Research Associate,
Volos Academy for Theological Studies,
Greece



Nikos Kouremenos holds a PhD in Oriental Ecclesiastical Sciences from the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies (PIO) in Rome. His research interests focus on the historical course of Christianity in the Mediterranean world and the engaging of the contemporary Orthodox theology with the ecumenical movement as well. In 2020, he co-edited a volume with the title *Nationalism and Ecumenical Orthodoxy* published by CEMES publications. He is currently Research Associate at the Volos Academy of Theological Studies (Volos, Greece).

Influence of Greek Theologians in 18th Century Ukrainian Territory: The Cases of Eugenios Voulgaris and Nikiforos Theotokis

This compact course explores the significant influence of Greek theologians Eugenios Voulgaris and Nikiforos Theotokis on the religious, cultural, and educational landscape of 18th century Ukrainian territory. Through two in-depth lectures, students will gain a concise yet comprehensive understanding of their life, works, and the broader implications of Greek-Ukrainian intellectual exchanges during this period. The objectives of the course are: (1) To introduce the historical and religious context of 18th century Ukraine. (2) To examine the biographies and theological contributions of Eugenios Voulgaris and Nikiforos Theotokis. (3) To understand the impact of their work on Ukrainian education, religion, and culture and (4) To explore the broader implications of Greek-Ukrainian intellectual and theological exchanges.

Maria Constantina Terss (Terzopoulou)

PhD (ABD), Stanford University,
Stanford, CA, USA



Maria Constantina Terss (Terzopoulou) is a seventh-year PhD Candidate in Byzantine and Medieval art history at Stanford University. Maria researches the dialogical relationship between the Byzantine East and the Medieval West through image, word, and liturgy. She uncovers how glory—doxa in Greek and gloria in Latin—was used to express the orthodoxy of iconophile art through the manipulation of light, color, and form in the ninth century. In 2017 she received her M.A.R. in Byzantine Material Culture from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and the Yale Divinity School, Yale University. Her scholarly background includes extensive paleographical training from the 2015 ASCSA and Gennadius Library Byzantine Palaeography program, Stanford's 2017 Medieval Palaeography course, Stanford's 2019 TEC Grant for research at the University of Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum's Department of Printed Books, the 2021 Princeton Rome Global Gateway Digital Paleography Workshop, and the 2022 Archival Notre Dame Summer Rome Seminar.

Iconoclasm & Iconophilia as Medieval Geopolitical & Sociocultural Markers

This course argues for the coexistence of iconoclastic and iconophile tendencies already from the origins of Christianity. It demonstrates how this phenomenon surfaces through an intercultural, image-based dialogue. It examines its occurrences until the Post-Iconoclastic period (ca. post-ninth century), through primary images and their sources. In the process, it uncovers a complex picture of sociocultural assimilation, differentiation, and strife for geopolitical autonomy, and makes visible the uncomfortable tension, growth, and decline of cultural contact. This approach reveals how this respective emphasis or deemphasis in images indicates serious geopolitical and sociocultural shifts. Specifically, we will traverse swiftly through the visual culture of Early Christianity's struggle to differentiate itself from dominant cultural inferences such as Judaism, and Hellenic philosophy and religion, Eastern Byzantine Orthodoxy and Western Roman Catholic relations, and finally Christian and Muslim contacts.

Icons as Diplomacy: The Cultural Embodiment of Values through Word, Image & Emotion

This course demonstrates how icons (εἰκόνες) have acted as diplomatic tools by promoting relationships, providing representation, playing a role in defense and negotiation, and making observation possible. Specifically, εἰκόνες have supplied perception to complex cultural concepts and shaped them into exchangeable cultural values. To paraphrase the iconophile theologian John of Damascus (675, 676 AD -749 AD) icons can either be externalized physically in the form of an image or the written word, but also internalized through affect. With the stimulation of emotion and their consequent noetic materialization images can also “be felt” with the assistance of memory. This approach will be explored in class case studies that span the sixth to the twelfth century and focus on examples in Sinai, Constantinople, and papal Rome. Starting with the largest and earliest surviving collection of Christian images in Sinai, Egypt we will explore the diplomatic role of representations of the Enthroned Virgin, the Anastasis (or *Descent into Hades*), and Pentecost. Finally, we will examine the visualization of the concept “righteous suffering” in the illuminated *Vatican Job* manuscript (Vat. Gr. 749) and “salvific redemption” in John Climacus' *Ladder of Divine Ascent* from Sinai Codex 418.

Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis

Deputy Director of Volos Academy;

Lecturer,
Hellenic Open University, Greece



Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis is Deputy Director of Volos Academy for Theological Studies and lecturer in systematic theology at the Hellenic Open University (Patras, Greece). He has authored many articles on the history and theology of the Orthodox Church, theological methodology and hermeneutics, political theology, eco-theology and theological education. He is executive manager of the Volos Academy's eco-theological project "Green parish initiative and parallel activities". His recent publications include *The Orthodox Church addresses Climate Crisis* (co-edited with Theodota Nantsou, Volos Academy Publications-WWF Greece, 2021); *Priests of Creation: John Zizioulas on Discerning an Ecological Ethos* (co-edited with John Chrysavgis, T&T Clark, 2021); *Christian Responses to Spiritual Incursions into 21st-Century Church and Society* (co-edited with S. Devenish, Cambridge Publishing Scholars, 2020).

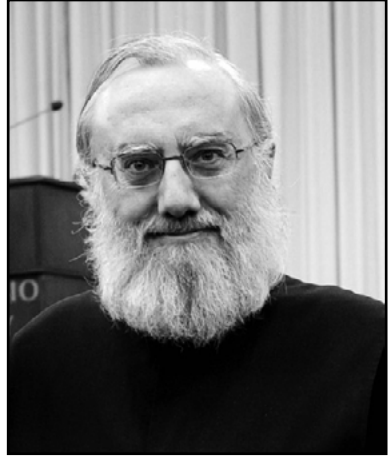
Towards a Theology of Toleration: An Eastern Orthodox View

It is methodologically problematic to project modern concepts (e.g. toleration, religious freedom, or pluralism) which may represent a variety of connotations, onto earlier historical periods, not applied to it. By saying this, one can barely find within the long history of Orthodoxy (meaning from the early period of the Church up at least to the 15th c.) any comprehensive and theoretical account of tolerance in the modern sense. At the same time, however, the Orthodox churches have encountered various religious traditions, either in the pluralistic context of the late Roman empire (ancient Church) and basically during the post-modern globalized and secularized world or in the Byzantine empire and the modern nation-states, where the church was closely linked to the state power. This lack should not prevent someone from searching for certain instances in Orthodox tradition, as it has been exemplified especially within Greek (Byzantine) Orthodoxy, which meant to play a decisive role in the formation of the Orthodox identity and spirituality as a whole, which can be used, either directly or indirectly, as building blocks towards an Orthodox vision of toleration.

Rev. Dr. Vasileios Thermos

Professor,
Supreme Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens,
Greece;

Psychiatrist for children and adolescents



Rev. Vasileios Thermos, M.D., Ph.D., was born in 1957 at Lefkada, Greece. He is a child and adolescent psychiatrist and holds a doctorate on Pastoral Psychology of Athens University. In 1986 and 1987 he was ordained, and has been engaged into training programs for clergy in Greece, Cyprus, USA. In 1996-97 he was a Visiting Scholar at Harvard Divinity School, Boston College, Boston University, Andover Newton. In 2014 he worked for 3 months as a Visiting Research Scholar at the Institute of Medical Humanities of the Medical School of Texas University. He has written extensively on sexuality and gender, and also conducted a research on clergy health and burnout. Some of his books and articles have been translated into English, French, Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Finnish. He is the editor of a Greek journal on the relationships between religion and psychology. Two master theses on his total work have appeared, in 2004 at the Theological School of Balamand University, and in 2020 at the Theological School of the University of Wien. In 2017-18 his essay *The Paradox of Mental Health Care and Spirituality: The Culture of Extreme Individualism as a Mediator* was awarded the prize on the “Culture, Care, and Spirituality” contest by the Jean-Marc Fischer Foundation in Switzerland. He is a Professor in the University Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens.

