

# Patristics

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This is a module in the course SOURCES OF THE FAITH IN HISTORY AND THE PRESENT.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is an introduction to Patristics for beginners. The first part of the course begins by examining the human need to find a meaning to life and how in the theology of the early Church this need was answered by the “mystery of Christ”. The second part focuses on theological concepts such as the Trinity, Christology, anthropology, the sacraments and icons. In a third part we study two figures: Ephrem The Syrian, particularly his concept of divinization as the embodiment of “truth and love”, and Maria Skobtsova who saw her way of life as an expression of her theology. Students will also be expected to write a short paper on either an individual Church father/mother or on a specific theological concept.

## GOALS

After successful completion of the course students are expected to be able to:

- Recognize basic key concepts and be familiar with the theological vocabulary used in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition (salvation, eschatology, participation, mystery/sacraments, sin, death, repentance, creation out of nothing, prayer, Sobornost).
- Describe some of the basic theological concepts in their own words (such as Trinity, Christology, theosis, Theotokos, truth and love, salvation and the Church, becoming human).
- Understand how “pre-modern” theology differs from “modern” theology.
- Articulate in his or her own words how “the mystery of Christ” brings life through death.
- Understand theology as a way of life, as in the example of Maria Skobtsova.

## SCHEDULE

### GENERAL INFORMATION

This course will be divided into three parts each of which will follow one of the books set for the course. Each part is subdivided into two-week segments. In each segment you will have specified reading from the course material, an assignment to complete and an online discussion of the text. In addition, there will be online lectures and webinars. The teacher may also add quizzes or tests, or interact with the students in other fun ways.

Online lectures will help you to grasp the meaning of some of the ideas and concepts involved in the course and will also be an opportunity to place questions to the teacher “live”.

On a webinar, participants are able to make presentations and join in discussions. For this they need to be prepared.

If you are unable to join a webinar you can submit the assignment to the teacher instead.

As a student on this course you are expected to complete all the assignments and be present for every online session. If you miss one online session without permission of the teacher, he or she will contact you; if you miss two sessions without prior arrangement with the teacher you could lose your place on the course.

Webinars and online lectures require that you have the technical means to join in, with both sound (microphone) and video (camera).

## Quick Facts

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### Organizer

Sankt Ignatios Folkhögskola

### Level

Seminary

### Length

1 semester

### Study Pace

Part-time (50%)

### Type of Instruction

Distance learning

### Language of Instruction

Swedish & English

## Literature & Materials

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Behr, John. (2006) *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death*, St Vladimir Seminary Press (or the Swedish version “*Kristusmysteriet: Liv genom död*”)

Louth, Andrew (2013). *Introducing Eastern orthodox theology*. London: SPCK Publishing

Brock, Sebastian P. (1992 [1985]). *The luminous eye: the spiritual world vision of Saint Ephrem*. Revised. ed. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications (or the Swedish version “*Det upplysta ögat: Världen sedd genom den helige Efraim Syrien*”). Selected pages.

Behr-Sigel, Elisabeth, *Mother Maria Skobtsova (1891–1945)*, The Wheel 7, fall 2016, (distributed by the school)

Further articles and chapters relevant to the course will be added.

## **PART I, THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST: LIFE IN DEATH**

**August 17<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>**, Roll Call & Introduction, Reading: Chapter 1-2.

**August 31<sup>th</sup>-September 13<sup>th</sup>**, Reading: Chapter 3-4, Discussion & Online lecture: "Life through Death" 8/9 18.00-19.30.

**September 14<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>**, Reading: Chapter 5 and postscript; Webinar 23/9 18.00-19.30: "Modern versus Pre-Modern theology".

## **PART II, INTRODUCING EASTERN ORTHODOX THEOLOGY**

**September 28<sup>th</sup>-October 11<sup>th</sup>**, Introduction, Reading: Chapter 1-5; Discussion.

**October 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>**, Reading: Chapter 6-7; Discussion & Online lecture: "The Christological debate".

(October 19<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, Autumn break.)

**October 26<sup>th</sup>-November 1<sup>st</sup>**, Reading: Chapter 8-9; Webinar: "Salvation and the Church".

## **PART III, THE LUMINOUS EYE: THE SPIRITUAL WORLD VISION OF SAINT EPHREM & MOTHER MARIA SKOBTSOVA (1891-1945)**

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>**, Ephrem the Syrian, Reading: Chapter 1-4, Discussion: "Divinization in Ephrem".

**November 16<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>**, Ephrem the Syrian, Reading: Chapter 4-7, Discussion & Online lecture: "Truth and love".

**November 30<sup>th</sup>-December 13<sup>th</sup>**, Maria Skobtsova, Discussion & Online lecture. (Teacher: Anne-Christine Lindvall)

**December 7<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>**, Final Assignment.

## **ASSESSMENT**

There are no examinations for College courses organised by the Folkhögskola. Assessment is based on full participation in all aspects of the course. This includes reading the set texts, completing written assignments and participating in group work.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

All students need to be at least 18 years old, be officially registered in Sweden and have a sufficient knowledge of the language of instruction.

## **TUITION**

Tuition at Sankt Ignatios Folkhögskola is free for everyone who is a citizen of Sweden or another EU country or who have been granted permission to live in Sweden. Students must be registered as living in Sweden.

## **SERVICE FEE**

Students are required to pay a service fee. The service fee for this course is SEK 400 per semester.