

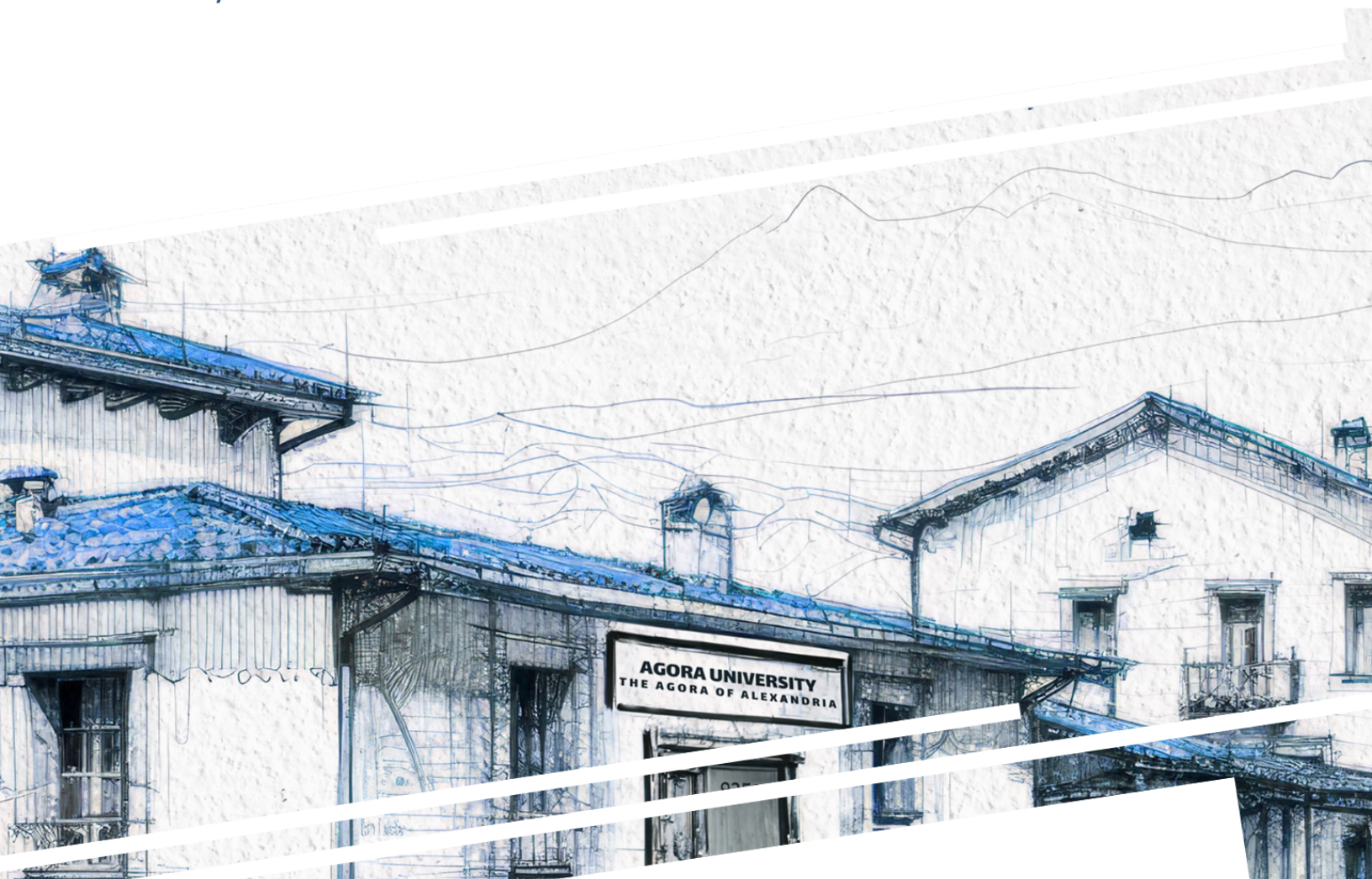
Agora University



**AGORA UNIVERSITY**  
THE AGORA OF ALEXANDRIA

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024 / 2025



[www.agora.edu](http://www.agora.edu)

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9253 Old Keene Mill Road

Burke, VA 22015

**Last Revised 10/30/24**

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Handbook Effective Beginning: 10/30/24

### **Contact Information**

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Agora University is certified to operate by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

### **Hours of Operations**

Agora University's programs and courses are always available through our Learning Management System.

Our faculty and support staff are available:

Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm EST

Agora University offices are closed during the following holidays: Martin Luther, King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Eastern Orthodox Holy Week, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Week, and the final two weeks of December through January 7th of every year.

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# General Information

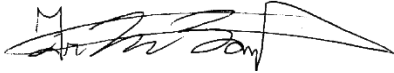
## 2 A LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR

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Welcome to Agora University! We are dedicated to academic distinction, theological inquiry, and groundbreaking research, where we strive for excellence and relevance in every course we offer.

With a world-class faculty who possess degrees from the greatest educational institutions in the world including, University of Oxford, University of St. Andrews, UCLA, University of Aberdeen, University of Toronto, and Claremont University to name a few. We are able to make available to our students some of the most outstanding thinkers and practitioners in the world. This allows us to offer courses that will challenge students in a multitude of fields.

We believe the true value of education starts with experience and praxis, actualizing theory into a lifestyle of communal mission and service. It is our pleasure to “give instruction to a wiseman, [knowing]...he will be still wiser” (Proverbs 9:9a). By participating in our activities and experiencing the depth, diversity and modernity of Early Christian thought, it will equip those with a desire to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ (Matthew 28:16) to the world of today.



Rev. Fr. Michael Sorial, Chancellor

### **3 ABOUT AGORA UNIVERSITY**

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At the heart of the great city of Alexandria in Egypt and at the intersection of Canopic Street and Pharos Street stood one of the most well-known public squares in the World. The Agora of Alexandria, which was only a few steps west of the Great Library of Alexandria, witnessed some of humanity's most astute thinkers, teachers and philosophers, the formation of profound teachings and free speech. Carefully situated between the Roman quarters (west), the Hellenic quarters (east) and the Coptic quarters(north), the Agora of Alexandria has been regarded as the melting -pot of the ancient world. Today, Agora University is a continuation of this indigenous Alexandrian heritage.

Agora University is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit pioneering global Orthodox Christian University dedicated to the Humanities.

2012 – Agora University was co-founded by Dr. Emmanuel Gergis and Rev. Fr. Michael Sorial in 2012 as a venue for engaging the Oriental Orthodox Christian tradition and the Humanities.

2013 – H.H. Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church and H.H. Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II of the Syriac Orthodox Church granted their blessings for the Mission and activities of the University.

2014 – Agora began cooperation with the Alexandria School Journal publishing its first academic journal in English and helped establish the Alexandria School Foundation in Egypt.

2015 – His Grace Bishop Epiphanius (of blessed memory) of the Monastery of St. Macarius in Scetis, Egypt became the President of the Advisory Board.

2016 – Mr. Naguib Sawiris became the Chairman of the Boards of Agora University.

2019 – Agora University's degree programs were fully accredited in the European Union.

2023 – Agora University was fully accredited in the USA by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC).

2024 – Agora University is now certified to operate in Virginia by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), effective September 17, 2024.

### **4 AGORA UNIVERSITY MISSION**

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Agora University is a pioneering global Orthodox Christian University dedicated to building bridges between Orthodox Christianity and the humanities to address the challenges of the contemporary world via distance learning. Agora University is committed to building a community of inspired students through innovative learning, open discussion, and research to become whole persons, and creative leaders who advance their communities. We welcome students from all faiths and backgrounds and provide them the intellectual freedom to express their diverse voices in open dialogue while preserving and upholding the particularity of our Orthodox Christian identity.



## **5 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

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As an indigenous Orthodox Christian organization, our Statement of Faith is the Scripture-based Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 325 and 381 A.D. as follows:

We believe in one God, God the Father the Pantocrator who created heaven and earth, and all things seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only -Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not created, of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary and became Man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried. And on the third day He rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, ascended to the heavens; He sits at the right hand of his Father, and He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-Giver, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the coming age. Amen.

## **6 STATE LICENSURE**

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### **STATE OF VIRGINIA**

Agora University is certified to operate in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Agora University (formerly St. Cyril Society) is exempt as a religious institution in the State of California, and operates under the Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009, California Education Code (CEC) Section 94874 (e) of the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE).

### **STATE OF ARIZONA**

Agora University is not required to obtain state authorization in Arizona since the university has no physical presence in Arizona as defined by A.R.S. § 32-3001(5).

### **STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

Agora University is not required to be licensed by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education since the institution does not have a physical presence in Connecticut.

### **STATE OF ILLINOIS**

Agora University is not required to be licensed by the Illinois Department of Higher Education since the institution does not have a physical presence in Illinois.

### **STATE OF KANSAS**

Agora University is not required to be licensed by the Kansas Board of Regents since the institution does not have a physical presence in Kansas.

### **STATE OF LOUISIANA**

Agora University is not regulated by the Louisiana Board of Regents since it offers courses and programs fully online and does not maintain physical facilities in the State of Louisiana.

#### STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Agora University is not required to seek licensure with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to enroll residents of Massachusetts into online courses and programs.

#### STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Agora University is not required to seek licensure with the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education to enroll residents of New Jersey into online courses and programs.

#### STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Agora University is not required to seek licensure with the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina to enroll residents of North Carolina into online programs.

#### STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Agora University is exempt as a religious institution by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

#### STATE OF MONTANA

Agora University is exempt from authorization as it meets the requirements set forth in 34 CFR § 600.9 b. 2 by the State of Montana University System.

#### OTHER STATES

Agora University is not currently pursuing state authorization in other States and has no students who reside in those states. Additionally, Agora is unable to accept applications for admissions from the states where it is not licensed or exempt.

## 7 US ACCREDITATION

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Agora University is accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC).

#### DEAC

1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808

Washington, D.C. 20036

202.234.5100

[www.deac.org](http://www.deac.org)



The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a recognized accrediting agency. The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CHEA is the leading non-governmental recognition for accrediting associations. A national advocate and institutional voice for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations.

### **CHEA**

One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 510

Washington, DC 20036

Tel: (202) 955-6126

Fax: (202) 955-6129

Email: [chea@chea.org](mailto:chea@chea.org)

### **U.S. Department of Education**

Agora University is listed in the Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs. DAPIP ID: 255457.

## **8 EU ACCREDITATION**

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Agora University's programs are fully [accredited](#) in the European Union through our collaboration and accreditation agreement with the Catholic University of Murcia, Spain. UCAM is not recognized by the USDE.



## 9 LEADERSHIP

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### CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARDS

Mr. Naguib Sawiris Chairman of Orascom Telecom Media & Technology Holding

### ADVISORY BOARD

Mr. Alex Shalaby	President	Chairman and Former CEO of Mobinil, Egypt
H.G. Bishop Angelos	Board Member	General Bishop, Egypt
H.E. Archbishop John Kawak	Board Member	Vicar of the Syriac Archdiocese of Eastern USA
Mr. George Sorial, J.D., M.B.A.	Board Member	Founder and Principal of Sorial Consultants
Mr. Mark Morgan, J.D.	Board Member	Partner at Day Pitney, LLP
Ms. Lana Sawiris	Board Member	Founder & Chief Creative, &LANA
Ms. Natalie Ramses	Board Member	Founder & CEO, Enova Digital, Zamia Import

### Board Members Emeriti

H.G. Bishop Epiphanius (June 27, 1954 – July 29, 2018)	First President of the Board	Bishop of the Monastery of St. Macarius, Egypt
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### GOVERNING BOARD

Fr. Michael Sorial, D.Min. (ABD)	President of the Board and Chancellor
Dr. Emmanuel Gergis, Ph.D.	Vice President of the Board
Ms. Lydia Dimyan, C.P.A.	Treasurer
Ms. Mary Sorial, M.A., M.Ed.	Secretary
Dr. Michael Wingert, Ph.D.	Board Member
Ms. Monica Ghattas, J.D.	Board Member
Fr. Seraphim ElBaramos, M.Litt.	Board Member
Mr. Ramy Adeeb, M.Sc., M.B.A.	Board Member
Mr. Onsi Sawiris	Board Member
Dr. Robert Felix, Ph.D., C.P.A.	Board Member

### EXECUTIVE TEAM

Dr. Emmanuel Gergis, Ph.D.	President and CEO
Ms. Sylvana Selim, MA, MFin	Chief Operating Officer

Mr. Amir Hanna, MSc	Chief Financial Officer
Mr. John Saad	Chief Technology Officer
Dr. Michael Wingert, Ph.D.	Dean of Holy Transfiguration College
Fr. George Mikhail, MBA	Registrar and Sr. Director of Educational Services
Ms. Veronica Rizk	Public Relations Manager
Ms. Mary Ghattas, Ph.D. (ABD)	Director of Studies
Mr. Bassem Massoud, MBA	Sr. Director of Finance
Ms. Vero Saad, MTS	Director of Community Engagement
Ms. Iriny Guirguis	Director of Human Resources
Ms. Christine Georges, MBA	Sr. Director of Admissions
Ms. Norma Joseph	Director of Marketing
Mr. Mourad Massoud	Agora University Press, Managing Director
Ms. Veronica Khalil	Press Executive Director
Ms. Sandy Agban	Director of Accreditation
Mr. Andrew Amir	Information Technology Manager
Ms. Monica Mansour	Sr. Admissions Officer
Mr. Bassam George, MBA	Bookkeeper
Ms. Gina Rofail	Admissions Officer
Ms. Mary Youhanna	Admissions Officer

## **10 EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

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The keyword in our organization is “Community”. Agora University strives to maintain a close relationship between students, staff, and faculty. Members of our faculty are deeply involved in shaping and guiding students during the academic year. Faculty members encourage students as they grow in their paths, discuss things they are learning in class, and challenge them in areas where the student may be struggling. Students have ready access to any staff or faculty member and are encouraged to seek help both academically and personally.

## **11 EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

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- 1- Provide quality distance education programs for graduate students to impact their communities.
- 2- Provide credentialed faculty members who have experience in teaching. Our goal is that at least 90 percent of our faculty have doctorates in their fields. Others with at least exceptional expertise in the courses they teach.
- 3- Provide adequate administrative staff to facilitate coordination of student services, financial accountability, and technological support.

- 4- Provide structured graduate-level programs in a semester-long format that is readily accessible in a flexible manner through technologically sound, cost-effective educational systems.
- 5- Provide effective interactions between students and faculty, as measured by at least a 90 percent positive rating on our end-of semester survey. All student complaints will be investigated by management within 14 days.

## 12 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

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<b>Application &amp; Registration</b>	January 15 – August 15
<b>Fall Term</b>	September 1 – December 15
<b>Spring Term</b>	January 9 – May 1
<b>Summer Term</b>	May 15 – August 25

Agora University offices are closed during the following holidays: Martin Luther, King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Eid-el-Fitr, Eastern Orthodox Holy Week, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Eid-el-Adha, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving Week, and the final two weeks of December through January 7th of every year.

## 13 UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

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### 13.1 GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- 1- Each applicant must be at least 18 years of age at the time of registration.
- 2- Each applicant must submit their undergraduate degree transcript and diploma. Average GPA of 3.0 in USA and the equivalent of 85% or a “B” worldwide.
- 3- Evidence of passing English language proficiency requirements by satisfying one of the following categories:
  - a. Native speaker.
  - b. Graduation from an English-speaking institution in USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, or any other country whose native language is English.
  - c. Graduation from an English-speaking institution worldwide (i.e. American University in Cairo).
  - d. A GCSE or iGCSE graduate with at least a “C” grade in English.
  - e. An IB Diploma graduate.
  - f. IELTS 6.5 or equivalent, with nothing lower than 5.5 in any of the four elements (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
  - g. TOEFL iBT score of 78, with nothing lower than 17 in any of the four elements (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Equivalency Guide: (TOEFL 550/ TOEFL CBT 213/TOEFL iBT 78).

h. The Admissions Committee reserves itself the right to take into consideration other proofs of English proficiency not stated above. In such event, the University might offer a conditional admission to the student providing they maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the first academic term.