Spiritual Life and Psychological Life: a Mutual Interaction

Psychology and psychotherapy have been increasingly disseminated in the West, therefore questions arise on their relationship with Orthodox Theology. This presentation will attempt to navigate between the two extremes: *psychologism* (as a surrender to a secular spirit without applying theological criteria) and *fundamentalism* (as a insecure attachment to habitual norms, as well as suspicion and hostility to science). Similarities and differences between spiritual life and psychological life will be presented, in the purpose to make manifest that human psyche is the 'first matter' for sanctification. I will also aim at indicating aspects of human life where psychological help is indispensable. Last but not least, the distinction between *soul* and *psyche* will be analyzed, a distinction that calls for a cooperation of theology and psychology because they are not incompatible.

Youth of 21st Century and Orthodox Conscience

Contemporary youth grows in the heart of postmodernity which has become their own culture; as a consequence new and huge challenges are posed for the Orthodox Church and Christianity in general. In this presentation I will highlight the significant characteristics of postmodern culture, in order to elaborate on how they modify emotions, opinions, erotic love and sex, goals in life, and the moral universe. Then I will attempt to identify the shortcomings of the Orthodox Church in front of postmodernity, as well as her potential for a fruitful dialogue with contemporary youth.

Dr. Dimitrios Moschos

Professor of Church History,
University of Athens (NKUA), Greece;

Privatdozent,
Theological Faculty of Rostock University,
Germany;

Member of the Board of Directors
of Volos Academy



Dimitrios Moschos studied Theology at the Department of Theology of Athens University (NKUA), Greece (BA, 1986) and Byzantine Studies at the University of Munich, Germany (MA, 1994). In 1996 he earned his Ph.D. by the Department of Theology of Athens and 2007 his Doctor Habilitatus (Post-doctorate Degree) in Church History by the Theological Faculty of University of Rostock, Germany. After having served as Religious Education teacher in Secondary Education, he is Faculty member (since 2021 Full Professor) at the Department of Theology of NKUA in Church History. Since 2007 he teaches also as adjunct Professor (Privatdozent) at the Theological Faculty of Rostock University, Germany. He is member of the International Orthodox Theological Association and of the editorial board of the theological review "Synaxi". Since 2018 serves as Director of the Oriental Christianity Research Laboratory (OCREL) at the Department of Theology of NKUA. In September 2022 is elected Head of the Department of Theology NKUA. His research interests cover the interrelation between history of Christianity and broader religious and cultural currents (e.g. asceticism or Greek philosophy) as well as evolving institutions (episcopal office, synodality) and social change within Christian Church, especially Eastern and Oriental Orthodox during the Late Antique and medieval period.

History of Monasticism as Means of Rethinking Society and Christian Community in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages / Middle Byzantium

One usually studies Christian monasticism in the context of an individualized pastoral counseling and spiritual quest. However, church historical research puts monasticism on a different background: As a movement of rethinking society in the light of the future Kingdom of God can put forth a concept for a better society. This is already demonstrated by cultural anthropologists such as Peter Brown. What is usually neglected is the constructive role of monasticism for the Christian community itself. We usually regard monks as troublemakers during the Christological controversies, yet it is interesting to regard all this spiritual literature after the 5th century as a tool for refurbishing the unity of the local church communities. This approach of monasticism can teach us how crucial aspects of Christian life and devotion can contribute to the change of history and the society.

The evolution of Greek speaking Orthodox Church and Theology since 19th century

The recent history of the Greek speaking theology in Greece, and in the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is not broadly known outside the Greek audience. In this course it will be given a brief historical sketch of the Church interrelated with the political and social history after the 19th century and an attempt of exposition of the essential intellectual and theological currents during the period until today.

