# Eastern Christianities

## Prof. Lorenzo Perrone

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to offer an introduction to the Eastern Christianities, that is those Church communities historically living in the broad geographical area ranging from the Caucasus and the Near East to Egypt and the Horn of Africa, which are connected by numerous traditions and common vicissitudes. In addition to the general historical context and the panoramas of various national Christianities, the course will explore their religious, artistic and cultural contributions.

By the end of the course, students will have an overall perspective of the historical and current developments of an important and little-known branch of the Christian tradition within political and interreligious contexts profoundly different from Western Christianity and particularly marked by its relationship to Islam. The general knowledge acquired will lay the foundation for further study on a linguistic and cultural level, also with regard to the dynamic diaspora of these Christianities and their current situations.

***COURSE CONTENT***

First, the course will present a general overview of Eastern Christianities. It will illustrate the main characteristics of this branch of the Christian tradition, distinguished not only from Catholicism and Protestantism but also from Byzantine-Slavic Orthodoxy. Together with the historical dynamics that have linked most of these Churches since late antiquity, the course will highlight the phenomena underlying ecclesiastical fragmentation leading to different nations and ethnic groups, but also their unifying elements. The second part will be dedicated to “national” Christianities, beginning with Syriac Christianity in its various historical and geographical expressions, from the Western Churches (Melkites, Jacobites and Maronites) to the Eastern Church (Assyrians and Chaldeans). The course will then move on to the Christianities of the Caucasus, with the Churches of Armenia and Georgia, which have gravitated historically around the two important ecclesiastical centres of Antioch and Jerusalem. This part will conclude with the presentation of African Christianity: the Churches of Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia in the wake of the missionary outreach of the Church of Alexandria. The third part will be dedicated to Jerusalem as the Holy City of Christians in the East, a place of encounter, exchange and confrontation among the different confessions.

***READING LIST***

P. Buzi, *La Chiesa copta. Egitto, Etiopia, Nubia*, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, Bologna 2014.

G. Fedalto, *Le chiese d’Oriente da Giustiniano alla caduta di Costantinopoli*, Jaca Book, Milan 1984, 20103.

A. Ferrari (ed. by), *Popoli e Chiese dell’Oriente cristiano*, Edizioni Lavoro, Rome 2008. Bernard HEYBERGER, *Les chrétiens d’Orient*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 2020.

B. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens d’Orient*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 20202.

A. Pacini (ed.), *Comunità cristiane nell’islam arabo. La sfida del futuro*, Edizioni della Fondazione Agnelli, Turin 1996.

V. Poggi, *L’Oriente cristiano*. Vol. 1: *Panorama storico delle Chiese cristiane in Asia e in Africa*, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, Bologna 2005.

P. Siniscalco, *Le antiche Chiese cristiane d'Oriente. Un cammino millenario*, Città Nuova, Rome 2016.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will mainly be delivered by means of frontal lectures but will also include meetings of a seminar-like nature, with the reading and discussion of texts.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam. This will focus on the contents of the course and require the reading of a monograph and two short essays chosen from the detailed reading list, which will be available in the blackboard. The students should also read one the texts in translation available in the blackboard. Students with specific and suitably motivated interests may define a more tailored syllabus with the teacher

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Given the introductory nature of the course, there are no particular prerequisites.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.