- 4- Submit two professional or academic letters of recommendation.
- 5- Complete Admission application and financial declaration forms.
- 6- Payment of Admission Application Fee. Fees can be paid by visiting <https://htc.agora.edu/admissions-and-tuition/>.
- 7- Submit a letter of intent detailing your reasons for joining the program.
- 8- All applicants must submit a government issued Photo ID.
- 9- All applicants must submit a passport sized photograph (in JPEG format, recent color photo, plain/white background, bright, centered/front view of full face, eyes open and visible and cropped from just above the top of the head to the collarbone).
- 10- Submit an updated Resume/CV.
- 11- Students must successfully pass an Admissions Interview.

Agora University accepts foreign transcripts from universities officially recognized by their respective governments in their country of residence. An official stamped and sealed transcript is required from all foreign students.

### **13.2 THD ADMISSIONS PREREQUISITES**

The following prerequisites are required for students entering the Doctor of Theology (ThD) program. In some cases, exceptional students who have not met all prerequisites for the ThD program may be provisionally accepted into the program and invited to complete the requisite courses prior to beginning participation in doctoral seminars.

1. A master's degree in a theology related discipline (M.Div., M.T.S., M.A.T., Th.M., or similar) or a master's degree with substantial coursework in theology with a minimum of 3.0 GPA.
2. Research language competence in at least one relevant modern language from the following list: Arabic, French, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Modern Hebrew, or Russian.
3. Knowledge of Classical Greek. Students without a knowledge of Classical Greek may be admitted to the program, provided that they learn Greek prior to advancing to candidacy.

#### **Application Phase:**

Students interested in applying to the ThD program must supply the following materials:

1. Official transcripts from an accredited college or university.
2. Resume or CV.

3. Statement of Purpose. The statement of purpose must include a research project proposal, which must be approved by the doctoral supervisor.
4. Letters of Recommendation: 2 letters.

### **13.3 SPECIAL ADMISSIONS TO HOLY TRANSFIGURATION COLLEGE**

Individuals with extensive ministry experience and a high school degree, but without an accredited bachelor's degree, may petition for provisional acceptance into the MTS or Certificate programs. They must submit an essay and other evidence that they are capable of doing graduate-level work and evidence of experiential learning. A committee will review the petition and if it qualifies an interview will be scheduled with the applicant and a final decision will be communicated thereafter. Students must earn a GPA of at least 3.0 in their first four courses. No more than 5 percent of the students in the MTS program can be admitted without a bachelor's degree.

#### **For Certificate Programs Admissions Only**

For Certificate programs, students whose primary education has been in English in an English-speaking country (see below) who have not yet attained a bachelor's degree may be eligible for admission under specific circumstances in fulfillment of the university's mission. Those applicants who have exhibited gifts and service verified by the church must demonstrate likely success at Agora University HTC as verified by ministerial authorities (such as one's bishop or parish priest). This service showcase at least 3 years of full-time vocational ministry or at least 5 years of significant part-time ministry.

The special admissions process is applicable to Holy Transfiguration College. Students admitted under Agora's special admissions process will be admitted conditionally and must pass all coursework with a B average.

#### **Additionally, the following restrictions apply:**

Students must have received their primary education in the English language in a native English-speaking country or the European Union; students admitted from non-English-speaking countries in the EU must submit TOEFL scores.

Students may take no more than 6 units per semester.

### **13.4 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY**

Students must register their disability status at the time of the admission application. If a diagnosis is received after the student has been enrolled, the student must inform the registrar of the disability status. Students diagnosed with and possessing appropriate documentation of a learning disability (or other disability impairing some aspect of distance learning) are given additional time added to the due dates of assignments and examinations without penalty.



### **13.5 INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Upon submitting all required items and completing the application form, the Director of Admissions will send an email within 3 business days to schedule a Zoom Interview. Usually interviews are 20-30 minutes. The Interview Committee consists of the Director of Admissions and two other faculty/staff members. After the interview, the Committee will make a decision. Decisions may take up to 3 weeks.

### **13.6 SELECTION CRITERIA**

Applications will be assessed against academic and non-academic selection criteria. Methods of assessing applications vary between courses but may include: prior and predicted academic achievement, references, personal or supporting statements, and a personal interview. Applicants may not omit any requested or relevant information, make any misrepresentation (for example, through plagiarism) or give false information at any point of the application process including after an offer is made. Should this occur the University reserves the right to dismiss the application, or withdraw an offer of admission.

### **13.7 DECISIONS**

Agora will notify the applicant of its decision of the interview and application by email. This notification is usually made within 10 days of the completion of the Application and Interview Process, but it could take up to 3 weeks depending on the number of candidates being interviewed. The admission status made is either full admission or denied admission.

#### **Full Admission**

Full admission is offered to the applicant for which Agora has received all admission documentation as required or requested, no additional demonstration of qualification is needed, and the applicant appears to be the kind of student who would benefit from study at Agora.

#### **Denied Admission**

An applicant denied admission does not meet the qualifications for admission.

### **13.8 TRANSFER CREDIT**

#### **13.8.1 Holy Transfiguration College**

Agora University may consider for transfer coursework completed at accredited institutions of post-secondary education whose accrediting agencies are recognized by the European Union or by an agency recognized by CHEA. Only coursework completed at a C average or better may be considered for transfer after a review by, and at the discretion of the Dean. Students will need to provide a transcript for all accredited coursework taken and indicate a desire to transfer coursework before enrolling in the current term. A maximum of 50% of graduate coursework can be transferred. A minimum of 50% of graduate coursework must be undertaken at Agora University.

Coursework earned at a non-accredited institution may be submitted for review with an official transcript and course descriptions. Coursework earned at non-accredited institutions will be considered on a case by

case basis by the Academic Dean. In most cases, refusal to transfer work will be based on content or academic standards incompatible with the courses required for graduation at Agora University.

Please note that Agora University courses might not be transferable to other institutions. It is only at the discretion of the receiving institution to make that decision.

## **14 UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT**

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Upon receiving a Letter of Admission from Agora University, the Student will also receive an Enrollment Agreement which must be signed and returned to the University for the Admissions process to be finalized. Upon receiving the signed Enrollment Agreement, the University Registrar will enroll students in their respective courses.

### **14.1 NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS**

The student must complete:

- 1- 12 credit hours to satisfy any Certificate program requirements.
- 2- 36 credit hours to satisfy the MTS program requirements.
- 3- 60 credit hours to satisfy the ThD program requirements.

Normal enrollment for a graduate student is six credit hours per semester. Auditing students may register in courses on an a-la-carte basis.

### **14.2 AUDIT CHANGE OF STATUS**

A student who is registered in a single course and participates in the course in which no assessment of student work is graded. University fees do not apply to auditing students. Audit students pay their full tuition.

Auditing students may petition the instructor to have their work and participation graded. Students who have successfully audited a course and earned a passing grade and provided all application materials may submit a change of status request to the registrar ([registrar@agora.edu](mailto:registrar@agora.edu)) to be regarded as a regular student. Upon a change of status from being an auditing student to a regular student, Library and Technology fees will be billed to the student account.

### **14.3 TYPES AND REGULATIONS OF A LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- 1- Personal Leave: for students who plan to take leave for one or a maximum of two semesters for personal reasons (health, financial, work-related, etc.).
- 2- Military Service Leave: for students who are called to active duty with the Military. Students may leave for the duration of their military assignment in active duty.
- 3- Study Leave: for students who are planning to take specialized pre-approved courses at another accredited institution to supplement their studies or satisfy other academic requirements of Agora University. The duration of this leave of absence is determined and pre-approved by the Dean and

cannot exceed two semesters for a master's program and cannot exceed four semesters for the doctoral program.

It is the responsibility of students to keep the Registrar apprised of their activities and to ensure that the Registrar is aware of their enrollments and progress. Any leave of absence must be approved by the Dean and submitted to the Registrar for proper filing.

## 14.4 ENROLLMENT STATUS

- 1- Enrolled
- 2- On Leave (officially recognized after petitioning the Dean)
- 3- Withdrawn (were once enrolled but have not been for one or more semesters)
- 4- Dismissed (officially acted upon by the Dean)
- 5- Graduated (once all requirements have been met and verified by the Registrar, the Director of Finance, and the Dean)

## 15 TUITION INFORMATION, WITHDRAWAL, AND REFUND POLICY

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### 15.1 INTRODUCTION

This policy details the refund of student charges which include both tuition payments and other university fees (i.e. Application Fee, Technology Fee, Library Fee, Graduation Fee).

### 15.2 GENERAL DEFINITIONS

**Tuition:** Charge for instruction including course content, textbooks, educational services, and instructional materials. This charge is billed 14 days before the beginning of a course.

**Application Fee:** This fee is required at the time of submitting an online application for admission. This fee is non-refundable.

**Technology Fee:** This fee is associated with supporting and maintenance of the technological services offered to students including the Learning Management System (LMS), the Student Information System (SIS), and the Student email account. This fee is billed once a year and is due at the beginning of every year. This fee is refundable as per the refund schedule detailed below.

**Library Fee:** This fee is associated with all library services offered by the University including subscription to electronic databases (i.e. LIRN, Ebscohost, JSTOR, ProQuest, etc.). This fee also includes subscription to the Virtual Librarian services to support student library requests 7 days a week. This fee is billed once a year and is due at the beginning of every year. This fee is non-refundable.

**Graduation Fee:** This fee is associated with processing documents (i.e. Diplomas, Transcripts, etc.) post-graduation. This fee is billed only at the successful completion of our programs after the student has completed all graduation requirements and has been approved by the office of the Registrar for graduation without having any academic or financial holds on their record. This fee is non-refundable.

**Regular Certificate Student:** A student who is registered in at least 3 credit hours per term. This student is expected to finish the Certificate program in four semesters.

**Regular MTS Student:** A student who is registered in 6 credit hours per term. Students successfully taking this course load will finish requirements for the degree in a two-year period.

**Full Time Doctoral Student:** A student who is registered for a full-time course load as defined by the program, typically around 6-9 credit hours per trimester. Students successfully completing this course load will fulfill the requirements for the degree within the expected duration of the program, which is typically around three years.

**Part Time Doctoral Student:** A student who is registered for a full-time course load as defined by the program, typically around 3-6 credit hours per trimester. Students successfully completing this course load will fulfill the requirements for the degree within the expected duration of the program, which is typically around six years.

**Auditing Student:** A student who is registered in a single course and participates in the course in which no assessment of student work is graded. University fees do not apply to auditing students. Audit students pay their full tuition. Upon a change of status from being an auditing student to a regular student, Library and Technology fees will be billed to the student account.

**Discount Groups:** A special reduced rate applied to tuition charges (does not apply to University fees), which is extended to an organization or corporation who has signed a partnership agreement with the University.

## 15.3 PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL PROGRAMS

### 15.3.1 Adjustment of University Scholarships

#### Scholarships

In the case of a refund processed per the schedule listed below, University scholarships are adjusted proportionally to the tuition charges incurred. This does not include any University Fees, only tuition charges. For example, if a student's tuition is reduced by fifty (50) percent, that student's University scholarship will also be reduced by fifty (50) percent.

### 15.3.2 Methods and Frequency of Payment

- 1- Tuition and university fees can be paid electronically online via Credit Card in USD through the Student Information System (Populi Web). Invoices are generated by the Accounting Office and sent 14 days prior to the start of a course and is due for payment 7 days prior to the course start date. Invoices are available on the SIS for the fastest, most secure, and convenient way for students to make payments online. The SIS notifies students of an invoice by sending an automated email.
- 2- For students residing in Egypt, cash payments in USD can be made through the University's partner in Egypt, the Alexandria School Foundation. For more information, please contact [admissions@agora.edu](mailto:admissions@agora.edu)
- 3- Students may also contact the Accounting Office to arrange payment via Wire Transfer using the following details:

- Wells Fargo Bank Account Number: 1227255559
  - Account Name: Agora University
  - SWIFT/BIC code WFBIUS6S
  - Wire Transfers (Domestic): 121000248
- 4- Students may choose to make their tuition payments based on a payment plan setup with the Office of Finance, and suitable to the length of the program they are admitted to. Please note that no student is able to graduate unless they have satisfied all their financial obligations to the University.

### **15.4 CANCELLATION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

- 1- Charges may be refunded if a student cancels their enrollment or withdraws from a course. Cancellation or withdrawal requests must be made in writing by sending an email to the Registrar at registrar@agora.edu. Refunds will be issued using the same method of payment within 30 days from the date the University receives the student’s withdrawal request. No tuition refunds will be issued if a student has not submitted a cancellation/withdrawal request. Tuition and fees cannot be carried over to the next semester.
- 2- A student requesting cancellation of their enrollment within 7 calendar days after signing an enrollment agreement is entitled to a full refund of all tuition and fees paid except the Application Fee.
- 3- A student requesting cancellation more than 7 calendar days after signing an enrollment agreement, but prior to beginning a course, is entitled to a refund of all tuition and fees paid minus: (i) the application fee and (ii) the library fee.
- 4- A student requesting to withdraw from a course after the course has begun is eligible for a refund of tuition and fees paid in accordance to the schedule in section 3.2.5.
- 5- Agora University will issue a full refund of the tuition charges for courses that have been canceled by the University.

### **15.5 TUITION AND UNIVERSITY FEE STRUCTURE**

#### **15.5.1 Tuition Fees For All HTC Students (Certificates and the MTS Program)**

<b>Charge</b>	<b>2024/2025 Academic Year</b>
<b>Tuition per Credit Hour</b>	\$222.22 Per Credit Hour
<b>Application Fee (non-refundable)</b>	\$50
<b>Technology Fee (per year)</b>	\$100
<b>Library Fee (per year)</b>	\$100
<b>Graduation Fee (one-time after graduation)</b>	\$50
<b>** Please note that students requesting a European Union Degree validation and authentication through UCAM will be</b>	

charged a non-refundable processing fee of \$450.	
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**15.5.2 Tuition Fees For All Th.D. Students**

Charge	2024/2025 Academic Year
Tuition Per Credit Hour	\$266.66 Per Credit Hour
Application Fee (non-refundable)	\$50
Technology Fee (per year)	\$100
Library Fee (per year)	\$100
Graduation Fee (one-time after graduation)	\$50

**15.6 REFUND SCHEDULES**

**15.6.1 Refund Schedule for Tuition and Fees for all HTC Programs**

Deadline	% of Tuition Refunded	Application Fee	Technology Fee*	Library Fee	Graduation Fee
Before Week 1	100%	Non-Refundable	100%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable
Week 1-3	100%	Non-Refundable	100%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable
Start of 4th Week	50%	Non-Refundable	50%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable
Start of 5th Week	40%	Non-Refundable	40%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable
Start of 6th Week	30%	Non-Refundable	30%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable
Start of 7th Week	20%	Non-Refundable	20%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable
Start of 8th Week	10%	Non-Refundable	10%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable
Start of 9th Week	0%	Non-Refundable	0%	Non-Refundable	Non-Refundable

\* Note: The Technology Fee refund is proportional to the total credits eligible to be taken during the year. For example, if the Technology Fee is \$100 per year, and the regular student load is 18 credits per year, then the Technology Fee per credit hour is \$5.56.

## 15.7 EXCEPTIONS

**Discount Groups:** Employees of the Alexandria School Foundation, a strategic partner of Agora University, may receive an additional 30% discount on the tuition rate if they don't participate in any need-based scholarship (see section 16).