Dr. Gayle Woloschak

Professor of Radiation Oncology,
Radiology, and Cell and Molecular Biology,
Northwestern University USA;

Professor of Science and Religion,
St Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA,
Ecumenical Patriarchate



Dr. Gayle Woloschak has a PhD in Biomedical Sciences and a DMin in Eastern Christian studies. She is currently Professor of Radiation Oncology and Associate Dean of The Graduate School at Northwestern University as well as Professor of Science and Religion at Lutheran School of Theology Chicago. She has worked in the area of science-religion dialogue for over 20 years and is active in numerous organizations including current President of the Center for Advanced Studies in Religion and Science and Associate Director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science.

Medical and Pastoral Issues of Concern for Orthodox Christians

This course is a multi-part program that will consider technological issues that are being practiced in medicine today and how ethical and pastoral issues should guide decision-making. As new technologies are being developed, the number of decision points that individuals face has become increasingly complex; when people turn to the Church for help in making these decisions, often the Church has little guidance to provide because the matters have not been discussed adequately or because the priests and clergy that deal with these issues are not well-informed. This series of lectures will provide some strategies for consideration of these technology issues from both an ethical and a practical perspective. The outlines for this entire series is: (1) Introduction (2) In Vitro Fertilization (3) Stem Cells (4) Genetics and Behavior Considerations (5) Gene Editing (6) End of Life Technologies (7) Genetic Counseling (8) Concluding Perspectives.

Sr. Dr. Vassa Larin

Host of the online catechetical programs
“Coffee with Sister Vassa”, USA



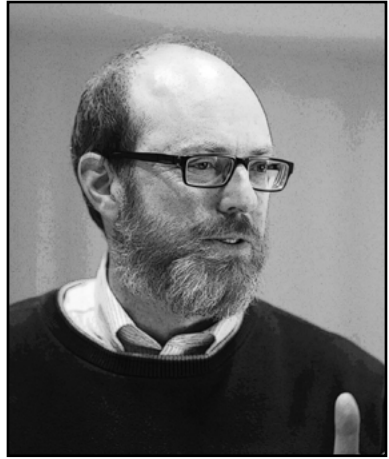
Dr. Sr. Vassa Larin is a liturgiologist, nun of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and host of the online catechetical programs “Coffee with Sister Vassa”. She is author of several books and many articles, scholarly and popular. Her most recent book is *Praying in Time. The Hours & Days in Step with Orthodox Christian Tradition* (Wipf & Stock, 2023), about praying the Hours in Byzantine tradition. Sister Vassa’s online-mission includes a daily Newsletter (with a brief reflection on Scripture), weekday audio-podcasts called “Monday Morning Coffee” (on the practical applications of the liturgical calendar and Scripture), a video-course on Divine Liturgy (available on YouTube), and other YouTube videos on Orthodox Theology, Tradition, and modern-day issues of Orthodox Canon Law and church life.

Orthodox Catechesis in the Age of Social Media: The Challenges of Learning and Living ‘Orthodoxy’ Amidst Internet Polemics

In the first part of this course, Sr. Vassa will first identify the specific challenges of Orthodox Christian adult catechesis (and “in-churching” or votserkovlenie) both of clergy and laypeople, in the context of the Internet Age. These include the technical/technological problems of community-building online; of community-building in highly-divisive times of political strife or war; and amidst the postmodern ways of thinking and argumentation. Second, Sr. Vassa will suggest several creative solutions to these challenges, including both online and offline approaches to adult catechesis. The final two hours of the course will be dedicated to “Defining the Basic Categories of Orthodox Christian Faith,” and will explore the learning and teaching of fundamental categories of the faith, as a foundation upon which one can build catechetical programs in the age of social media. der diversity and nationalism?

