



***Liberal Arts: Level 7***  
***Classics of Christendom: Literature***  
***2023-24***

**ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:**

**Grades 11-12**

*Students in grades 9-10 may be admitted by permission from the instructor.*

**Class Times:**

**Section 1 M/W 12:30 PM – 2:15 PM ET**

**Instructor:** Dr. Alexander Titus

**E-mail:** [alexander.titus.scholeacademy@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.titus.scholeacademy@gmail.com)

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**SCHEDULE FOR *CLASSICS OF CHRISTENDOM: LITERATURE***

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**CLASS SESSION DATES:**

**Start date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023

**End date:** Wednesday, May 22, 2024

**ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL HOLIDAYS (NO CLASSES):**

**Monday, September 4, 2023 (Labor Day)**

**Monday, November 20 – Friday, November 24, 2023 (Thanksgiving)**

**Monday, December 18, 2023 – Friday, January 5, 2024 (Christmas and New Year's)**

**Monday, February 19 – Friday, February 23, 2024 (Winter break)**

**Monday, April 29 – Monday, May 6, 2024 (Holy Week/Pascha and Bright Monday)**

## COURSE MAP

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### Fall Semester

Quarter 1: Early Monastic Spirituality and Late Antique Philosophy

1. Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict*
2. Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Complete Works*
3. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

Quarter 2: Middle Byzantine Spirituality, Liturgical Piety, Medieval Western Philosophy

4. Maximus the Confessor, *On the Ecclesiastical Mystagogy*
5. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Theological and Practical Treatises*
6. Anselm of Canterbury, *Monologion; Why God Became Man*

### Spring Semester

Quarter 3: Medieval Western Monasticism, The Rise of Scholasticism

7. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Humility and Pride; On Loving God*
8. Bauerschmidt, *The Essential Summa* (Thomas Aquinas)

Quarter 4: The Late Medieval “Renaissances” (Italian and Palaiologan), The Growth of Popular and Lay Spirituality

9. Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*
10. Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*
11. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Selected Canterbury Tales*
12. Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment as needed.

**REQUIRED TEXTS (PRIMARY):**

1. [RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict: 978-0814612729](#)
2. [Dionysius the Areopagite, The Complete Works: 978-0809128389](#)
3. [Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy: 978-0140447804](#)
4. [Maximus the Confessor, On the Ecclesiastical Mystagogy: 978-0881416473](#)
5. [Symeon the New Theologian, The Theological and Practical Treatises and the Three Theological Discourses: 978-0879079413](#)
6. [Anselm of Canterbury, The Major Works: 978-0199540082](#)
7. [Bernard of Clairvaux, Selected Works: 978-0809129171](#)
8. [Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, The Essential Summa Theologiae: 978-1540960061](#)
9. [Dante Alighieri, The Inferno: 978-0812970067](#)
10. [Nicholas Cabasilas, The Life in Christ: 978-0913836125](#)
11. [Geoffrey Chaucer, Selected Canterbury Tales: 978-0486282411](#)
12. [Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ: 978-0486431857](#)

**ADDITIONAL COURSE TEXTS:** Other materials as provided by the instructor.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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This course will cover some of the most significant Classics of Christian Literature, both East and West, beginning with the early 5th century and ending with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. We will read works of Christian theology, spirituality, poetry, prayer, philosophy, and imaginative fiction from this extremely important (but sometimes overlooked and/or misunderstood) period. Students will come away with an understanding both of the historical emergence of Christian theology and spirituality, as well as develop the skills necessary to read these texts “literarily”: What are the major themes and issues of the text? How does the author’s historical context inform these? How do we see the Holy Spirit working through these texts in the life of the Church? As a course within the classical “Great Books” tradition of the liberal arts curriculum, most of class time will be spent discussing the primary texts, with the instructor providing supplementary contextual data where relevant; optional secondary sources are also available to be read concurrently with the primary. As a course within St. Raphael School, non-Orthodox students are welcome to enroll, but with the understanding that the instructor will approach the material from an explicitly Eastern Orthodox perspective, and will therefore at times need to be critical of, although not uncharitable to, the non-Orthodox materials. Literary thinking begins with understanding, not prejudice, and thus the instructor will often encourage students to read each text with empathy before rushing to evaluate whether it is “right” or “wrong.” This class can be taken by itself, but it is designed to be taken together with its sister course, Classics of Christendom: History, in a back-to-back block. Students who enroll in both courses will receive a discount on tuition.