## 15.8 SAMPLE REFUND CALCULATIONS

### 15.8.1 MTS Program

If a student registered in 6 credit hours sends a withdrawal request during the fifth week of the semester, the student will receive a refund of 40% of the tuition and the Technology Fee:

Refund Percentage: 40%

Tuition Charge:  $\$222.22 \times 6 \text{ credit hours} = \$1333.32$

Technology Fee Charge per year: \$100

Technology Fee divided by number of credit hours per year: Assuming 18 credit hours per year for this sample calculation, the total Technology Fee for 1 credit hours is \$5.56:  $\$5.56 \times 6 \text{ credit hours} = \$33.36$

Total tuition and fees paid: \$1,433.32

Refund:  $(\$1333.32 + \$33.36) \times 40\% = \$546.67$

### 15.8.2 ThD Program

#### Part Time Th.D. Student:

If a part-time student registered in 6 credit hours sends a withdrawal request during the fifth week of the semester, the student will receive a refund of 40% of the tuition and the Technology Fee:

Refund Percentage: 40%

Tuition Charge:  $\$266.66 \times 6 \text{ credit hours} = \$1,599.96$

Technology Fee divided by number of credit hours per year: Assuming 18 credit hours per year for this sample calculation, the total Technology Fee for 1 credit hours is \$5.56:  $\$5.56 \times 6 \text{ credit hours} = \$33.33$

Total tuition and fees paid: \$1,633.29

Refund:  $(\$1599.96 + \$33.33) \times 40\% = \$653.32$

#### Full Time Th.D. Student:

If a full-time student registered in 9 credit hours sends a withdrawal request during the fifth week of the semester, the student will receive a refund of 40% of the tuition and the Technology Fee:

Refund Percentage: 40%

Tuition Charge:  $\$266.66 \times 9 \text{ credit hours} = \$2,399.94$

Technology Fee Charge per year: \$100

Technology Fee divided by number of credit hours per year: Assuming 27 credit hours per year for this sample calculation, the total Technology Fee for 1 credit hours is \$3.70:  $\$3.70 \times 9 \text{ credit hours} = \$33.33$

Total tuition and fees paid: \$2,433.27

Refund:  $(\$2,399.94 + \$33.33) \times 40\% = \$973.3$

# 16 SCHOLARSHIPS

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## 16.1 HTC SCHOLARSHIPS: NEED-BASED AID POLICY - BISHOP EPIPHANIUS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

### 16.1.1 Need-Based Scholarship

Need-based Scholarships are awarded solely based on the applicant's financial needs according to specific income brackets. The application process for this scholarship requires submission of the student's proof of income. The Need-based scholarship awarded will only cover tuition costs and not any administrative or application costs. **Please note that awards are offered on a first come first served basis and are subject to the availability of funds for the current academic year. Additionally, Need-based Aid cannot be applied in addition to any other corporate or group discounts or any other Scholarships offered by Agora.**

The current total tuition for the Master of Theological Studies program is \$8000. The Bishop Epiphanius Scholarship offers a need-based fund and is awarded to applicants interested in pursuing the Master of Theological Studies or the Certificate Programs and are facing financial needs.

#### **Definition:**

**Student Income:** The combined income of the student and his/her spouse.

#### **Types of Aid**

1. Grants which do not need to be repaid.
2. Work-study: part-time employment opportunities of a financial value equivalent to the awarded scholarship amount.

#### **How to Apply**

Complete the financial aid application, fill in all the sections, and upload all the required documents. Missing information or documents are not accepted and will be deemed incomplete.

#### **Application Requirements:**

- Applicants may not be younger than twenty-two (22) years of age during the year they are applying, unless otherwise approved by the Committee.
- Applicant must be admitted to the Master or Certificate Programs. Proof of such acceptance/enrolment (in the form of a Letter of Acceptance or a current transcript) must be submitted along with the completed Scholarship Application.
- Applicant must be applying on a need-based status.
- Applicant must submit all application requirements and maintain an average of 3.0 GPA in all studies.
- The application will solicit information about Church-related Services and will request a personal handwritten response to a question of a thought-provoking nature.

#### **Eligibility**

To be eligible and continue receiving our need-based scholarship, you are required:

- To be enrolled in our Master or Certificate programs.



- Not to be on academic probation.
- Maintain a minimum cumulative grade of B.
- To submit the last 3-months payment slip/ HR letter stating your monthly salary and all other variables (bonus, profit share and similar).
- To submit the last 3-months bank statement.
- To demonstrate financial need by providing any of the following or similar supporting documents:
  - Expenses like rental contract
  - Loans or instalment statements
  - Retired parents and official pension letters
- Updated CV/Resume
- Pastoral Reference letter

### **Need-Based Aid Income Qualification Brackets**

1. For a student income of \$6,250/year to \$2,900/year, the need-based aid package is 88% scholarship on tuition fees.
2. For a student income of \$2,899/year or less, the need-based aid package is 90% scholarship on tuition fees.

### **Special Circumstances**

Sometimes, financial situations change after aid has been awarded. If this is the case, students may appeal to the Director of Admissions for a re-evaluation of their aid package. There are no guarantees that additional aid may be available at the time of the re-evaluation.

### **16.1.2 Merit-Based Scholarship**

This is a form of financial assistance that is given based on the candidates' skills and academic accomplishments.

The scholarship awarded will only cover tuition costs and not any administrative or application costs. Please note that awards are offered on a first come first served basis and are subject to the availability of funds for the current academic year. Additionally, Merit-based Aid cannot be applied in addition to any other corporate or group discounts or any other Scholarships offered by Agora.

#### **How to Apply**

Complete the scholarship application, fill all the sections, and upload all the required documents. Missing information or documents is not accepted and will be deemed incomplete.

#### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for our Merit-based scholarship, you are required:

- To be enrolled in our Master program
- Not to be on probation and maintain a minimum cumulative grade of B.

- To submit the last 3-month payment slip/ HR letter stating your monthly salary and all other variables (bonus, profit share and similar)
- To hold a bachelor's degree
- To submit an official transcript with a minimum GPA of 3.5 or higher
- To have shown incredible extracurricular activities
- To Submit an updated Resume/CV

### **16.1.3 Clergy-members ministry-based aid**

For clergy members (bishops, priests, and monks) there might be additional ministry-based aid available through the Bishop Epiphanius Merit-based fund. For further information, please contact the Director of Admissions.

# University Policies

## 17 CODE OF ETHICS

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Agora University is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and to upholding the public's trust. We recognize that our behavior affects not only our own individual reputation, but also that of Agora University. Accordingly, this Code of Ethics forms the ethical principles that will guide all members of the university community in all decisions and activities.

**These principles are:**

**Respect:** We will nurture a climate of care, concern, fairness, and civility toward others while recognizing and embracing each individual's dignity, freedom, and diversity even in the face of disagreement.

**Honesty and Integrity:** We will act and communicate truthfully and candidly. We will uphold the university's values and make decisions based on the greater good, conducting ourselves free of personal conflicts or appearances of impropriety and self-dealing.

**Communication:** We will openly share information with stakeholders regarding the processes used in developing policies and making decisions for the university.

**Stewardship:** We will use university resources in a wise and prudent manner in order to achieve our educational mission and strategic objectives. We will not use university resources for personal benefit or gain.

**Excellence:** We will conduct all university affairs diligently, exercising due professional care and striving to meet the high expectations we have set for ourselves as well as the expectations of those we serve.

**Responsibility and Accountability:** We will be trustworthy and answerable for our conduct, decisions and obligations and will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures. We recognize our obligation to report unethical conduct to appropriate authorities.

## 18 STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The student understands and agrees that:

1. If English is not the student's primary language, and the student is unable to understand the terms and conditions of the enrollment agreement, the student shall have the right to obtain a clear explanation of the terms and conditions as well as all cancellation and refund policies in his or her primary language.
2. Agora University agrees to provide current, accredited, distance education content and instruction, as well as reasonable educational and student services including but not limited to course registration, assessment, maintenance of student records, and transcripts. Instruction is provided online through [www.agora.edu](http://www.agora.edu).
3. Agora University does not guarantee job placement to graduates upon program/course completion or upon graduation.
4. Agora University reserves the right to reschedule the program start date when the number of students enrolled does not meet the minimum required number.

5. Agora University will not be responsible for any statement of policy or procedure that does not appear in the University Handbook.
6. Agora University reserves the right to discontinue any students' training for unsatisfactory progress, nonpayment of tuition, or failure to abide by University rules.
7. Students who have non-academic grievances may contact Agora University Management by phone at 1.866.GO.AGORA or by email at ceo@agora.edu
8. Course enrollees agree that all information within Agora University courses, course texts, accompanying workbooks, and websites, etc. are protected by intellectual property rights, including copyrights, trademarks and other proprietary rights, which rights are valid and protected in all media existing now or later developed, and contractually agree not to create derivative works based on the information and not to use the information for the purpose of enhancing competing works. Course enrollees are granted a limited license to use, search, display, or print the Information contained on Agora University websites for their own personal non-commercial use only, provided the information is not modified and a copy of this agreement is attached to any copies that are made. Any other use of the information is strictly prohibited. None of the information may be otherwise reproduced, republished or re-disseminated in any manner or form without the prior written consent of Agora University. All rights, including copyright, in any information which are linked to but not hosted on the website continue to be owned by their respective owners. Note that by using agora.edu, you signify your agreement to this and future Copyright Notices. Your continued use of agora.edu after changes to this Copyright Notice will mean that you accept the changes.
9. Information concerning other universities that may accept the University's credits toward their programs can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Dean. It should not be assumed that any programs described in the University catalog could be transferred to another institution. The University does not guarantee the transferability of credits to a university or institution. Any decision on the comparability, appropriateness and applicability of credits and whether they should be accepted is the decision of the receiving institution.
10. This document does not constitute a binding agreement until accepted in writing by all parties.
11. Students are free to speak with professors to express concerns about final grades. If a student does not feel his or her professor has resolved the issue satisfactorily, he or she may express in writing a grievance or complaint to the dean. (If the complaint is against his or her dean, the student may appeal directly to the CEO, as described below.)

## 19 SUBMISSION OF MISSING DOCUMENTS POLICY

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Failure to submit all required admission documents within the first 12 credit hours of enrollment at Agora University will result in suspension from the program. These documents include but are not limited to official transcripts, official certificates, passport, photo, and CV.

### **Procedure:**

- If Students fail to submit all the required documents during their application process, they will receive a notification upon enrollment regarding the submission of missing documents.
- Students must submit all missing documents to the university's admissions office within 12 credit hours of enrollment.
- The university will review the submitted documents and notify students of any additional requirements or missing documents.
- Failure to submit all required documents within the specified timeframe may result in suspension from the program as determined by the university.

### **Effective Date:**

This policy is effective immediately for all new and current students.

## 20 TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY

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This policy was established to aid in the planning of computer purchase(s) throughout the completion of the Agora University programs.

The University strongly recommends that students entering our programs have appropriate and updated mid-range consumer-grade laptop. Students should consider using a laptop that is already owned or another existing computer if possible. If you do not have access to a laptop already and must purchase a new one, we have some recommendations below. Again, please note that if you already have a laptop it does not need to meet the specifications below. These specifications are only for people who do not already have access to a laptop and must purchase a new one. Some courses in the university may require a more robust system, so be sure to verify any class/software requirements before making a purchase. The University will update these specifications on an annual or biannual basis to match advances in software and hardware requirements.

### **Example minimum hardware specs:**

- Intel ® Core™ i3 (4 cores recommended)
- 4GB Memory
- 256GB Hard Drive
- 15.6" HD Widescreen LED Display
- Wireless Network Adapter
- Microphone
- Webcam

### **Software Requirements:**

- Operating System of Choice (i.e. Windows or Mac)

- Word Processor of Choice (ex. Microsoft Word)

Student participation in coursework is a program level requirement. You must have access to a computer connected to the internet. If you are reading this Handbook, you probably already meet the requirements. Dial-up connections will be sufficient for accessing readings in most classes, but all courses have substantial video materials, which will display better if you have a DSL or cable connection. You may use any of the common browsers: Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari. Most of our course reading materials are in PDF format. There is a link to three free PDF readers on our public information page. The PDF pages are designed for full-size computers; tablets may provide an adequate display, but the materials may be difficult to read on smaller devices. We require that you have a word processing program, such as Microsoft Word. Free word-processing programs are also suitable. We require that you also have a webcam with a microphone, for identity verification and live session participation. Your internet connection must be able to transmit video. Students cannot be admitted without these technologies available. Should they lose access, they may request an incomplete (see Incomplete Policy) or a leave of absence, otherwise they shall be dropped from the program.

registrar@agora.edu, or call us at 1-866-GO-AGORA.

Office of the Chancellor	chancellor@agora.edu
Office of the CEO	ceo@agora.edu
Office of the COO	coo@agora.edu
Office of the CFO	amir@agora.edu
Office of HTC Dean	dean@agora.edu
Office of Operations	operations@agora.edu
Office of Marketing	marketing@agora.edu
Office of Admissions	admissions@agora.edu
Office of the Registrar	registrar@agora.edu
Office of Accounting	accounting@agora.edu
Office of Information Technology	support@agora.edu
Office of Public Relations	vrizk@agora.edu

## 21 IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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Electronic mail is the best way to correspond with Agora Staff and Faculty. Since many instructors are part-time, they do not necessarily check their messages every day. If an instructor does not respond to a message within two days, or it is an urgent matter, please email the Agora University Director of Educational Services at

## 22 TRANSCRIPTS AND RECORDS POLICY

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Student records are confidential. The University cannot process a transcript request unless we receive a signed request or an online request through the Student Information System. Outstanding obligations to the University, such as Tuition fees, must be reconciled prior to release of student transcripts. Send all requests to the Registrar and include instructions on where the transcript should be mailed. We will retain your academic records permanently. You may request official transcripts by visiting <https://agora.populiweb.com>. Official Agora University transcripts are released only when requested in writing or online through the Student Information System by the student. Transcripts will not be released for students who have failed to meet their financial obligations to the University. The University will not allow transcripts from other institutions sent or delivered to Agora University to be copied or released to a student. Those documents must be requested from the originating institution. Students may have access to an unofficial transcript online by making a request through their portals on Populi account.

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## 23 ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND ADVISEMENT

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1. Please note that students enrolled at Agora University must complete a minimum of 50% of course work at Agora. Course transfers are subject to our

University Credit Transfer Policy and at the full discretion of the Dean.

2. Agora University does not award life or work experience credit.
3. Agora University provides Academic advisement through the office of the Dean. For more information, please send an email to registrar@agora.edu
4. For all Certificate, and Masters program advisement, please contact Ms. Mary Ghattas at mary.ghattas@agora.edu
5. Agora University does not currently offer any career or placement advising services.
6. All faculty members are required to list their office hours on their syllabi designating their time availability for assisting students outside of regularly scheduled lecture hours.

## 24 ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY

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### 24.1 ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINTS

Students are free to speak with professors to express concerns about final grades. A student may speak to his instructor if s/he thinks they have been graded inappropriately on an assignment or exam or given a final course grade that is inappropriate. If the student thinks the instructor decision is dissatisfying, s/he may express in writing a grievance to the dean. If the complaint is against the dean, the student may submit an appeal directly to the Chief Executive Officer. Students will not be subjected to any unfair actions as a result of initiating a complaint proceeding.

### **24.1.1 Submitting a Complaint to the Office of the CEO**

When the Office of the CEO receives a formal letter of inquiry/complaint, the CEO will convene an Administrative Hearing Committee to consider the inquiry/complaint. The Committee will meet to discuss the written grievance and analyze all the facts submitted. A written notification of the decision should be sent to the student and the dean within 30 days from filing the inquiry. The office of the Dean will keep a record of all student complaints and documentation of how they were handled. The decision of the CEO is final.

### **24.1.2 Non-Academic Grievance Policy**

Agora University takes all complaints very seriously. All grievances are treated with confidentiality, including those affiliated with bullying, physical harassment, illegitimate discrimination of race and religion, and any vilification made by students.

NOTE: These complaints may be formal or informal, where formal complaints are communicated in writing and an informal complaint is one considered to be unwritten.