Dr. Brandon Gallaher

Associate Professor
of Systematic Theology,
University of Exeter, UK



Brandon Gallaher is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Exeter (Devon, UK). His publications include *Freedom and Necessity in Modern Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), [with Paul Ladouceur] *The Patristic Witness of Georges Florovsky: Essential Theological Writings* (London: T & T Clark, 2019) and [with John Chryssavgis] *The Living Christ: The Theological Legacy of Georges Florovsky* (London: T & T Clark, 2021). His recent research has focussed on Orthodoxy and modernity, comparative theology, political theology and the ecclesiology of Sergii Bulgakov. Gallaher served as a Theological Subject Expert in the Ecumenical Patriarchate Press Office at the Holy and Great Council of Crete (2016) and was a member of the 'Special Commission' of theologians who help draft the Ecumenical Patriarchate's *For the Life of the World: Towards a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church* (2020) (with responsibility for the section on ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue). He was one of the drafters and two co-coordinators (along with Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis) of the March 2022, 'A Declaration on the Russian World (*Russkii mir*) Teaching'. He serves as a priest of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Ethnophyletism and Russkii Mir: 'Heresy' or a Secular Political Doctrine? The Diaspora Debate

The debate on the ideology of *Russkii mir* in the Orthodox diaspora has been particularly fiery since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The lecture will first set out in a sketch form the *Russkii mir* teaching within the context of the troubled history of Orthodoxy with nationalism and ethno-phyletism. It will then, after giving a brief sketch of the Russian world teaching, look in some detail at the 'Declaration on the Russian World Teaching' ('Volos Declaration') of March 13, 2022 (Sunday of Orthodoxy) as a contemporary Orthodox response to nationalism more broadly and *Russkii mir* in particular drawing on the 'Barmen Declaration' (1934). The last part of the lecture will look at some of the diaspora critics of the Declaration, the contention that *Russkii mir* is a 'myth' and the recent debate among Orthodox progressives about whether the category of 'heresy' can be applied to the teaching or whether it is more honest to simply say the teaching is a secular political doctrine. The focus in the lecture will be on the diaspora debate but it is hoped that the debate in Ukraine as well as in online Russian and Ukrainian spheres can be brought out in classroom discussion.

Orthodox Christianity and Inter-Religious Encounter

This two-part lecture will first give a brief introductory overview of the history, theory and practice of interreligious encounter as well as some of the differing Christian theologies of religion (including the relatively new discipline of 'comparative theology') and the different practices of interreligious dialogue with a strong emphasis on its place in the public sphere. It will then look at some of the major theoreticians in the history of Orthodox engagement with other religions and set out a contemporary Orthodox theology of religions.

Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis

Director,
Volos Academy for Theological Studies,
Greece



Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis studied Theology in Thessaloniki, and Philosophy in Paris, Sorbonne. He has published extensively in many languages in the areas of the eschatological dimension of Christianity, the dialogue between Orthodoxy and modernity, religious nationalism and fundamentalism, Political theology, contemporary Orthodox and Western theology, issues of renewal and reformation in Eastern Orthodoxy, Ecumenical and Inter-religious dialogue, Religious education, and more. He is serving as the editor of the theological series “Doxa & Praxis: Exploring Orthodox Theology” (WCC Publications), while he is a member of the Board of various theological journals (Political Theology, Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies, Review of Ecumenical Studies, The Wheel). He taught Systematic Theology at the Hellenic Open University, and St Sergius Institute of Orthodox Theology in Paris. He has also been a Research Fellow at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Boston), Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University (New Jersey), DePaul University (Chicago), Faculty of Theology of KU Leuven (Belgium), and the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Münster University (Germany). He is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Academy of Religion (EuARE), and co-Chair (with Prof. Papanikolaou) of the Political Theology group of the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA). For the last twenty-three years Dr. Kalaitzidis has been the Director of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, a research center in Greece dealing with modern issues for Eastern Orthodoxy. His English publications include among others *Orthodoxy and Political Theology* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2012), and (as co-editor) *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), and *Politics, Society and Culture in Orthodox Theology in a Global Age* (Paderbon: Brill/Schöningh, 2023).