## **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ACTION**

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Our classes are discussion- (not lecture-) based, and the instructor cannot have a discussion with himself! Therefore, it is necessary that each student also be prepared to participate directly and attentively in class conversations. Students are expected to attend each class session on-time and with the assigned readings prepared, unless the instructor has given prior written permission, in which case the student will watch and take notes on the missed class. Students should come to each class with a set of questions about the day’s reading, which they will post the night before on Canvas. The instructor has endeavored to assign only widely available and relatively inexpensive books, so students will need to have their own, printed copy (not a borrowed or digital copy) of each of the required texts (listed above), which they will mark up and annotate accordingly. The instructor will occasionally provide the students with digital copies of hard-to-find or out-of-print texts (some of which are in the public domain) for the purposes of supplementary reading. Students should plan to complete between 30 and 50 pages of reading for each class session.

## STUDENT EVALUATION: GRADING

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### Scholé Grading Philosophy

While Scholé Academy courses will be “restful,” we also recognize the need to provide grades for students who will be using a course as part of their prepared college transcript. It’s a delicate balance to achieve both restful learning and excellent academic performance. Earning a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery of a discipline. Often, for disciplines in classical education, learning the concepts introduced will be a necessary and significant component of future success in upper-level classical education. In that sense, attaining mastery is its own reward. Instructors may apply this grading philosophy differently in lower school than in middle and upper school, but this is the intention behind all Scholé Academy grading practices.

### Grading Practices

Instructors typically assign the following grades based on students’ level of achievement: *magna cum laude* (with great praise), *cum laude* (with praise), *satis* (sufficient, satisfactory), and *non satis* (not sufficient). Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work should be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy. These assessments are not mere grading instruments but ways for instructors to signal progress towards mastery with students and parents.

### Grade Reporting

We recognize that some parents are required to prepare transcripts so they can report the courses and grades earned by their students. Scholé Academy does not provide official transcripts for parents to use in their reporting of courses and grades. However, If your student is enrolled in a lower school course and you require either a traditional numeric or letter grade, please notify the instructor. Middle and upper school instructors will provide traditional numerical grades, but they will also provide more meaningful narrative feedback and progress reports.

While Scholé Academy serves homeschoolers by providing online instruction, we do not replace parents as the administrators of homeschools. As such, the ultimate authority on a student’s grade is his parents. If a parent feels the need to modify the instructor’s assessment in his own records, as the administrator, he should feel free to do so. However, only students who complete the required work for a given class at a level deemed satisfactory by the instructor will receive a grade report from Scholé Academy.

(See Section 8 of the Scholé Academy Student-Parent Handbook)

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## STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS

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Students' grades will comprise:

1. Reading and Class Discussions (30%)
2. Daily Summaries/Questions (30%)
3. Writing Assignments (40%)

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## STUDENT EVALUATION: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

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Students will often take assessment tests and/or quizzes privately at home. Students are on their honor to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#) which assumes the personal cultivation of Student-Virtues described in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Additionally, plagiarism is a serious and punishable offense. Proper citation of all sources is essential to the academic endeavor. Remember to cite any source if the information is not common knowledge or is an opinion obtained through any source. A plagiarized assignment will result in a failing grade.

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## THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

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We conduct classes online using Zoom. Students are expected to have cameras on and to participate regularly in class.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

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## ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

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**Dr. Alexander Titus** is a learner, educator, translator, and Church historian, specializing in the Byzantine and medieval Western periods. He holds a BA (2011) in Classics from the University of Oregon, an MA (2015) and ThM (2016) from St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary, and a PhD (2022) in Church History from Princeton Theological Seminary, where he wrote his dissertation on St. Gregory Palamas. His English translation of Palamas' Triads is also forthcoming from St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (2023). Dr. Titus has come to believe strongly in the salvific value of classical education, not only for the soul of the individual Christian, but for the building up of the whole Church.

Dr. Titus currently lives in Springfield, Oregon, with his wife and two sons. His other interests include cooking, literature, visual arts (e.g., film, animation, games), volunteering in his local Orthodox community, and attempting, sometimes fruitlessly, to maintain a large rural property. He loves spending time with children and teaches part-time at his local Orthodox homeschooling resource center. [alexander.titus.scholeacademy@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.titus.scholeacademy@gmail.com)