#### ***24.1.2.1 Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to assaults, inappropriate touching, comments, a written communication; expressing sexual interest or requesting sexual favors; after being informed that the interest is unwelcome, requests for employment decisions, academic evaluation, grades or advancement, or other decisions affecting participation in a University program (quid pro quo), or when such conduct creates a hostile working environment. When complaints address the matter of sexual harassment, the university will allocate 60 days to investigate the matter.

#### ***24.1.2.2 Registering a Complaint***

**Option One:** The complainant may initially raise an informal complaint (unwritten) with the appropriate university official (regularly, the Registrar). Following receipt of the informal complaint, the issue will be reviewed by the Dean within three (3) business days and a response will be provided to the complainant within five (5) business days. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Dean may choose to meet with the CEO to gain further information and resolution of the complaint raised. The Registrar will raise the complaint directly with the Dean if the complaint is perceived to be of an extreme, threatening, or criminal nature.

**Option Two:** If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she may submit a formal complaint in writing. As an alternative to the Option One informal complaint, the complainant may opt to go directly to the formal second stage. The formal written complaint must be received by the Registrar within 10 business days of the complainant receiving feedback. The formal complaint will be reviewed and addressed within three (3) business days and a response will be provided to the complainant within five (5) business days. If not satisfied with the decision of the Registrar, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the Dean within 10 business days of receipt of the formal complaint decision. The complaint will be addressed within 15 business days of receipt of the complaint, and a response will be given within 30 business days. Complaints should be resolved within 30 days of the initial date of response from the Dean.

In addition, students can contact students may also contact our accrediting agency, the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, 1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808, Washington, DC. 20036.



Phone: 202-234-5100, email [info@deac.org](mailto:info@deac.org).  
website: [www.deac.org](http://www.deac.org).

Should a satisfactory solution to the problem not be found, the student may contact SCHEV at: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) James Monroe Building 101 North 14th Street Richmond, VA 23219.

The student may also file a complaint online at: <https://www.schev.edu/students/resources/student-complaints>

Students will not be subject to unfair action as a result of initiating a complaint proceeding.

## **25 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

Agora University faculty strive to hold amenability to ensure academic honesty in their classes and students share this responsibility. Agora University students are required to refrain from all acts of academic dishonesty.

### **25.1 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Actions taken by a faculty member who has evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, shall, after speaking with the student, take one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

1. Issue an oral reprimand.
2. Give the student an “F” grade or zero points or a reduced number of points on all or part of a particular paper, project or examination.

If the act of academic dishonesty results in a “F” grade or zero points being awarded to the student for that particular paper, project, or examination, and this result affects the student’s overall grade in the class, then the student shall be issued the proper grade, as affected by the specific “F” or

zero grade, by the faculty member. Any incident of alleged academic dishonesty in the instructor’s grading of an F or zero points – the instructor shall investigate if there has been any misconduct by the student and decided to proceed and reported to the Dean. If the Academic Dean notes that multiple Academic Dishonesty Reports have been filed for particular students, from multiple instructors, however, then the Dean shall seek the suspension of the student for one full calendar year. If, upon this student’s return from the one-year suspension, the Dean receives any further reports of academic dishonesty concerning this student, the Dean shall recommend the student be expelled permanently. The Dean shall keep the faculty member and Division Dean reasonably informed of the status of the student discipline process and outcome.

Examples of Violations of Identity Fraud:

- Taking an examination for another student or having someone else take an examination for one-self.
- Having another person or a company do research and/or write a report.
- Obtaining answers from another student before or during an examination.
- Knowingly allowing another student to copy one’s work.
- Sharing answers for a take-home or on-line examination unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Receiving help in creating a speech, essay, report, project or paper unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Turning in a speech, essay, report, project or paper done for one class to another class unless specifically authorized by the instructor of the second class.

- Offering another person’s work as one’s own: copying a speech, essay, report, discussion board posting, project or paper from another person or from books, websites, or other sources.
- Using outside sources (books, or other written sources) without giving proper credit (by naming the person and putting any exact words in quotation marks).

Examples of academic dishonesty conduct warranting the imposition of disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Altering a graded examination/assignment and returning it for additional credit.
- Stealing or attempting to steal an examination or answer key.
- Printing an online exam without the express authorization of the instructor.
- Stealing or attempting to change official academic records.
- Forging or altering grades.
- Falsely reporting or claiming to have experienced technical difficulties with online instructional tests, quizzes, or assignments.
- Using unauthorized materials, such as notebooks, or other items, without the instructor’s consent during an examination or placement test.
- Misreporting or altering data in research projects.
- Intentionally impairing the performance of other students and/or a faculty member.
- Collusion – when any student knowingly or intentionally helps another student perform an act of academic dishonesty. Collusion in an act of academic

dishonesty will be disciplined in the same manner as the act itself.

## 26 ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

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### Holy Transfiguration College

Agora offers several programs. Students may proceed from any of the Certificate Programs toward the Master of Theological Studies – Maintaining Satisfactory Progress.

Since all coursework for a Master of Theological Studies degree must be completed within two years, and 9 courses are required, Regular students who want to obtain a degree should plan on taking at least six courses per year. For all Certificate Programs, students should plan on taking at least four courses per year. Since a GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation, you should aim for a grade of B or better in all of your classes. Most courses require you to log in to the website at least once or twice a week, either to participate in a forum or to submit a written assignment.

### 26.1 INCOMPLETES

A student will be given an Incomplete grade when all the following conditions apply:

1. whenever required course work is missing,
2. when that missing work would result in the student receiving a lower final grade, and
3. when the student has formally requested an extension.

In all other cases, a student should receive a grading letter with the outstanding work counted as “zero” or “fail”. If the extension is granted, according to arrangement with the instructor all incomplete work must be completed in consultation within three weeks after the final

paper is due. Grade of “W” should be granted if the student has any health or personal crisis. Students cannot register for more courses if they have an incomplete.

## **26.2 WITHDRAWING FROM COURSES**

Courses may be dropped any time prior to the due date of the final examination or paper. These requests should be conveyed in writing to the Registrar and the instructor(s).

If a student drops a course before the seventh week, a grade of W will be assigned whether or not the student is passing. If the withdrawal is initiated after materials have been posted for the seventh week of the semester, a mark of W for Withdrawal will be assigned if the instructor informs the Registrar that the student had a passing grade at the date of the official withdrawal. A mark of F will be assigned if 1) the student is failing at the time of withdrawal and 2) the student withdraws after the seventh lecture is posted.

Agora University certifies that students who cancel after paying in full, but are not eligible for a refund, receive all materials, kits, and equipment, as applicable.

## **26.3 COURSE RE-TAKES**

We do not allow students to take an examination again. We do allow students to take a course again (if they pay the tuition again), and only the highest grade is then counted in the GPA.

## **26.4 LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

If health or other unforeseen circumstances make it impossible for you to continue your studies, please contact the Registrar for a leave of absence. No charge will be added, and it will extend the duration of completing your degree. The granting of a leave of absence indicates a

continuing relationship with the University and allows students to resume studies at a specific time without reapplying for admission to the University. A personal leave of absence does not exceed two semesters in length, a military service leave is for the duration of the assignment on active duty, and a study leave of absence does not exceed four semesters in length.

Types and Regulations of a Leave of Absence

1. **Personal Leave:** for students who plan to take leave for one or a maximum of two semesters for personal reasons (health, financial, work-related, etc.).
2. **Military Service Leave:** for students who are called to active duty with the Military. Students may leave for the duration of their military assignment in active duty.
3. **Study Leave:** for students who are planning to take specialized pre-approved courses at another accredited institution to supplement their studies or satisfy other academic requirements of Agora University. The duration of this leave of absence is determined and pre-approved by the Dean and cannot exceed two semesters for a master's program and cannot exceed four semesters for the doctoral program.

## **26.5 ACADEMIC PROBATION**

A GPA of at least 3.0 is required for the degree. Students are not put on academic probation when their GPA falls below 3.0. A student placed on academic probation means that the student is warned with academic disqualification. A student who has not achieved both a term and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or higher at the close of a semester will be placed on

academic probation. The student will be notified of this probationary status.

### **26.6 ACADEMIC DISMISSAL**

A student becomes academically disqualified or dismissed and may not continue enrollment under any of the following conditions:

1. A student fails six or more hours of coursework in any given year.
2. A student on academic probation fails to achieve both a term and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or higher.

The student will be notified within one week of any dismissal. The Dean may waive academic dismissal if individual circumstances warrant such action.

### **26.7 APPEAL OF DISMISSAL**

A student who becomes dismissed may appeal the dismissal by filing an appeal to the Registrar within two weeks of the date of notification of dismissal. After the appeal has been considered by the Dean, the Registrar will notify the student of the decision. Once this decision has been made, no further appeal is allowed.

Dismissed students are not eligible for readmission until at least three semesters have elapsed. If readmitted, the student will be on academic probation and will be expected to satisfy the requirements for removal from probation by the end of the term.

## **27 GRADING POLICY**

The work of all students at Agora University is reported in grade format. A final grade for each student registered in a course is assigned by instructors as required.

### **27.1 GRADUATE COURSES**

The following grades are used to report the quality of graduate student work at Agora University:

- A Superior Achievement
- B Satisfactorily demonstrated potentiality for professional achievement in field of study
- C Passed the course but without doing work indicative of potentiality for professional achievement in field of study
- F Fail
- P Pass (achievement at grade C level or better)
- I Incomplete
- IP In Progress

The grades A, B, and C may be augmented by a plus (+) or minus (-) suffix. The grades A, B, and P signify satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students may apply a C grade toward graduate degrees unless otherwise prohibited by the program requirements. However, courses in which a grade of C is received must be offset by higher grades in the same term for students to remain in good academic standing. A grade of F yields no unit nor course credit.

### **27.2 GRADE POINTS**

Grade points per unit are assigned by the Registrar as follows:

#### **Equivalency Guide**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>100 Point Scale</b>	<b>GPA</b>
A+	97-100	4
A	93-96	4
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3

B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1
D-	60-62	1
F	Below 60	0

A plus (+) or minus (-) suffix added to a grade increase or decrease the grade-point value, except in the case of A+, which carries the same number of grade points as the A grade. Courses in which students receive a grade of P may count toward satisfaction of degree requirements, but these grades, as well as I and IP are disregarded in determining the grade-point average. (After the removal of an I grade and assignment of a letter grade, units and grade points are included in subsequent grade point averages.

### 27.3 GRADE-POINT AVERAGE

The grade-point average is determined by dividing the number of grade points earned by the number of units attempted. The GPA per course is calculated by multiplying the grade points assigned by the number of course units. For example, if a student takes three four -unit courses and receives grades of A-, B-, and C+, then the GPA for the term equals the total grade points (34.8) divided by the total course units (12). The GPA is 2.9. For satisfactory standing, students must maintain a B average (3.0 GPA). Only grades earned at Agora University are calculated in the student's GPA. Grades earned at another institution do not affect the GPA at Agora University.

### 27.4 INCOMPLETE GRADES

Once a grade of Incomplete (I) is assigned, it remains on the transcript along with the passing grade students may later receive for the course. The grade of Incomplete ('I') may be assigned when a student's work is of passing quality yet is incomplete for a good cause as determined by the instructor (such as illness or other serious problem). It is the student's responsibility to discuss with the instructor the possibility of receiving an Incomplete as opposed to lower mark impacted by the Incomplete (to include an F grade).

If a grade of (I) is assigned, students may receive unit credit and grade points by satisfactorily completing the coursework as specified by the instructor. Students should not re-enroll in the course; if they do, it is recorded twice on the transcript. If the work is not completed within one year's time, the I lapses to an F.

### 27.5 CORRECTION OF GRADES

All grades except 'I' are final when filed by the instructor in the end-of-term course report. After grades have been submitted, a grade change may be made only in case of a clerical or procedural error or other unusual circumstances. No grade may be revised by re-examination or, with the exception of grades of 'I', by completing additional work. Students who are dissatisfied with a grade should review their work with the instructor and receive an explanation of the grade assigned. All grade changes are recorded on the transcript.

## 28 PROCTORING POLICY

On occasion, professors may opt to offer students an opportunity to sit an oral examination. The professor teaching the course will proctor the

examination via Zoom (or similar platform) and utilize a rubric shared in common by all university courses for oral examinations. These rubrics serve as a direct means of measuring student achievement in accordance with course and program outcomes. The professor will be required to verify student identity through both video and audio activation of the online platform. Instructors planning on offering oral examinations should include this policy on their syllabus and upload a blank copy of the oral exam rubric to the course module.

## **29 GRADUATION POLICY**

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Students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in order to graduate. In addition, students must pass all required courses to earn credit toward graduation. A grade of “F” carries zero credit and does not contribute to graduation requirements. A student cannot graduate if there are any outstanding obligations to the University, such as tuition fees. Students are considered graduates once their thesis has been completed, and a diploma will be sent to them.

## **30 NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

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Agora University admits students of any race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the University. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin in its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships, and any other organization-administered programs.

## **31 PRIVACY POLICY**

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Agora University recognizes that the protection of the rights of persons requires adherence to clearly formulated institutional policies governing the maintenance of student records. Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all students’ records shall be strictly enforced. Officers of administration, members of the faculty and staff of the University are bound to respect the rights of a student by holding in confidence information they acquire in the course of their work.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a federal law which defines permanent educational records as files, documents and other recorded materials which contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by Agora University or a person acting in an official capacity for the University.

Educational records do not include those maintained by instructional, supervisory, administrative and educational personnel in the sole possession of information which is not accessible or revealed to any other person. Additionally, educational records do not include records of a student 18 years of age or older or those of a student attending an institution of post-secondary education that are created or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional or paraprofessional personnel in connection with the provision of treatment to the student unless specifically requested by the student. Records of students as employees are not part of the education record unless the employment results from the employee’s status as a student.

Educational records do not include alumni records.

The Registrar coordinates the inspection and review procedures for student records which include personal, academic and financial files as well as placement records. The FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. They are; The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day the University receives an official request for access.

Students should submit to the Registrar a written request that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. A student should be notified of the time and place where the records may be inspected, if the registrar will make arrangements to access their record.

Official Agora University transcripts are released only when requested in writing or online through the Student Information System by the student. There is a fee for each copy. Transcripts will not be released for students who have failed to meet their financial obligations to the University. The University will not allow transcripts from other institutions sent or delivered to Agora University to be copied or released to a student. Those documents must be requested from the originating institution. Students may have access to an unofficial transcript online by making a request through the Student Information System.

The right to request an amendment of the student's educational records that he/she believes is inaccurate or misleading. The student should write to the Custodian responsible for the particular record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed in 100 words or less and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

The Custodian of the record will notify the student of its decision to amend the record or deny the student request. If denied, the student may choose to appeal the decision to the appropriate executive official.

Agora University may disclose information on a student without violating FERPA through what is known as directory information. FERPA regulations define "directory information" as information contained in an education record of a student that would not usually be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. This generally includes a student's name, address, telephone number, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (full/ part time, undergraduate or graduate), degrees, honors and awards received, other educational institutions attended and related information. Federal law (Solomon Amendment) also requires that institutions of higher education provide military recruiters with the names, addresses, telephone numbers and birth dates of currently enrolled students.

A student may restrict the release of his/her directory information by making a request in writing to the Registrar within two weeks of the start of the first enrolled semester of the academic year. This request must be made on a yearly basis.

In certain situations, a student's consent is not required to disclose educational information. These exceptions include:

- to school officials who have legitimate educational interests.

- to Federal, State, and local authorities involving an audit or evaluation of compliance with education programs.
- to persons or organizations in connection with financial aid.
- to organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of educational institutions.
- to accrediting organizations.
- to parents of students for violations of any law or institutional rule related to the possession of alcohol or controlled substance.
- to comply with judicial order of subpoena.
- health or safety emergency.
- directory information.
- to the students themselves.
- results of disciplinary hearing to an alleged victim of a crime of violence.
- to the Attorney General of the United States in response to an ex parte order in connection with the investigation or prosecution of terrorism crimes.