New Trends in Greek Orthodox Theology

Theology in Greece today is the outcome of a long and complex historical process, in which many different, and even contradictory, trends and theological proclivities have converged and continue to converge, thereby defining its shape and agenda. Among these trends, a decisive role is attributed in the first section of the lecture to the so-called “generation of the 1960’s” (including among others pre-eminent Greek theologians such as Metropolitan of Pergamon John D. Zizioulas, Christos Yannaras, Nikos Nissiotis, Fr. John Romanides, Panagiotis Nellas), a Greek theological movement for renewal inspired mainly by the theology of the Russian diaspora and the call to “return to the Fathers.” In the second section are given the reactions to and criticism of the “theology of the 1960s,” both by conservative Greek academic and ecclesiastical circles, and by the progressive side which accused this theological movement of conservatism and anti-westernism. The emergence of the agenda initiated by the new theological generation (of 2000) is discussed in the main and longer (third) section. This new theological agenda and its principal characteristics come from points of disagreement with the theologians of the generation of the ‘60s, and from a renewed and more inclusive understanding of Orthodox theology which goes beyond the *problématique*, the language and the agenda of the 1960s. Among the topics raised and discussed by the new trends of Greek theology are: the re-discovery of Eschatology and its dynamic interpretation, ecclesiological issues, such as the centrality of the episcopal office, and the critique of the dominant place of monasticism in the life of the Church, the movement of liturgical renewal, the revalorization of mission, the re-discovery of ethics and the dilemma of ethics versus ontology, the renewed interest in political theology, the overcoming of anti-westernism and of the West-East divide as central interpretative key, a more constructive relationship between Orthodoxy and modernity, the critical approach of the “return to the Fathers” movement, the reconsideration of the devaluation of Biblical studies, the emergence of an Orthodox Feminist Theology and the debate on women’s ordination, the radical critique of religious nationalism, and the devolution into Byzantinism and ecclesiastical culturalism. In the fourth section the lecture names the settings and institutions that are hosting the new theological trends in Greek Orthodoxy, while it concludes by briefly reviewing the conservative and fundamentalist reactions toward this new theological agenda, and by highlighting the urgent need for contemporary Greek theology to face the new, dynamic and particularly challenging global context.

Georgios Vlantis, MTh

Director
of the Council of Christian Churches
in Bavaria, Munich, Germany;

Research Associate of Volos Academy,
Greece



Georgios Vlantis was born in Athens, Greece, in 1980. He studied in Athens and Munich. He holds a BA in Theology and a Masters in Comparative Philosophy of Religion. From 2009 to 2011 he worked as scientific advisor and conference leader at the Orthodox Academy of Crete. 2011-2016 he was assistant of the Chair of Orthodox Systematic Theology at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Munich. Since 2012 he has been an associate of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies. He has published articles on various issues pertaining to philosophy of religion, history of theology, and ecumenism, in Greek, German, English and Italian, e.g. on apophaticism, patristic considerations of atheism, reception of ecumenical documents, the Holy and Great Council of Crete, Ukrainian autocephaly, Orthodox fundamentalism, and Orthodoxy and modernity. He has translated books and articles into Greek, German and English and is active in various ecumenical forums in Germany and beyond. Since May 2016 he has been the Director (Geschäftsführer) of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Bavaria (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Bayern), Germany. On August 31, 2023 His All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew invested Georgios Vlantis Archon Hieromnimon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Orthodox Engagement in Interchristian Dialogue: Theological Principles

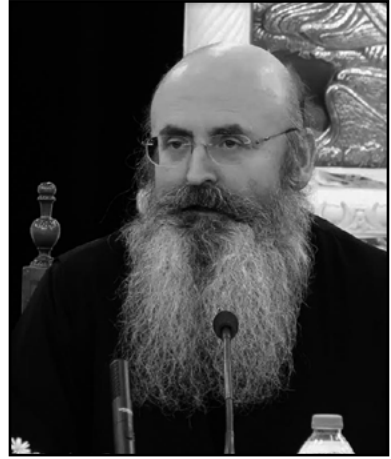
The lecture will focus on the theological principles which justify the Orthodox commitment to ecumenism. Why does the Orthodox Church participate in the ecumenical dialogue? Can the Body of Christ be divided? What are the limits of the Church and who can we ecclesialogically approach the relation between the Orthodox Church and the other Christian traditions? What is the place of the heterodox Other in its ecclesiology? Could the apophatic and ascetic ethos of the patristic tradition inspire the dialogue? To what extent is eschatology related to ecumenical theology? Do the Orthodox recognize the sacraments of the various non-orthodox denominations? What is their approach on issues like common prayer or intercommunion? Why is antiecumenism so strong in Orthodoxy? What is the Orthodox vision of unity, considering the challenges of a rapidly secularized Western world? What are the specific burdens (theological, structural, contextual) within Orthodoxy that affect its ecumenical involvement? How does the panorthodox crisis related to Ukrainian autocephaly influence the Orthodox understanding of ecumenism?

