

**SAINT JOHN OF DAMASCUS  
INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY**

# NON DEGREE THEOLOGY ONLINE PROGRAMS

## KALIMA E-LEARNING PROGRAM

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

### MISSION STATEMENT

The *Kalima* E-learning Theology Program at the University of Balamand is a unique Arabic program for theological education, organized and administered by Professors at the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology. It makes qualitative theological formation accessible to all Arabic speaking people, regardless of their place of residence. Those Church-committed Christians who would like to pursue theological education without being able to attend a theological school are now eligible to acquire a theological academic formation through *Kalima*. This program is committed to equip students with basic knowledge in the main fields of theological and pastoral studies. The mission of the program is accomplished in a professional, dynamic and original learning process, which technically operates through the Moodle e-learning platform.

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

*Kalima* seeks to:

1. Assist students in understanding the theory and praxis (practice) of the Orthodox Faith.
2. Sensitize students about engagement and research in the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Christian faith through courses that reflect timely discussions and current issues.
3. Equip students with academic and pastoral skills and tools to develop innovative ways of understanding and communicating the fundamentals of Christianity.
4. Provide students with an opportunity for interacting with scholars specialized in the various fields of Orthodox Theology.
5. Form students to be engaged in the life and pastoral work in their parish, whether in teaching, preaching or serving.
6. Help students living in the Orthodox Antiochian Diaspora to remain closely associated with their Mother Church.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the program, the students will be able to:

- a. Discuss theological concerns of the Church, after receiving in the program a deeper investigation of various theological fields.
- b. Interpret Holy Scriptures using specific modern interpretation tools.
- c. Discern important phases in Church History, and critically review documented events.

- d. Discern the hallmarks of Orthodox theology, being informed about its background and the historical and cultural circumstances that shaped its wording.
- e. Become involved in theological discussions within the context of the parish life, and defend the various aspects of the Holy Faith against heresies.
- f. Teach Christian Education in the parish Sunday School or in various elementary, middle, and high schools.
- g. Act as Pastoral Assistants, helping their priests in various pastoral duties within the parish.
- h. Write short articles in local papers and parish bulletins.
- i. Utilize the human and material resources of St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology.
- j. Know and interact with a net of Arabic-speaking students who graduate from the *Kalima* Program.

## **CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION**

The curriculum of the *Kalima* program for theological education contains 12 courses divided into 6 semesters, with 2 courses in each semester. These courses cover the main fields in Orthodox Theology (Holy Scripture, Dogmatics, Patristics, Liturgical Theology, Church History, Pastoral Studies, and Canon Law), with both the academic approach and pastoral priority. Each course is presented over 14 study weeks, on average of one lecture per week.

At the end of the study cycle, and after successfully completing all of the courses (as well as fulfilling all of the requirements of the curriculum), students will receive a certificate from the administration of the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology. However, this certificate of completion of the *Kalima* program is not an official degree, and is not equivalent to any state acknowledged university degree. In order for one to attain a Theological degree, he/she must enroll and complete a degree program at the Institute of Theology as a regular student.

## **REGISTRATION**

- Applicants to the *Kalima* program must fill out the registration form posted on the program's webpage.
- Each registered student must follow the two offered courses in each semester, until he/she finishes all of the courses in the curriculum after three years.
- The registration fees can be paid either by electronic payment available on the website, or by depositing the correct amount in the *Kalima* bank account.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- Each student registered in one or more courses of the program agrees to respect and comply with all applicable bylaws and regulations.
- The student must follow the lessons published weekly, and must not fail to enter the program and read the material. A repeated absence for more than two weeks makes the student subject to dropping that course.
- In every course, the student undergoes a weekly quiz concerning the previous lessons. Furthermore, he/she must take a midterm and a final exam. The general average of all quizzes, midterms and finals of a course will constitute the final grade.

- The student should complete all assignments related to the lessons given by the professor. His/her work will be evaluated by the professor according to the policy set at the beginning of the course.
- A grade that is less than 60 means that the student did not succeed in the course.
- The student can drop a course at any time. In that case, he/she will not be reimbursed the registration fee of that course. If he/she later chooses to take the course, from which he/she once withdrew, he/she will have to pay the fee again.

