

**COURSE OUTLINE**  
**PART I**  
**HISTORY OF THE (EASTERN) CHRISTIAN MYSTICAL TRADITION**

- I. THE MYSTICAL DIMENSION OF THE SCRIPTURES. The Old Testament Background. The New Testament: The Incarnate, Transfigured and Risen Christ. The Gospel of St. John. The Epistles of the Apostle Paul.
- II. PLATONIC/HELLENISTIC BACKGROUND. Plato. Philo. Plotinus.
- III. PRE-NICEAN DEVELOPMENTS. The Mystical Dimension of Martyrdom. St. Ignatius of Antioch and Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas. The mystical theology of Clement of Alexandria and Origen.
- IV. THE MONASTIC TRADITION OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST. St. Anthony the Great and primitive monasticism. The intellectual tradition of the desert – Evagrius of Pontus. The mysticism of the heart - St. Macarius the Great. St. Gregory of Nyssa and divine incomprehensibility. The Sinaitic Tradition – St. John Klimakos (of the Ladder).
- V. THE WESTERN CONTRIBUTION OF THE PATRISTIC AGE. St. John Cassian. St. Ambrose of Milan. St. Augustine. St. Gregory the Great.
- VI. THE SYRIAC TRADITION. The poetic and mystical theology of Sts. Ephraim and Isaac of Syria.
- VII. BYZANTIUM. St. Dionysius the Areopagite and apophatic theology. St. Maximus the Confessor. St. Symeon the New Theologian and Light mysticism. Mt. Athos.
- VIII. ST. GREGORY PALAMAS AND HESYCHASM. A detailed study of this important figure in the history of Eastern Christian spirituality.
- IX. THE HESYCHAST TRADITION OF ORTHODOX RUSSIA. St. Sergius of Radonezh and the “Golden Age of Russian Spirituality.” St. Nil of Sora and the non-possessors. St. Paisius Velichkovsky and the revival of hesychasm in Russia. *The Philokalia*. St. Seraphim of Sarov and the practice of “eldership.”
- X. THE CONTEMPORARY SETTING. Continuing revival and popularization of hesychasm. The Jesus Prayer and its use in contemporary spirituality.

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Our main text for this part of the course will be *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* by John Meyendorff. We will also read parts of the other books assigned for this course. The book review and mid-term exam will be completed in this first half of the course.