The Jubilee of the Council of Nicaea (325) and Its Ecumenical Importance

In 2025 the Orthodox Church, various other Christian traditions and the broader ecumenical community celebrate 1700 years since the Council of Nicaea (325 AD). The lecture will focus both on its importance for ecclesiastical history and Christian doctrine and its relevance for the interchristian dialogue nowadays. The Council of Nicaea confronted the challenge of Arianism, formulated a creed and introduced a series of canons of particular importance for the development of the administrative structures of the Church. Moreover, it marks a paradigm shift in the relations of Christianity with the political power, known as Constantinian shift. What does Nicaea mean for an ecumenically fruitful understanding of episcopal ministry, synodality, conciliarity and decision-making processes? To what extent is its language, coming from the encounter between the Bible and the Greek philosophy, binding for a convincing articulation of faith in the twenty-first century? Will the Jubilee of Nicaea strengthen the bonds of unity between Christians of different traditions or will the contradictory readings of its message make the existing differences more visible and rather unbridgeable?

H. E. Grigorios (Papathomas), Metropolitan of Peristeri

Professor of Canon Law
Faculty of Theology,
University of Athens (NKUA)
Greece



Metropolitan Grigorios (Papathomas) of Peristeri was born in Namata, Kozani, in 1960. He is Professor of Canon Law at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Athens and at the “Saint Sergius” Orthodox Institute of Theology in Paris, as well as at the “European Inter-University Programme of doctoral formation in Comparative Ecclesiastical and Canon Law Erasmus Gratianus” in Paris. Graded with a post-doctoral diploma in Law for Directing Research (*Habilitation à diriger les Recherches*) at “Jean Monnet” Faculty of Law of the University of Paris XI (1997), he published monographies and articles (20 books and about 105 articles) on Theology, Canon Law and History of Religions. He is the President of the “European Forum of Orthodox Schools of Theology” (EFOST) of the European Union and member of University Centres (Groups of Research) of a) “Law and Religious Societies” (D.S.R.) at “Jean Monnet” Faculty of Law of the University Paris XI and b) “Institute of Research for the Study of Religions” (I.R.E.R.) at the Faculty of Letters of the University Paris IV-Sorbonne. He teaches also Systematic, Patristic and Canonical Theology at the “Saint Platon” Orthodox Theological Seminary of Tallinn (Estonia). He was elected Metorpolitan of Peristeri in 2021.

The Canonical Collections of the Orthodox Church

Dr. Ionut Biliuta

Research Associate,
Gh. Sincai Institute,
Romanian Academy,
Târgu Mureș, Romania



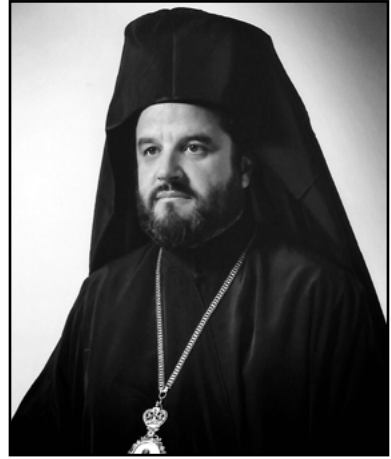
Ionut Biliuta is a Romanian historian of the Orthodox Church and Orthodox theologian. He pursued his historical studies at the Central European University (PhD in History 2014) and theological studies at Babes-Bolyai University (PhD in Orthodox Historical Theology 2017). Over the years, he received various doctoral, postdoctoral, and research grants from institutions in Germany, Austria, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel. His latest publication: "The Traditional and Modern Sources of André Scrima's Oeuvre: Religious Americanization, Competing Theophanies, and Transnational Theological Renewal in Contemporary Romania," in Viorel Coman, Alexandru Tofan (eds.), *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and the Culture of Dialogue: The Legacy of André Scrima (1920-2000)*, Paris: Cerf, 2024, pp. 271-291.