Requests to disclose educational information will always be handled with caution and approached on a case- by- case basis. The determination as to whether or not a legitimate educational interest exists will be made by the custodian of the records. When the custodian of the record has any question regarding the legitimacy of the request, the custodian should withhold disclosure unless the consent of the student is obtained.

The following is a list of the types of records that the University maintains, their custodian and their appropriate executive official.

<b>Type of Record</b>	<b>Custodian</b>	<b>Appropriate Executive Official</b>
Academic Records	Registrar	Academic Dean
Disciplinary	Academic Dean	CEO
Financial Aid	Director of Finance	CFO
Placement	Registrar	Academic Dean
News Releases	Director of Public Relations	Chancellor
Student Accounts	Director of Finance	CFO

\*\*Agora University uses highly encrypted cloud-based servers to ensure the protection of student records.

## **32 RECORDS RETENTION POLICY**

Agora University’s Records Retention policy establishes the types of university records and their retention period for records. It is based upon legal and operational requirements and provides a framework for the life cycle management of university records.

This policy is intended to assist the University in properly protecting and managing the records it needs to maintain, while eliminating the records that are no longer legally or operationally required. This will help to ensure that the University is following all applicable laws and regulations governing records retention and eliminating unnecessary records storage costs.

This policy responds to the various local, state, and federal statutes and regulations and internal policies that apply to records retention.



## **32.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **32.1.1 Office of the Dean**

The Office of the Dean is responsible for identifying the academic records to be retained and determining the period of retention. The Office of the Dean must also make arrangements for the proper storage of the records and coordinate with outside vendors for that purpose, where appropriate. Finally, the Office of the Dean arranges for the handling of the disposal of records whose retention period has expired.

#### **Faculty Records:**

Agora University understands the necessity of maintaining the accuracy and confidentiality of faculty personnel records, and the importance of gathering and keeping records of employment history and performance for making informed personnel decisions.

The Office of the Dean in collaboration with the Department of Human Resources maintain a faculty personnel record for each faculty member that includes, at a minimum, the following:

- Documentation verifying the faculty member's highest earned degree that qualifies the faculty member for employment at the university.
- Curriculum vita.
- Annual certifications.

The University receives the official transcripts directly from granting institutions by mail. The degrees are scanned and kept securely on Microsoft highly encrypted SharePoint. The original transcripts are destroyed, and only the President, Dean, and Director of Human Resources have access to the digital files.

### **32.1.2 Office of the CEO**

The Office of the CEO is responsible for providing guidance regarding the legal retention requirements for financial and administrative

documents and coordinating document holds when litigation is ongoing, pending, threatened, or likely. The University's CEO will designate one or more individuals to serve as the point of contact.

### **32.1.3 Who should know about this Policy?**

All University employees; All contractors who create, use, or store University records; All consultants who create, use, or store University records; All vendors who create, use, or store University records.

### **32.1.4 Exclusions and Special Situations**

Any records relevant to pending or ongoing litigation, government investigation, or audit **MUST BE RETAINED** until such matters have been resolved, all appeals are exhausted, and the retention period has expired. All disposal of relevant records must cease, including the disposal of records according to approved retention periods, when such a document hold is in place. In cases where litigation is threatened or likely, consult the Office of the President to determine whether a litigation hold is required.

### **32.1.5 Records Policy Definitions**

Definition of a Record: Records are documents and parts of documents contained on any media and in any format that: are made or received by the organization; provide evidence of its operations; document business decisions; and/or have value requiring their retention for a specific period of time.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Academic transcripts
- Letters, memoranda and correspondence
- Policies, procedures and methods
- Invoices and receipts
- Purchase orders, contracts and certificates

- Tax forms
- Data stored in computers, data processing equipment, and off-line media
- Computer programs and documentation

### **33 SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL POLICY**

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Agora University expects each student to use social media responsibly and respectfully in ways that reflect the moral and ethical guidelines set forth by Agora University. Agora University is primarily an online institution; therefore, all courses and instructional materials and correspondence is conducted online. Please check your email account daily. We know life is busy, nonetheless, failure to be aware of updated policies, procedures or other information does not relieve you from responsibility or obligation.

### **34 SOLICITATION**

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Students, staff or outsiders may not sell to or survey the University community.

### **35 SPEAKING FOR THE UNIVERSITY**

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Students should refer media inquiries to the Public Relations office which reports to the Office of the Chancellor, which can answer questions accurately and speak officially for Agora University. Students are not to release information or grant interviews to the news media without first checking with the Public Relations office or being asked by that office to do so. In addition, students are not to speak for the University on social media.

## **36 STUDENT IDENTITY VERIFICATION POLICY**

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Agora University’s Student Identity Verification Policy is in compliance with the requirements set forth by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). The HEOA requires that institutions offering online education have processes in place to ensure that the student registering for a course is the same student who participates in the course or receives course credit. The Act requires that institutions use one of the following three methods:

- A secure login and pass code;
- Proctored examinations; or
- New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

#### **36.1 STUDENT ID AND PASSWORD**

All students registered for coursework at Agora University are provided with a secure user ID and password. Access to online courses is controlled by the use of the secure User ID and password.

#### **36.2 LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (POPULI)**

Agora University uses Populi as its Learning Management System. Students access the LMS with their unique Student ID and Password. The unique User ID and password are used to verify that a student who registers for an online course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program.

The small faculty to student ratio ensures close interaction between students and faculty and the ability of faculty to manage student identity via for any sudden change in academic performance, change in writing style, online discussions, or

email inquiries. More importantly, constant contact between the students and faculty by phone, Zoom, or other technological means assures the faculty of the student's identity.

Students enrolled in courses at Agora University are responsible for providing complete and true information in any identity verification process.

### **36.3 VERIFICATION OF IDENTITY**

All students submit a personal photograph and a government-issued photo ID at the time of admission. Staff and Faculty verify the identity of all students using Zoom for interviews, online lectures, academic advising and general inquiry live video sessions.

# Holy Transfiguration College

## **37 ABOUT HOLY TRANSFIGURATION COLLEGE**

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Established in 2015 as Holy Transfiguration College (HTC), Agora University initiated innovative, interdisciplinary master's degree programs aimed at community-building through Orthodox Christian tradition thought across divergent domains. In March 2017, the institution was renamed Agora University, designating HTC as the Department of History, Philosophy and Religion. HTC aims to be the nucleus of Agora University's vision to be a pioneering institute dedicated to the humanities from an Eastern Christian perspective. HTC continues to focus on developing interdisciplinary venues between the Eastern Christian tradition and the humanities. HTC is committed to providing high quality Orthodox Christian foundations while also maintaining a vigorous tradition of high-quality research on subjects pertaining to the intersection between theology and the humanities.

Our world-class faculty come from renowned institutions worldwide including University of Oxford, University of St. Andrews, University of Aberdeen, UCLA, King's College London, University of Toronto, Pittsburg Theological Seminary, and Claremont Graduate University. Our diverse student body comes from all over the world including USA, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, and Iraq with various professional experiences ranging from engineering, medicine, social work to physics and ministry.

### **37.1 FACULTY**

#### **37.1.1 Professors**

**Dr. Ani Shahinian, D.Phil.**

[Ani.Shahinian@agora.edu](mailto:Ani.Shahinian@agora.edu)

**Associate Professor of Armenian Studies and Apologetics**

Ani Shahinian holds a D.Phil. from the Oriental and Theology Faculties at the University of Oxford. Her doctoral research examines the political, social, economic, and ecclesiastical

history of Armenia and applies innovative approaches and strategies to understand complex, enduring issues. She has lectured and held seminars in several faculties at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), including courses on Philosophy of Mind, Political Philosophy, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and International Relations. Shahinian's

academic and professional interests meet at the intersections between the disciplines, where she endeavors to bridge different fields by exposing entwined questions of technology, ethics, and sustainability in uncertain environments. Prior to her academic career, Shahinian worked for the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), where she assisted with investigations and prosecutions of human trafficking cases and criminal civil rights abuses. While working at the DOJ, she detected parallels between contemporary and historical human rights violations, and the evolving significance of the role of national ethics. These realizations impelled her to seek answers hidden in history. Her academic career continues this journey of investigation and discovery, directing her research interests toward innovative methodologies to problem solving for our current world.

**Dr. Andreas Andreopoulos, Ph.D.**

[FrAndreas@agora.edu](mailto:FrAndreas@agora.edu)

**Professor of Eastern Christianity and Spirituality**

Dr. Andreas Andreopoulos is Reader in Orthodox Christianity at the University of Winchester, UK. He studied in Greece, Canada and the UK, obtaining his PhD in Theology and Art at Durham University. Since then, he has worked all over the UK, America and Canada, in addition to delivering conference papers and lectures across the world. Dr. Andreopoulos has been at the University of Winchester since 2010 and is Program Leader for the MTh Orthodox Studies.

**Dr. Brian Butcher, Ph.D.**

[Brian.butcher@agora.edu](mailto:Brian.butcher@agora.edu)

**Visiting Professor of Liturgical Theology and Early Christianity**

Dr. Butcher is currently a sessional lecturer in the Toronto School of Theology and a Fellow of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, relocated in 2017 to the University of St. Michael's College from Saint Paul University in Ottawa. From 2011-2017, he taught courses at the latter in both Eastern and Western Christian traditions, after stints at Simon Fraser University, Catholic Pacific College/Trinity Western University and Corpus Christi College—all in Vancouver. *Liturgical Theology After Schmemmann: An Orthodox Reading of Paul Ricoeur*, Brian's first major book, was published in 2018 by Fordham University Press. His professional associations include membership in the American Academy of Religion—where he is a member of the steering committee for the Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit—as well as the Society of Oriental Liturgy, the International Society for Orthodox Church Music, and the North American Academy of Liturgy. A subdeacon in the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, he also conducts the Ottawa-based Sheptytsky Institute Choir. He enjoys taekwondo, training for triathlons, performing Celtic and other folk music, and cooking.

**Dr. Emmanuel Gergis, Ph.D.**

[Emmanuel@agora.edu](mailto:Emmanuel@agora.edu)

**Associate Professor of Dogmatics and Systematic Theology**

Dr. Emmanuel Gergis is Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Agora University. Prior to his academic career, he worked for two decades as Vice President of Technology and Chief

Technology Officer in government and private sectors where he successfully led multi-million-dollar projects. After finishing his International Baccalaureate at the Mahindra United World College of India, he studied Business Administration at Concordia University. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Applied Orthodox Theology from the University of Balamand in Lebanon with a focus on Patristic Theology and the Christology of St. Cyril of Alexandria. He also holds a Master of Letters degree in Divinity from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland where his thesis focused on the Theological Anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa and Ephrem the Syrian. Emmanuel completed his doctorate in Systematic and Historical Theology from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland where he focused on Coptic epistemology, the unitary reality of Christ, and the theology of T. F. Torrance. He is an author, translator and lecturer on contemporary Patristic topics including Orthodox Systematic Theology, Theological Anthropology, Trinitarian Theology and Personhood, Theological realism and Coptic Christianity.

**Fr. Jacob Joseph, Ph.D.**

[frjacob@agora.edu](mailto:frjacob@agora.edu)

**Associate Professor of Christian Mission**

Fr. Dr. Jacob Joseph, a Syrian Orthodox Priest, is a visiting lecturer at Agora University. Before joining his theological studies, he completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in English Literature from Mahatma Gandhi University, India, and Kerala University, India, respectively, and worked as a lecturer in India. After securing his Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology from Serampore University, Calcutta India, he served the church both in India and abroad in

various capacities as a National Youth Director (USA and Australia), Director of the Holy Cross College of Management and Technology, Puttady, Kerala, India, Editor of Vision Journal, Mumbai, India and Mission Director, Latur, Maharashtra, India. Fr. Joseph completed his Ph.D. in Christology of St. Severus and Social Margins in India (Patristic Theology and Contextual Mission) from the University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia. His research interests focus on Patristic, Liturgical, Missional, and Contextual Theology. Currently, he also serves as a lecturer (sessional) at St. Athanasius Coptic Theological Seminary, Melbourne, in Patristic Theology and Orthodox Mission Theology and as a visiting lecturer at Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary, Ernakulam, India in Ecumenical and Mission Theology.

**Dr. Joseph Youssef, Ph.D.**

[jyoussef@agora.edu](mailto:jyoussef@agora.edu)

**Associate Professor of Anthropology of Religion**

Dr. Joseph Youssef is Associate Professor of the Anthropology of Religion at Agora University. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology from the University of Toronto. Joseph completed his doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Toronto where he focused on Coptic Orthodox Monasticism and its influence on Coptic laity. His research examines questions of exemplarity, virtue, and political theology, both in Egypt and the Coptic Diaspora in North America. His research interests include: Exemplarity, Monasticism, Asceticism, Transnationalism, Diaspora, Morality and Ethics, Political Theology, and Pilgrimage.

**Fr. Mebratu Kiros Gebru, Ph.D.**

[frmebratu@agora.edu](mailto:frmebratu@agora.edu)

**Visiting Professor of Liturgical Theology**

Fr. Dr. Mebratu Kiros Gebru got his theological formation from the Holy Trinity Theological College of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's Patriarchate in Addis Ababa. Upon the completion of his undergraduate studies at the college, he taught there as a graduate assistant instructor for about two years. In 2003 Fr. Gebru got a scholarship to pursue theological studies at master's level at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto. His master's thesis on the Christology of his own ecclesial tradition was revised and published by Gorgias Press, entitled: *Miaphysite Christology: An Ethiopian Perspective*.

While working towards his Ph.D. in theology at the same university, he was ordained a priest in 2008 at St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox Cathedral in Toronto where he served as a youth educator. As he had developed a particular interest in the Ethiopian liturgy since he was pursuing undergraduate studies, such interest was ultimately demonstrated in his doctoral thesis which he wrote on the theological and sacramental dimensions of creation in the Ethiopian liturgical rite and successfully defended in April 2012. Aside from liturgy, Fr. Gebru's research interest includes Ethiopian Christianity, Orthodox spirituality and ecclesiology.

**Dr. Michael Wingert, Ph.D.**

[Michael@agora.edu](mailto:Michael@agora.edu)

**Dean of Holy Transfiguration College**

**Associate Professor of Old Testament and Syriac Studies**

Dr. Wingert's research focuses on ancient medicine, Semitic scriptural literature, the

linguistic and philological background to Semitic languages in contact with neighboring speech communities, Northwest Semitic epigraphy, the philosophy of language, and ancient Near Eastern religions. At UCLA, Wingert developed a course for undergraduate students on the origins of medicine based on ancient-Babylonian and Egyptian medicine. Additionally, he was the lead research assistant on the Sinai Palimpsests Project for the UCLA Digital Library's partnership with the Early Manuscript Electronic Library, a project that digitizes and recovers the washed away texts from the library of St. Catherine's monastery in the Sinai of Egypt. At Agora University, Wingert teaches Introduction to the Old Testament, Suffering and the Scriptures, Healing and the Word, and electives in Syriac studies. In addition to his appointment at Agora, Wingert serves on the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal committee for missions and has previously served on the advisory board for the Assyrian Arts Institute. He speaks Sureth (known by scholars as Northeastern Neo-Aramaic) with his family and is an advocate for the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures in the Middle East and beyond.

**Mary Ghattas, Ph.D.**

[Mary.Ghattas@agora.edu](mailto:Mary.Ghattas@agora.edu)

**Assistant Professor of Church History and Coptic Studies**

Mary Ghattas is a PhD Candidate earning her degree in the history of Christianity, with a regional emphasis on the Middle East. Her Master's thesis examined ecclesial diplomatie in Medieval Egypt and Nubia. Her research projects explore the interstices between ecclesiastical relations and state politics in the East, the role that history and historiography play

in shaping communal memory and narrative, and consequently, healing communal memory through history. At Agora University, she teaches Church History II: Oriental Church History After Chalcedon and electives in Coptic Studies. She also serves as Director of Agora University Press. She is currently an Assistant Managing Editor for the Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia, helping to update and expand an invaluable online reference tool for Coptic Studies. Her publications include: *Martyria and Loving the Enemy: An Orthodox Response to ISIS* (2014), *The Trinity in the Alexandrian Tradition: Patristic, Copto-Arabic, and Modern Theologians* (2015), and *Notes on the Enaton After the Arab Conquest and Its Localization* (2018).

