

CODE: THO 3305	TITLE: Eastern Christianity and the Encounter with World Religions
CREDITS: 3 cr.	
TERM: Fall 2010	PROFESSOR: Symeon Rodger

DESCRIPTION	This course is an examination of the central issues involved in understanding non-Christian approaches to spiritual life from an Eastern Christian viewpoint, rooted solidly in the Eastern Patristic worldview. The course begins with an examination of those theological presuppositions of the Patristic Tradition that bear directly on the understanding and evaluation of other religions. It then examines the influence of pre-Christian approaches on the development of the Orthodox Christianity of the first millennium, Orthodoxy's interaction with other traditions during that period, and finally, for the bulk of the course, examines specific non-Christian approaches in more detail. The religious traditions studied include: pre-Christian Hellenistic philosophy, the Semitic religions of Judaism and Islam, the Far Eastern religions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism, Native American approaches and finally the rise of the New Age Movement in the modern West. All these traditions are examined at a deep level in an effort to avoid superficial and intellectually indefensible conclusions.
OBJECTIVES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To give students a genuine understanding of the spiritual essence and intellectual perspective of each tradition, as well of each tradition's manifestations in the modern world. 2. To develop a methodological approach that would enable Eastern Christians to understand and evaluate other traditions accurately. Such a methodology does not currently exist within the Christian East.
WORKLOAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research paper or negotiated project • Contribution to in-class discussions • Mid-term examination • Oral final examination
EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research paper or negotiated project 40% • Contribution to in-class discussions 20% • Mid-term examination 20% • Oral final examination 20%
REQUIRED TEXTS	<i>John Garvey, Seeds of the Word</i> <i>Dr. Symeon Rodger, The 5 Pillars of Life</i> <i>Kelsang Gyatso, Introduction to Buddhism</i> <i>Chen Kaiguo, Opening the Dragon Gate</i>
RECOMMENDED TEXTS	N/A