Religious Freedom in the Post-Communist Romania

The course explores the status of religious freedom in contemporary Orthodoxy, emphasizing the case study of the Orthodox Church in Romania. By undergoing a careful analysis of the state-church-civil society relationships through the frames of modernization, democratization of the public sphere, and gradual secularization, the lectures offer the students a broad image of the Romanian religious landscape, the challenges posed by nationalism, secularization, and the human rights, and the inner-struggles within the Romanian Orthodox Church in the last few decades. The first lecture provides a detailed account of the main theoretical underpinnings of religious freedom over the twentieth century from a multitude of perspectives (the freedom of speech and practice, the right to oppose the state and bishops' injustice, the limits of canonical boundaries in what concerns obedience towards the higher authority, the right to have different opinions than the bishop or the synod, etc.). Reconciling the most important Orthodox theologians (Justin Popovič, Serge Bulgakov, Dumitru Stăniloae, Nikolai Afanasiev, etc.) with the perspectives emerging from history and social sciences, the lectures promote interdisciplinary and, to some extent, ecumenical views on what religious freedom should be. Arguing that every institution should be considered a body constituted of many layers, each animated by its opinion, multiple individual voices (the hierarchy of bishops, the priests, the monks, the charismatic monks, etc.) co-existed within every church in the region. In this respect, the synodality of the Orthodox Church should be considered the living embodiment of opinions exchanged and debated freely among the clergy, monastics, and laity, and not just an opinion handed top-down. I will argue that societal and political modernization experienced by Romania, especially during the post-Communist years, determined tectonic shifts within Orthodox communities that eventually led to the onset of traditionalist fundamentalism and tribal ultranationalism. Romanian society's post-1989 political and social transformations determined the Orthodox Church to recalibrate its discourse(s) according to various challenges and pending issues. The two lectures track the vast array of silences and "voices" from within and outside the Orthodox Church, the motivation(s) behind these voices, and their impact on contemporary religious and secular milieus. Also, through a diachronic investigation, the second lecture addresses the tension between the public messages of the official Orthodox hierarchy and those emerging from various monastics and priests on controversial issues (LGBTQ rights, mandatory vaccination, church-state relations, Westernization, the war in Ukraine, etc.)

H. E. Maximos (Vgenopoulos), Metropolitan of Selyvria

University of London,
Ecumenical Patriarchate



His Eminence, Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria (Eastern Thrace-Turkey) studied theology in Athens and in Belgrade. He completed his doctoral studies in systematic theology at the University of London (Heythrop College) in 2008 and he is now member of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches. He has served the Ecumenical Patriarchate as Grand Archdeacon (2008-2014). He participated in ecumenical meetings and conferences and served as a lecturer in Orthodox ecclesiology at the Patriarchal Theological Academy on the island of Crete (Greece). He is the author of *Primacy in the Church from Vatican I to Vatican II: An Orthodox Perspective* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2013).

The Bilateral Dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches: History and Theology

Based on the official texts of the dialogue and the personal experience of the instructor, the course intends to provide a detailed overview of the history and theology, the topics, as well as the problems and the achievements of the bilateral dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches since the early 80's up to now. In addition, the course will also focus on the pioneering role of the late Patriarch Athenagoras in the middle 60's towards a rapprochement among the respected Churches, while it will highlight the intra-orthodox problems caused by certain Churches which put at risk the future of the official dialogue.

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