**Fr. Michael Sorial, D.Min., Ph.D.**

[Frmichael@agora.edu](mailto:Frmichael@agora.edu)

**Assistant Professor of Ecclesiology,  
Missiology and Youth Ministry**

Rev. Fr. Michael Sorial is Co-founder and Chancellor of Agora University. Since his ordination in 2005, and prior to his academic career, he also served as a Priest in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Prior to his ordination, Fr. Michael served in a dual role as US Director of Sales and Marketing and Director of Operations for a UK-based Biotech company. After completing his bachelor's in Biology with a Minor in Business from the University of Texas, he completed a Master of Letters degree in Divinity from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, where he focused on Orthodox Ecclesiology, the incarnational theology of St.

Athanasius of Alexandria, and the intersectionality with culture. Fr. Michael is currently working on his doctorate at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

**Mehari Worku, M.A., Ph.D.**

[Mehari@agora.edu](mailto:Mehari@agora.edu)

**Assistant Professor of Church History and  
Ethiopic Christianity**

Mr. Worku is a PhD Candidate at the Catholic University of America, and a lecturer at Addis Ababa University. His work is focused on Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Egyptian Christianity. He holds his MA degree from the Catholic University of America.

### 37.1.2 Lecturers

**Samuel Tadros, M.A.**

[Samuel@agora.edu](mailto:Samuel@agora.edu)

**Assistant Professor of Church History**

Mr. Tadros was previously distinguished visiting fellow in Middle Eastern Studies at the Hoover Institution, a professorial lecturer at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) where he taught Middle Eastern politics, and the co-host of Sam & Ammar at Al Hurra TV, a program dedicated to covering Middle Eastern political and social developments from a classical liberal perspective. He is the author of *Motherland Lost: The Egyptian and Coptic Quest for Modernity* (2013) and *Reflections on the Revolution in Egypt* (2014), both published by Hoover Press. Mr. Tadros received his MA in democracy and governance from Georgetown University and his BA in political science from the American University in Cairo.

## 38 HTC PROGRAMS AND DEGREES

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A growing number of learners are finding that online learning opens educational opportunities that normally would not be available. With online education and supervision through a strong teaching community, Agora University is an adequate solution for students who wish a flexible schedule for professional or family circumstances.

### 38.1 CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Agora University is currently offering four specialized graduate-level Certificate programs. Each program is comprised of 4 courses and can be completed in one calendar year. Students may proceed from any of the Certificate Programs toward the Master of Theological Studies – Maintaining Satisfactory Progress.

#### 38.1.1 Certificate in Eastern Christian History

The Certificate of Eastern Christian History is a short-term graduate program focused on the history of Eastern Christian communities. The program provides students customizable training through a set of course offerings in Eastern Christian history courses appropriate to educators, church or parachurch ministries, and personal enrichment.

**The program is comprised of the following courses:**

MTH503 Church History I: The Early Church

The courses listed here are indicative, and there is no guarantee that they will run for the current academic year. Students will take the courses in the order they are made available.

Three Elective Courses in History from the List Below:

HIST 501 Oriental Church History – The Alexandrian Church I

HIST 503 Oriental Church History – The Alexandrian Church II

HIST 506 History of Ethiopic Christianity

HIST 508 History of Nubian Christianity

MTH 504 Church History II: The Oriental Church

**Program Outcomes:**

1. Recall a basic knowledge and matters important to the history, culture, and theology of early and Eastern Christianity through the focused study of Eastern Christian history.
2. Explain ideas and concepts pertinent to Orthodox Christian history.
3. Utilize research methods and theoretical frameworks rooted in Eastern Christian history for engaging contemporary challenges in society.
4. Think theologically and critically about the Orthodox Christian tradition both historically and within contemporary church and society.
5. Construct and defend a position rooted in Orthodox Christian history.
6. Produce new and original work articulating a holistic understanding of Orthodox Christian history.

#### 38.1.2 Certificate in Eastern Christian Scripture

The Certificate of Eastern Christian Scripture is a short-term graduate program focused on the scriptural traditions of Eastern Christian communities and their reception. The program provides students customizable training through a set of course offerings in Eastern Christian biblical studies courses appropriate to educators,



church or parachurch ministries, and personal enrichment.

**The program is comprised of the following courses:**

MTH505 Holy Scripture I: Introduction to the Old Testament

MTH506 Holy Scripture II: Introduction to the New Testament

The courses listed here are indicative, and there is no guarantee that they will run for the current academic year. Students will take the courses in the order they are made available.

Two Elective Courses in Sacred Scripture from the List Below:

MTS602 Suffering and the Scriptures

MTS603 Healing and the Word

SCRP 510 The Book of Genesis

**Program Outcomes:**

- 1- Recall a basic knowledge and matters important to the history, culture, and theology of early and Eastern Christianity through the focused study of sacred scripture in the Eastern Christian tradition.
- 2- Explain ideas and concepts pertinent to Orthodox Christian biblical studies.
- 3- Utilize research methods and theoretical frameworks rooted in Eastern Christian approaches to and exegesis of sacred scripture for engaging contemporary paradigms.
- 4- Think theologically and critically about the Orthodox Christian approaches to scripture both historically and within contemporary church and society.
- 5- Construct and defend a position rooted in Orthodox Christian approaches to scripture.
- 6- Produce new and original work articulating a holistic understanding of

Orthodox Christian approaches to sacred scripture.

**38.1.3 Certificate in Contemporary Studies**

The Certificate of Contemporary is a short-term graduate program focused on the intersection of contemporary studies and Eastern Christian communities. The program provides students customizable training through a set of interdisciplinary course offerings in Eastern Christian studies appropriate to educators, church or parachurch ministries, and personal enrichment.

The courses listed here are indicative, and there is no guarantee that they will run for the current academic year. Students will take the courses in the order they are made available.

**Four Elective Courses in Contemporary Studies from the List Below:**

MTS601 The Christian Doctrine of God and Diversity

MTS602 Suffering and the Scriptures

MTS603 Healing and the Word

MTS604 From Cult to Culture: Retrieval and Re-appropriation in Orthodox Liturgy

MTS605 Church, Culture, and Tradition

MTS606 Anthropology of Asceticism

MTS607 Human Will and Divine Will

MTS608 Theology and Encounter: Navigating the Christianity Reality

MTS609 An Orthodox Approach to Theology and the Arts

**Program Outcomes:**

- 1- Recall a basic knowledge and matters important to the history, culture, and

theology of early and Eastern Christianity by engaging in interdisciplinary coursework.

- 2- Explain ideas and concepts pertinent to Orthodox Christianity in a contemporary setting.
- 3- Utilize research methods and theoretical frameworks rooted in Eastern Christian Studies for engaging contemporary paradigms.
- 4- Think theologically and critically about the Orthodox Christian tradition both historically and within contemporary church and society.
- 5- Construct and defend a position rooted in Orthodox Christian tradition as it intersects with contemporary issues.
- 6- Produce new and original work articulating a holistic understanding of Orthodox Christian theology as it pertains to the contemporary world.

#### **38.1.4 Certificate in Servant Enrichment**

The Certificate in Servant Enrichment is a short-term graduate program focused on enriching the knowledge base of those serving Eastern Christian communities. The program provides students customizable training through a formative set of course offerings in Eastern Christian studies appropriate to educators, church or parachurch ministries, and personal enrichment.

**The program is comprised of the following courses:**

MTH501	Introduction to Theology and Methodology
MTH509	Pastoral Theology and Spirituality

The courses listed here are indicative, and there is no guarantee that they will run for the current

academic year. Students will take the courses in the order they are made available.

#### **One Elective Courses in History from the List Below:**

MTH504	Church History II: The Oriental Church
HIST 501	Oriental Church History – The Alexandrian Church I
HIST 503	Oriental Church History – The Alexandrian Church II
HIST 506	History of Ethiopic Christianity
HIST 508	History of Nubian Christianity

#### **One Elective Course from the List Below:**

MTH502	The Theology of Mission
MTH507	Patristics: Greek, Latin and Syriac Fathers
MTH508	Liturgical Theology: Sanctification of Life
MTS605	Church, Culture, and Tradition

#### **Program Outcomes:**

- 1- Recall a basic knowledge and matters important to the history, culture, and theology of early and Eastern Christianity.
- 2- Explain ideas and concepts pertinent to Orthodox Christianity.
- 3- Utilize research methods and theoretical frameworks rooted in Eastern Christian Studies for engaging contemporary paradigms.
- 4- Think theologically and critically about the Orthodox Christian tradition both historically and within contemporary church and society.
- 5- Construct and defend a position rooted in Orthodox Christian tradition.
- 6- Produce new and original work articulating a holistic understanding of Orthodox Christianity.

### 38.1.5 Sample Certificate Study Plan

Term 1 Fall	–Term 2 Spring	–Term 3 Summer	–
Required Course 1	Elective 1	Elective 2	
Required Course 2			

## 38.2 MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (M.T.S.)

The Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree is designed for a wide range of learners and attracts a diverse profile of students ranging from moms to monks. This degree equips students who might be interested in preparing for doctoral studies, life of ministry, non-profit work, or simply personal enrichment. The master’s degree is completed over a period of two years. Each academic year has 3 terms: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Students can only take a maximum of 2 courses per term. This 36-credit hour degree is divided into 21 credits of core courses, 9 credits of elective courses, and 9 credit hour thesis.

### 38.2.1 Program Objectives

The MTS program is designed to offer a general introduction to Oriental Orthodox theology through the introductory graduate level study of church history, dogmatics, scripture, patristics, spirituality and liturgics. In addition to nearly two years of academic study, students are afforded the opportunity to write a master thesis in a specialized area of study.

### 38.2.2 Program Outcomes

The MTS program outcomes are intended to prepare students to:

- 1- Demonstrate a broad familiarity with Orthodox theology and history as expressed by the Orthodox Christian faith and tradition.
- 2- Articulate a holistic understanding of the Orthodox religious heritage.
- 3- Think theologically and critically about the Orthodox Christian tradition both historically and within contemporary church and society.
- 4- Communicate coherently, effectively, and persuasively in writing.
- 5- Construct in a thesis a coherent, sustained theological argument in an area of specialized study.

### 38.2.3 Core Required Courses

#### MTh 501 - Doctrine I: Introduction to Orthodox Theology and Methodology

**3 credits**

**Description:** This course explores an introductory discussion of the nature of theology. The aim of this course is to highlight the two-fold nature of theology both as an encounter of the human soul/heart and an expression of the human mind. Basic and fundamental themes and concepts of Orthodox theology will be discussed. Various sources, resources, and methodologies will be discussed to show the inner - coherence of theological loci and their relevance to everyday life.

#### MTh 503 - Church History I: The Early Church

**3 credits**

**Description:** This course provides a survey of the history of the Christian Church from an Orthodox perspective from the coming of our Lord to the Council of Chalcedon (451). Topics to be covered include the Apostolic period, the Early Fathers, the Ecumenical Councils, and the development of the Church’s ecclesiology noting the beginnings of East-West divergences.

**MTh 508 - Liturgical Theology: Sanctification of Life** **3 credits**

**Description:** Here the student is introduced to the subject of Liturgical theology, Liturgical science and traditions. The readings emphasize the integral character of Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist constituting together the beginning of the Christian life. Also, it emphasizes the understanding of sacrament or mystery as an action of the Church, rather than a “private” rite. The course also focuses on the sacraments of penance, unction, marriage, and holy orders as well as on the liturgical services of Vespers, Matins, and the Eucharistic liturgy. It focuses on how the prayer of the Church transfigures the life of the Christian.

**MTh 505 - Holy Scripture I: Introduction to the Old Testament** **3 credits**

**Description:** This course provides a survey of the Old Testament within the context of Orthodox Christian theology as well as modern biblical criticism. The course content is divided into three parts, each focusing on different aspects of Old Testament studies: Part 1 focuses on the introduction to Old Testament studies as they are presented in the modern era; Part 2 is a (re)reading of the major portions of the Old Testament in light of the modern scholarly conversation; Part 3 looks at Byzantine-Chalcedonian approach to the Old Testament in the modern era as a dialogue partner with our own Orthodox tradition within the non-Chalcedonian communion.

**THEO 500 - Thought and Text: Introduction to Theological Research & Writing** **3 credits**

**Description:** This course aims to assist in preparing and developing students for graduate level theological writing. Particular attention will be given to writing effectiveness, to include

essay structure, types of papers, the different models of reasoning in research, the crafting and assessment of arguments, elements of form and style, revision, peer review, and final editing. In addition, students will become familiar with logical reasoning as it pertains to sentence structure and crafting their ideas in writing.

**MTh 506 - Holy Scripture II: Introduction to the New Testament** **3 credits**

**Description:** A survey of the New Testament, this course covers the life and redemptive work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the early development of the Church through the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. Readings outside of scripture set the historical background for the reading of the primary texts.

**38.2.4 Elective Courses**

**Students Choose THREE Courses from the following:**

**MTh 509 - Pastoral Theology and Spirituality** **3 credits**

**Description:** The purpose of this course is to help the student understand the basics of pastoral care, with an emphasis on “foundations,” covering both theories and types of personalities and various methods in pastoral care. It will also help the student to discern the most important elements of the Spiritual life in the Eastern Christian experience. The course will highlight the importance of prayer and encounter as a key to theology and the different aspects of spiritual life.

**MTh 507 - Patristics: Greek, Latin and Syriac Fathers** **3 credits**

**Description:** This course surveys the Church Fathers of the East and the West. Despite the emphasis of the course on the Fathers who wrote in Greek and Latin, it will touch on the Fathers who wrote on other languages like Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic. This Course also introduces

the student to the historical context of the various Church Fathers. It also aims to give biographic information about those Fathers, their writings, how their thoughts were shaped, and what contributed to their formation. It then explores the literature of the various Fathers, the specific characteristics of each of them, and the contribution of the literature on the overall Christian thought that was preserved by the Church. Introducing the Patristic literature would require us to be introduced to the heretical teachings that urged the Fathers to confront them by their orthodox teachings.

### **MTh 502 - The Theology of. Mission**

**3 credits**

**Description:** This course explores the theological evolution of Christian Mission with particular emphasis on Orthodox theology of mission. It provides an account of multiple ranges of biblical, theological, and liturgical perspectives of the theology of mission. By analyzing the works of Orthodox mission theologians, the course explains the relevance of the Orthodox mission theology in today's global and local contexts. It furnishes relevant missional narratives from various historical contexts for illustrating the Orthodox mission practices. The course also examines the salient features of mission theology in other Christian traditions to encourage a more comprehensive understanding of the theology of Orthodox Christian mission.

### **MTh 504 - Church History II: The Oriental Church**

**3 credits**

**Description:** Council of Chalcedon to the present day by tracing key historical events and themes to gain a better understanding of the Oriental Orthodox Christian tradition and its legacy in the Middle Eastern religious mosaic. The examination of this trajectory provides an

opportunity to delve into the Oriental Orthodox viewpoint of Christian history. Participants analyze historical themes in order to strengthen their knowledge of and develop an appreciation for this tradition.

### **MTS 601 - The Christian Doctrine of God and Diversity**

**3 credits**

**Description:** The Christian faith confesses a Trinitarian God who is a diversity of persons in unity. This doctrine must present Christians with a model of appreciating diversity while also being rooted in a unity. This course traces the development of the Christian doctrine of God and related themes from Scripture to the 20th century. The course pays close attention to significant texts in the Christian tradition to discussions of the doctrine of the trinity and its relationship to diversity. We explore how our Trinitarian faith should be lived daily by reflecting on contemporary challenges surrounding diversity of religion, sexuality, culture, and biodiversity.

### **MTS 602 - Suffering and the Scriptures**

**3 credits**

**Description:** In this course, we will be examining the phenomenon of human suffering as our approach to encountering the scriptures, focusing on the Old Testament. By exploring the notion of suffering in the human condition, we will unlock some of the more important points of Christian theology that will provide us with the exegetical framework for reading, understanding, and integrating the Old Testament narrative into our lives.

### **MTS 603 - Healing and the Word**

**3 credits**

**Description:** This course looks at the matter of the textualization of the incarnation event as the

remedy for the ailing human condition and is a companion piece to the course *Suffering and the Scriptures*. In this course, students will approach the message of the Gospel from the lens of healing, examining the formation of the New Testament in light of the early Christian movement amidst the backdrop of the emergence of rabbinical Judaism and the transition from Hellenic to Roman rule in the region.

**MTS 604 - From Cult to Culture: Re-appropriation in Orthodox Liturgy Today**  
**3 credits**

**Description:** This course examines the fundamental elements of Eastern Christian worship as it developed in the early centuries of the Church, in order to historically ground subsequent theological discussion of contemporary renewal. After several weeks exploring the common repository of Orthodox liturgical tradition, we consider examples of current scholarship on the extant Rites in use among the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches: Armenian, West Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian, East Syrian and Byzantine. The selected readings showcase key scholars in the field, highlight the value of comparative and interdisciplinary methodologies, and illustrate the challenges of integrating history and theology with pastoral practice. The final weeks invite students to synthesize what they have learned by means of reflection on their own identity as worshippers in the modern world—with all its challenges: how does the beauty of the *Lex Orandi* (“rule of prayer”) relate to the truth of the *Lex Credenda* (“rule of belief”), while also cultivating the goodness of an authentic spirituality, that is, a faithful and fruitful Christian *Lex Vivendi* (“rule of living”)?

**MTS 605 - Church, Culture and Tradition**  
**3 credits**

**Description:** *Church, Culture, and Tradition* is a 3-credit module, which aims to investigate the meaning of the Church and its diverse expressions through a study of ecclesiology, Tradition and culture. The module will start by defining the term ‘Tradition’ followed by an overview of the true identity of the Church and its expression within different contexts throughout history. The module will then discuss our contemporary context and the appropriate ways of engaging with a theology of inculturation by incarnating in a multi-cultural and pluralistic society.

**MTS 609 - An Orthodox Approach to Theology and The Arts**  
**3 credits**

**Description:** What is beauty? Why does it matter so? How does it relate to the Christian experience of God and the Church’s interpretation of divine revelation? What role should the arts play in contemporary Orthodox faith and witness? This course engages such perennial questions (and more) through a survey of the sources, themes and media characteristic of Eastern Christian aesthetic theory and practice, drawing also upon pertinent Western dialogue partners.

**MTS 606 - Anthropology of Asceticism**  
**3 credits**

**Description:** One definition of asceticism is that it is a practice of bodily discipline and self-deprivation, usually for religious purposes. Some ascetical practices include prayer, fasting, prostration, and night - vigil. While asceticism plays an important role in cultivating morality in Christianity generally speaking, reducing these practices as simply reflections of religious belief diminish their broader social importance. In order to understand asceticism, this course uses anthropological tools to contextualize the wider conditions that influence how ascetical practices

come to be understood in different Orthodox Traditions. What do people of various socio-cultural and Orthodox Traditions understand asceticism to be? How are ascetic practices linked to the wider-socio-political conditions of respective communities? How can we understand morality in relation to asceticism? Using ethnographic and historical examples, the course considers these questions as they relate to a wide range of Orthodox contexts. It offers an overview of the ways in which anthropological analyses of ascetical life can provide scholars new perspectives with which to make sense of larger questions of theology, religious identity, politics, imagined community, nationhood, and belonging.

#### **MTS 607 - Human Will and Divine Will**

**3 credits**

**Description:** In this course, we will be examining the human will, divine will, and the paradox notion that arises from discussions on the freedom of the human will. The approach to the topic is grounded in how this phenomenon is envisioned in scriptures, then interpreted by church fathers, and medieval archimandrites in different schools of philosophical thought. By exploring the notion of human will (human desire) and divine will, the course offers venue into how to think about larger questions of what it means to be human, especially in our current technological world.

#### **MTS 608 - Theology and Encounter: Navigating the Christian Reality**

**3 credits**

**Description:** This course explores the epistemological grounds for understanding Christianity's view of concrete truth. The concrete reality of truth in Christianity is fully revealed through a life of encounter and rational

expression. While encounter is a mystical experience, theological expression is a colorful tradition that utilizes a spectrum of human philosophies and ideologies. This course traces the commonality of the Christian encounter while investigating the diversity of theological expression from ancient times until our post-modern frames of mind.

#### **SCRIP 510 - The Book of Genesis**

**3 credits**

**Description:** This course investigates the book of Genesis. Various hermeneutical approaches to the book of Genesis will be undertaken, beginning with the Patristic reception of these texts and their subsequent life in the Church. Special emphasis will be placed on the theology, structure, composition, and themes of Genesis as pertaining to their significance for Christian faith, life, and ministry. Additionally, challenges posed by the content, construction, and assembly of the text by modern critical methods will be explored in order to calibrate the patristic response to such challenges.

#### **HIST 501: Oriental Church History: The Alexandrian Church I**

**3 credits**

**Description:** The aim of this class is for students to explore the marginalized voice of the Oriental Orthodox tradition, to get to know it on its own terms, and to refine this voice in its engagement with disciplinary discourse. The course will focus on the history of the Alexandrian Church and its legacy in Egypt, from the apostolic era of St. Mark until the Ottoman period. The class is designed for students to be able to understand and analyze the multi-faceted factors that shape the current Christian ecumenical dialogue today by looking back into the history of the most ancient native Christian traditions. It will provide students with the tools to aid their study of Oriental Orthodox Church history-students are

the ultimate drivers of their education and are given free rein to pursue and research whichever topic piques interest.

**HIST 503: Oriental Church History: The Alexandrian Church II**                      **3 credits**

**Description:** The aim of this class is for students to explore the marginalized voice of the Oriental Orthodox tradition, to get to know it on its own terms, and to refine this voice in its engagement with disciplinary discourse. The course will focus on the history of the Alexandrian Church and its legacy in Egypt, from the end of the Ottoman period unto the present day. The class is designed for students to be able to understand and analyze the multi-faceted factors that shape the current Christian ecumenical dialogue today by looking back into the history of the most ancient native Christian traditions. It will provide students with the tools to aid their study of Oriental Orthodox Church history-students are the ultimate drivers of their education and are given free rein to pursue and research whichever topic piques interest.

**HIST 506: History of Ethiopic Christianity**                      **3 credits**

**Description:** The course will focus on the history of the Church in Ethiopia and Eritrea from its inception until the present day. As an important part of this class, students will learn about the multifaceted landscape of Christianity in the Horn of Africa. Students will study the major figures and events that shaped the Tewahedo Church in its various locales, languages, and cultures. Special attention will be given to the roles of Syriac and Coptic churches in the formation of Tewahedo Christianity. Students will wrestle with the challenges related to the Church in the Horn of Africa as it struggles with recent political persecution.

**HIST 508: History of Nubian Christianity**

**3 credits**

**Description:** The course will focus on the history of the Church in Nubia from its inception until the present day. As an important part of this class, students will learn about the unique cultures of the historical kingdoms in the Sudan. Students will study the major figures and events that shaped the Nubian Church. Special attention will be given to the roles of the Church of Alexandria in the formation of Nubian Christianity. Students will wrestle with the challenges related to documentation of the Church in Nubia and its eventual, albeit recent decline four centuries ago.

**PATR 602: Orthodox Ascetic Mysticism**

**3 credits**

**Description:** The Orthodox ascetic tradition, that spans more than ten centuries of contemplative prayer and theology, often describes the ascent towards God with the stages of Purification, Illumination and Union with God. The themes of illumination and deification especially, may be found throughout the entire theological and ascetic tradition of the Christian East. This tradition of contemplative prayer developed in the Egyptian desert, in Constantinople and in Syria, but its roots may be found in the Biblical and the Neoplatonist tradition. This module examines these writings within their historical, cultural, and spiritual background, and presents the thought of significant writers such as Philo of Alexandria, Origen, John of the Ladder, Maximos the Confessor, Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas.

**38.2.5 Required Thesis**

**MTh 550 - Master Thesis Writing**

**9 credits**

**Description:** Students will research, write and submit their 14,000-word Master thesis under the guidance of a supervisor from the Faculty.



Typically, students have six months to complete and submit the dissertation. The purpose of this course is to complete the capstone project in the Master degree programs and validating the students as master practitioners. Based upon the thesis proposal and recommendation of the thesis supervisor with the approval of the University faculty, students are able to complete their thesis writing. Upon successful completion of this module, in addition to satisfaction of all other required academic and financial obligations, the students are deemed qualified to graduate with the Master of Theology degree. In consultation with the thesis supervisor, each student will develop his or her own work schedule for the course. At the beginning of the course, all students are required to attend a virtual research and methodology orientation seminar. All students are entitled to a total of 10 hours of supervision per term by their thesis supervisor.

### 38.2.6 Sample Course Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Task</i>
<i>Week 1</i>	Prepare work schedule and meet with the supervisor to work on the primary and secondary sources, the thesis statement, the research question, and the general outline of the thesis
<i>Week 2-4</i>	Conduct research, read primary and secondary sources, and formulate literature review
<i>Week 5-7</i>	Write Chapter 1
<i>Week 8-10</i>	Write Chapter 2
<i>Week 11-13</i>	Write Chapter 3
<i>Week 14-15</i>	Write Introduction and Conclusion

*Week 16* | Review, Format, and Submit Thesis

### 38.2.7 Sample MTS Study Plan

<b>Term 1 – Fall</b>	<b>Term 2 – Spring</b>	<b>Term 3 – Summer</b>	<b>Term 4 – Fall</b>
Intro Theology	to New Testament	Church History II	Elective
Old Testament	Church History I	Liturgical Theology	Elective
<b>Term 5 – Spring</b>	<b>Term 6 – Summer</b>		
Elective	Thesis		
Thesis	Thesis		

## 38.3 DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY (THD)

### 38.3.1 Program Description

The Doctor of Theology (ThD) program aims to develop advanced theological researchers trained in the theological discourse of Eastern Christian traditions, preparing future leaders in interdisciplinary domains. The Doctor of Theology degree is a manageable program that provides the appropriate rigor for advanced research. This degree is aimed at students who may or may not pursue, be pursuing, or are ordained in clerical ministry, but who desire to use the knowledge and skills gained through pursuing a doctoral degree in order to serve their communities. As such, the program endeavors to form a network of highly trained persons in our communities in order to create educational excellence and opportunities for autonomous learning.

Students pursuing the ThD degree will have acquired appropriate theological training at the Master's level prior to entry into the program.

The ThD provides students critical research skills and methods for the purposes of conducting original research, engaging with one's community, and establishing a world-wide cadre of theologians able to bridge historically rooted theology with the contemporary world. The program focuses on producing future scholars knowledgeable with the roots and legacy of ancient Christianity, as particularly represented by the Orthodox Christian tradition.

The Doctor of Theology is a 60 credit-hour program comprising doctoral seminars (42 credit-hours), comprehensive examinations, and a dissertation (18 credit-hours). The program culminates in the production of an original contribution to the field of theology through the research and writing of the doctoral dissertation.

### 38.3.2 Program Outcomes

Students pursuing the ThD program will by the end of their program be able to:

1. Recall an advanced knowledge important to the history, culture, and theology of early and Eastern Christianity.
2. Orally articulate ideas and concepts pertinent to Orthodox Christian history, culture, and theology.
3. Utilize appropriate research theories, methodology, and theoretical frameworks to address fundamental questions concerning Eastern Christian theology for engaging contemporary challenges in society.
4. Demonstrate theologically based critical thought and contemplation concerning the Orthodox Christian theological positions and their application, both historically as well as within contemporary church and society.

5. Construct and defend a position rooted in Orthodox Christian thought, demonstrating effective written communication sufficient to publish or present student's work within the appropriate theological research domains.
6. Produce new and original contributions to Orthodox Christian theological discourse, at a level appropriate to teaching at the community as well as collegiate or university levels.

Students will take the modules in the order they are made available. The modules listed here are indicative, and there is no guarantee that they will run for the current academic year.

### 14 courses of three-unit doctoral seminars (42 Credit-Hours):

#### One Core Course:

THEO 800 Research Methods

#### 13 Elective Doctoral Level Courses from the List Below:

DOGM 801	The Two Ways of Knowing
DOGM 805	Theological Anthropology
DOGM 807	Orthodoxy in the Modern World
DOGM 808	Advanced Seminar in Christology
HIST 802	Genocide in the Early 20th Century Middle East
HIST 803	History and Memory
PATR 803	Death in the Christian Tradition
LTST 800	From Cult to Culture

SCRP 800	Comparative Translations of Scripture in Antiquity
SCRP 804	Israelites Religion and its Ancient Near Eastern Context
SCRP 835	Scripture: Daniel
SCRP 854	Scripture: John
MTS 601	The Christian Doctrine of God and Diversity

**The end of the Doctor of Theology degree culminates in dissertation research (core):**

THEO 801      Dissertation Writing 18  
Units

**38.3.3 Core Required Courses**

**One Required Course:**

**THEO 800 Doctoral Research Methods Seminar**

**3 credits**

This course explores the basics of theological research and the appropriate formats necessary to accompany theological research. During the semester, students will engage in readings presented in seminar format and will undertake research activities across internal and external library resources. In addition, students will produce an annotated bibliography in the field of study under which the student has been admitted to the program, as well as a preliminary prospectus or research proposal.

**Thirteen Elective Doctoral Level Courses from the List Below:**

**DOGM 801 The Ways of Knowing**

**3 Credits**

This course explores the two types of knowledge in Orthodox Christianity: Knowledge of the mind

(ἐπιστήμη) and knowledge of the heart (γνώσις). The course will discuss the essence of Orthodox Christian knowledge through true encounter, and the expression of such experience in the diverse human epistemological and philosophical frames of mind. The course will also highlight the importance of establishing a priority for using a specific order of epistemological questions to accurately express the encounter. The course will then highlight Orthodox methodologies and their foundational dependence on a lifestyle of a ‘change of mind’ (μετάνοια) and the necessity of this change for a true Orthodox conversion, not just in form but also in essence.

**DOGM 805 Theological Anthropology**

**3 Credits**

This course aims to explore the historical, scriptural, and patristic sources to engage with contemporary issues in theological anthropology. The course will examine theological anthropology as outlined in Pauline literature. It will also examine the theology of the Cappadocian and Syriac Fathers, particularly Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Theologian, Ambrose of Milan, Basil the Great, Ephrem the Syrian, and Jacob of Serug to examine the diversity of interpretation and breadth of meaning for the mystery of humanity. The course will shed emphasis on establishing methodologies to address modern issues surrounding the origin of humanity.

**DOGM 807 Orthodoxy in the Modern World**

**3 Credits**

This module intends to familiarize students with the thought of some of the most important modern Orthodox theologians, as well as the

challenges Orthodoxy faces today. To this end, the work of key theologians such as Sergei Bulgakov, Georges Florovsky, Paul Florensky, Vladimir Lossky, John Zizioulas, Christos Yannaras, Alexander Schmemmann, and Dumitru Staniloae will be examined, as well as critical assessments of their work and contribution. Several challenges and problems of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary world will also be examined, such as the renewed importance to the Patristic legacy; the collapse and restoration of Mt Athos in the 20th century; the challenge of ecumenism.

### **DOGM 808 - Advanced Seminar in Christology**

#### **3 Credits**

The question Christ posed to His disciples, “who do people say I am?” has been answered in different ways since the earliest times of Christianity. Using Christ’s query as a point of departure, this seminar investigates and presents a comprehensive synthesis of the Christological controversies that arose in both the Eastern and Western part of Christendom. Through a close reading of the writings of the Church fathers, the course also helps the students understand the mystery of the Incarnation of the Logos (Word of God) as the indispensable part of the divine plan of salvation.

### **HIST 802 - Genocide in the Early 20th Century Middle East**

#### **3 Credits**

How did Christianity in Turkey decrease from 25% of its population to just 0.4% today? This doctoral seminar is designed to introduce students to the critical study of human genocide through an in depth examination of the Turkish

driven genocide against its Christian minority communities. Students taking this course will examine the antecedents of genocide and the Christian response. Questions investigated in this course address religious and national identity, persecution, martyrdom, and the legacy of victimhood. The experience of Armenians and Assyrians (i.e., Syriac-speaking Christians) will especially be highlighted.

### **HIST 803 - History and Memory**

#### **3 Credits**

History begets memory and memory begets history. Different groups of people hold differing historical narratives based on their communal memories. Communal memory creates historical narrative that ultimately intentionally seeks to forget, erase, and exclude events that are historically preserved. This class seeks to explore the history of the Oriental Orthodox tradition and how this history is shaped, remembered and forgotten, and preserved in communal memory.

### **PATR 803 - Death in the Christian Tradition**

#### **3 Credits**

In this module students will engage with a range of biblical, classical and contemporary texts to explore how the Christian tradition has thought about death and what, if anything, might come ‘after’ it. Students will acquire a thorough grounding in the biblical perspectives on death and hope, noting how this develops and changes through the history of Israel and the early Christian era.

This will lay the foundation for the investigation of classic theological questions such as the relationship between sin and mortality, and the relationship of body and soul in Christian anthropology and hope. We will explore the increasing complexity of the ways in which

Christians came to understand the possible post-mortem states of the person, and the debates which have circled around each of these: eternal bliss, eternal damnation (whether understood as conscious eternal torment or otherwise), and the various conceptions of Purgatory. Much of what the Christian tradition has to say about death is mediated through liturgy, and we will spend time investigating the significance of classic and contemporary funeral rites from diverse traditions. The willing embrace of death, whether through martyrdom or suicide (of course the distinction can be a blurred one), features much in contemporary cultural and political discourse. The course ends with a look at how the Christian tradition has approached both topics historically and in the present day.

### **LTST 800 - Cult to Culture**

#### **3 Credits**

This doctoral seminar examines the fundamental elements of Eastern Christian worship as it developed in the early centuries of the Church, in order to historically ground subsequent theological discussion of contemporary renewal. After several weeks exploring the common repository of Orthodox liturgical tradition, we consider examples of current scholarship on the extant Rites in use among the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches: Armenian, West Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian, East Syrian and Byzantine. The selected readings showcase key scholars in the field, highlight the value of comparative and interdisciplinary methodologies, and illustrate the challenges of integrating history and theology with pastoral practice. The final weeks invite students to synthesize what they have learned by means of reflection on their own identity as worshippers in the modern world—with all its challenges: how

does the beauty of the *lex orandi* (“rule of prayer”) relate to the truth of the *lex credendi* (“rule of belief”), while also cultivating the goodness of an authentic spirituality, that is, a faithful and fruitful Christian *lex vivendi* (“rule of living”)?

### **SCRIP 800 - Comparative Translations of Scripture in Antiquity**

#### **3 Credits**

How do the various ancient translations of the Bible convey the same meaning in essence but diverge in form? This doctoral seminar is designed to introduce students to the critical study of the Sacred Scriptures through an examination of the various languages traditions through which these writings are conveyed. Students will participate in weekly seminars of scripture reading with attention to issues in comparative translation. Students taking this seminar are expected to be proficient in Hebrew and Greek. Proficiency in one or more languages of Christian and Jewish antiquity are highly encouraged: Aramaic (Targumic and Syriac) Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic (Ge'ez), Georgian, and Latin.

### **SCRIP 804 – Israelites Religion and its Ancient Near Eastern Context**

#### **3 Credits**

This doctoral seminar is designed to introduce students to the critical study of the religions of ancient Israel and Judah during the Iron Age and their development in relation to the ontological encounter of divine inspiration prior to the incarnation. In large part, the course is motivated by the question of how the image and likeness of God is imprinted upon those inside and outside the faith community of ancient Israel, and what this means for understanding the emergence of

scripture and tradition before the dawn of Christianity. Engaging both the primary texts of scripture and the ancient near East, the course prepares students to analyze the similarities and differences between the beliefs and praxis of ancient Israel with those of their neighbors. An examination of the prominent secondary literature introduces students to the major theories of the nature and diachronic changes in Israelite religion. Research beginning with these primary and secondary texts will be measured against the concerns of Orthodox Christian theological anthropology. Students taking this course will be proficient in Classical Hebrew and ideally one other scriptural language from antiquity, such as: Greek, Targumic Aramaic, Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Armenian, or Ethiopic.

### **MTS 601 - The Christian Doctrine of God and Diversity**

#### **3 Credits**

Description: The Christian faith confesses a Trinitarian God who is a diversity of persons in unity. This doctrine must present Christians with a model of appreciating diversity while also being rooted in a unity. This course traces the development of the Christian doctrine of God and related themes from Scripture to the 20th century. The course pays close attention to significant texts in the Christian tradition to discussions of the doctrine of the trinity and its relationship to diversity. We explore how our Trinitarian faith should be lived daily by reflecting on contemporary challenges surrounding diversity of religion, sexuality, culture, and biodiversity.

### **SCRP 835 – The Book of Daniel**

#### **3 Credits**

Description: The book of Daniel is a unique document within the literature of the Old Testament, intersecting with history, prophecy, apocalypse, and wisdom literature, in three different languages. Like all books of the scripture, the book of Daniel can be read entirely on its own as well as in concert with the entirety of scriptural tradition. In this course, we will be plunging deeply into the book of Daniel in order to better understand inner-biblical exegesis, the reception of the text within the tradition of the Church, and its place in modern biblical scholarship.

### **SCRP 554 – The Gospel of John**

#### **3 Credits**

Description: The course, The Gospel of John, involves an in-depth exploration of a particular theme or area in the study of theology. In this stream of the theology, we shall read the entire text of the Gospel according to John, chapter by chapter, in the context of modern historical research, but also with an eye to the Patristic commentaries and the spiritual reading of this text. The several strands of the text will be studied in a seminar form. The class will take into account several Biblical hermeneutic methodologies, but ultimately will concentrate on the text itself and the way it was understood and received in the early Christian communities.

**The end of the Doctor of Theology degree culminates in dissertation research (Required):**

**THEO 801 Dissertation Writing 18 Credits**

### 38.3.4 Theo 801 Dissertation Writing and Doctoral Student Evaluation Criteria:

*Doctoral Seminars:* In doctoral seminars, students will be evaluated based on their participation and essay submission, which is graded according to the ThD Essay Grading Rubric.

#### *Advancing to Candidacy*

In order to advance to candidacy, students must successfully pass all doctoral seminars and comprehensive examinations. The following assessments are used to evaluate students advancing to candidacy:

#### *Language Exams:*

*Students must satisfy one language requirement from each of the following categories:*

1. Classical Greek
2. The Primary Language of a major tradition: Classical Armenian, Christian Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, or Syriac.
3. One modern research language: (E.g. Arabic, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, or Russian)

Students can show the fulfillment of the language requirement by a) submitting transcripts to show successful completion of these languages, b) sitting for language examination at one of the national testing centers [e.g. the Goethe Institute for the German language exam], c) by successfully passing Agora's faculty evaluation at the discretion of the Dean, where students will be presented with pertinent passages to translate from primary texts in the case of classical languages, or research articles in their modern research language.

#### *Comprehensive Exams:*

Comprehensive exams comprise two exams addressing the student's primary and secondary research areas. These examinations cover the

dominant and relevant peer-reviewed literature in the appropriate field measuring the student's presentation of advanced scholarly theological knowledge, inclusion/use of theoretical and theological concepts, and evidence of specialized content areas specific to Orthodox Christian theology.

#### *Dissertation Progress Defense:*

Following the passing of language and comprehensive exams, doctoral students must pass their dissertation progress defense by producing a 10,000-word excerpt and sitting for an oral defense of their dissertation before a select committee from the faculty senate, excluding the student's supervisor. Upon passing the dissertation progress defense, students will advance to candidacy and be cleared to enter the dissertation writing phase of the program.

#### *Dissertation Writing:*

The student will write the dissertation with an original contribution to the field. The dissertation must be at least 65,000 words with a maximum of 75,000 words, excluding bibliography.

#### *THEO 801 Learning Outcomes:*

Students will solidify their acquisition of the program outcomes and develop specific skills particular to the doctoral dissertation that prepares students for conducting and completing future research. The following learning outcomes are aligned to the Th.D. program outcomes.

#### I. Research Skills:

- *Students shall utilize appropriate research theories, methodology, and theoretical frameworks to address fundamental questions concerning Eastern Christian theology for engaging contemporary challenges in society.*
- a. Students will have exceeded the research skills particular to each course and

expanded these to address the work necessary to major, sophisticated presentations in monograph format.

- b. Students will know the major streams of research particular to their field: books, authors, journal databases, primary sources, etc.

## II. Knowledge of their Field:

- *Recall an advanced knowledge important to the history, culture, and theology of early and Eastern Christianity.*
- *Orally articulate ideas and concepts pertinent to Orthodox Christian history, culture, and theology.*
- a. Through their research undertaken, students will acquire specific knowledge and perspective on material directly and indirectly related to their research question. The research process is valuable not only for answering the specific research question, but also for learning valuable information within the context of uncovering data specific to the research. Generally, student research will yield 10x the information that will be directly necessary to include in the publication of the thesis.

## III. Proper Analysis

- *Students shall demonstrate theologically based critical thought and contemplation concerning the Orthodox Christian theological positions and their application both historically as well as within contemporary church and society.*
- *Students shall be able articulate a specific position on their undertaken research producing an original contribution to the fields of theological*

*discourse. Proper analysis displays a student's ability to not only conduct independent research, but to make sense of that research for the student's own benefit as well as for others.*

## IV. Written Communication

- *Students shall construct and defend a position rooted in Orthodox Christian thought, demonstrating effective written communication sufficient to publish or present the student's work within the appropriate theological research domains.*
  - o Produce new and original contributions to Orthodox Christian theological discourse, at a level appropriate to teaching at the community as well as collegiate or university levels.

Upon completion of the dissertation, students will be able to display the acquisition of their ability to communicate their research and analysis in written format.

*The Viva:*

At the conclusion of the dissertation writing process with a minimum of 65,000 words and a maximum of 75,000 words, students will submit the completed project to their supervisor, who will forward it to the examination committee, comprised of three faculty members. The committee will determine a date for the viva no later than six months from the date of submission. The viva usually takes two hours, with a maximum of four hours.



### 38.3.5 Sample Full Time ThD Study Plan

**Research Methods** (THEO 800) is a mandatory module that will be offered as an initial course depending on the term the student is enrolled in the program.

<b>Term 1</b>	<b>Term 2</b>	<b>Term 3</b>	<b>Term 4</b>	<b>Term 5</b>	<b>Term 6</b>	<b>Term 7</b>
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Fall</b>

The Two Ways of Knowing	Israelites and their Ancient Near Eastern Context	Genesis in the Early 20th Century	The Christian Doctrines of God and Divinity	Culture and History	Historical and Anthropology	Theological and Anthropology
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Orthodox in the Modern World	Advanced Seminars in Christology	The Book of Daniel	The Gospel of John	Comparative Translations of the Scriptures in Tradition	Death in the Christian Tradition	Research in the History of Christianity
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<b>Term 8</b>	<b>Term 9</b>
<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
Research	Research

## 39 STUDENT COMMUNITY

Accomplishing the educational mission of Agora University requires an edifying community atmosphere and an environment that promotes spiritual growth. The student handbook is one way by which Agora University establishes a context for the student experience and indicates what we value. The Keyword in our University is “Community”. We would encourage you to consider ways and opportunities to impact the world and correspond with the modern challenges that face our society.

Students are to attend each class for which they are registered. In addition, students are expected to respect both professors and fellow students and exhibit deportment that helps create a positive learning environment in each classroom. Agora University wants all students to achieve their highest academic potential and makes faculty and academic support resources available to assist each student in meeting his or her academic goals. Students, however, are ultimately responsible for their own academic success and should take the initiative to ask for assistance as needed.

**Faculty—** Students needing assistance with a specific course should first seek the help of the professor. Maintaining continued contact with a professor and staying informed of one’s academic status in a course is highly recommended.

**Registrar—** The Registrar is knowledgeable about the degree the student is pursuing and available to help the student plan his or her semester course sequence, course load and class schedule.

Students and faculty are brothers and sisters in one family, and we expect each to treat the other with respect both in and out of the classroom. Appropriate discourse in a reasoned fashion is

part of the education process, and strong opinions informed by fact, logic, spiritual maturity and insight are valued. Students are not only welcome but invited to discuss any matter with their professors in and out of class in the spirit of appropriate decorum and mutual respect.

## **40 STUDENT SERVICES**

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### **40.1 LIBRARY SERVICES**

#### **Virtual Librarian**

Agora University has an online Virtual Librarian available to students during the following hours:

#### **Librarian Service Hours**

Monday - Friday (7AM EST to 9PM EST)

Saturday - Sunday (12PM EST to 7PM EST)

All students will have access to Electronic Databases including ATLA Religion and Periodicals, ProQuest, Cengage and other digital resources.

All our students will have access to our online platform Populi Web <https://agora.populiweb.com> . The programs we are offering are mainly based on regular Internet access to the Populi Web, and this will require both a basic competence in skills related to Internet use and easy access to suitable computer. Each module has a designated website granting immediate access to vital information, electronic resources of various sorts, and providing a site for regular on-line tutorials.

### **40.2 CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION**

If your information changes, please login to <https://agora.populiweb.com> to update your information.

### **40.3 STUDENT ID CARDS**

Agora University can issue Student ID cards which might be helpful for local library use or other student services and discounts. If you are interested, please send an email to the Registrar's office. Student IDs are valid for two years and are renewed based on the registration status of the student. If you lost your student ID, a \$10 replacement fee is required and paid to Agora University.

### **40.4 GRADUATION CEREMONY**

Upon graduation, all students are issued their diplomas and transcripts via the postal service. However, Agora University periodically organizes a graduation ceremony for those interested in attending. The Graduation Ceremony is not required.

### **40.5 ALUMNI NETWORK**

Establishing a community is an integral part of Agora University's Mission. We invite all our graduates to join our Alumni Network which provides our students and faculty to stay connected and provide support to the University community. Please contact our alumni coordinator at [alumni@agora.edu](mailto:alumni@agora.edu)

## **41 QUICK GUIDE TO RESEARCH AND WRITING**

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### **Critical Use of Sources**

#### **Identify your sources:**

- Books (textbooks)
- Encyclopedia Articles
- Monographs
- Journal Articles
- Book Reviews

- Collection of Essays (Festschrift, Oxford/Cambridge Handbooks, Conference Papers)
- Primary Source

**Getting the Most out of your Sources:**

- Don't rely on your memory.
- Take notes.
- Notebook summary from books you read.
- Recording your notes on ideas and synthesis.
- Use Post-it notes.
- Always ask, why am I using this book or article, what do I hope to gain from it?

**Primary Sources:**

- Who is the author?
- What was his background?
- Was the source intended for publication (or was it a private letter?)
- Who were the intended audience?

- Do we know when it was written, and what was happening in the author's world at that date?

**Secondary Sources:**

- Who is the author? (he or she may be an eminent professor, or a very new post-doc, publishing a first article, or somewhere in between. (Do not suppose that new scholars are less important)
- Where is the work published?
- When was it written? It matters whether the book you are reading was written in 1969 or 2009.
- It is important to note that at some time you need to stop reading and start writing!

**Academic Presentation:**

All essays should be word-processed and set out with either 1.5 or double spacing. Footnotes or endnotes are included in the word count, but bibliographies are not.