## **COURSE OFFERING**

### **First Year**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Number of Lessons</b>
Introduction to the History and Order (Typicon) of Christian Worship	KLMA 204	14
Exegesis of the Old Testament	KLMA 220	14
Important Landmarks in Church History	KLMA 240	14
Patrology	KLMA 255	14

### **Second year**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Number of Lessons</b>
Gospels – Acts of the Apostles – Revelation	KLMA 211	14
Pastoral Care	KLMA 282	14
The Orthodox Christian Dogmas	KLMA 230	14
Introduction to Anthropology and Christian Ethics	KLMA 235	14

### **Third year**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Number of Lessons</b>
Epistles of the New Testament	KLMA 212	14
The Church and The Challenges of The Modern World	KLMA 236	14
Canon Law	KLMA 283	14
Christianity and Other Religions (Comparative Religions)	KLMA 293	14

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

### **KLMA 204 INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND ORDER (TYPICON) OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**

A general introduction to Christian worship, its roots, sources and history, with a special focus on the services which are practiced in the parishes, such as the daily prayers and the Eucharist. It also deals with the sacraments, their practice, and their importance in the life of the Church and the parish.

### **KLMA 211 GOSPELS - ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - REVELATION**

This course offers an exegesis of selected passages from the New Testament covering the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation. Texts are chosen, when possible, from liturgical readings and are presented to the students as examples of New Testament exegesis by pointing to some exegetical methods which can be used in the parishes and within youth groups.

### **KLMA 212 EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

This course offers an exegesis of selected passages from the Epistles of the New Testament, and particularly from the Pauline Corpus, with the purpose of highlighting the main theological issues and spiritual value. The historical and present complicated debates of Low and High Criticism are within the scope of this course. It also traces the development in perspectives resulting from the changing circumstances that necessitated the writing of the epistles.

### **KLMA 220 EXEGESIS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

This course offers an exegesis of selected passages from the Old Testament covering the books of the Law, Prophets, Wisdom Literature and Psalms. Texts are chosen from liturgical readings and are presented to the students as examples of biblical exegesis by pointing to some exegetical methods which can be used in the parishes and within youth groups.

### **KLMA 230 THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN DOGMAS**

This course aims at clarifying the status of Dogma in the Church by highlighting the close connection between doctrine and life in Christ. It deals with the most important Christian doctrines such as the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, Christology, Creation, Salvation, Ecclesiology and Christian Eschatology. The course takes into consideration the elaboration of these issues in the Ecumenical Councils and in the writings of the Fathers, their history, with a special emphasis on their role in the life of the Church, the liturgy, and the faith of the community.

### **KLMA 235 INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

This course sheds light on the main ethical aspects of faith in Christ, with emphasis on the Orthodox vision of man. The course deals with the impact of this Orthodox anthropology on the behavior of church followers regarding important social issues such as family, work, and politics. The course also deals with the problems of bioethics, which present a great challenge to Christianity in this day and age, especially cloning, euthanasia, and abortion. These issues are discussed from a Christian point of view.

### **KLMA 236 THE CHURCH AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN WORLD**

The course provides a forum on the most important theories and ideologies prevailing in the modern world

concerning politics, economics, religion, and philosophy while attempting to elaborate a position towards them from the point of view of the Christian faith rooted in tradition and open to modernity.

#### **KLMA 240 IMPORTANT LANDMARKS IN CHURCH HISTORY**

This course is designed to introduce students to important periods, institutions, personalities, religious and theological expressions of church life from the apostolic period until modern times. Special emphasis is given to the history of the Church of Antioch.

#### **KLMA 255 PATROLOGY**

The course presents a view on the position of the fathers and their status in the mind and the life of the Church. It also presents the frameworks in which the Church's theology emerged and developed in addition to all issues and problems that occupied the Church over the first three centuries. It also deals with researching the fathers' contributions in Church issues and all other regulatory and theological fields...etc. Of course it addresses the educational, intellectual, cultural and religious backgrounds of selected fathers and how their contributions were influenced by these backgrounds and their status in the life of the Church.

#### **KLMA 282 PASTORAL CARE**

The course is an introduction to the theology of priesthood. It discusses the leadership role of priests and pastoral assistants in a parish setting. It presents an introduction to parish administration, with an emphasis on various pastoral ministries such as teaching, social care, and family ministries.

#### **KLMA 283 CANON LAW**

This course introduces the student to the Canon Law, its development throughout history as well as to their interpretation by the Church. The course accomplishes the first part by concentrating on the Canon Law in the Church of Antioch. In addition, it also deals with canons regarding marriage and divorce as they are used nowadays in the Antiochian Church.

#### **KLMA 293 CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS (COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS)**

This course discusses the Christian position towards other religions. It deals with dialogue of religions, taking into consideration actual discussion about this topic in different places in the world. This course emphasizes the importance of Christian Witness in openness and love.

# **CBB E-LEARNING PROGRAM IN SPANISH** **(CURSOS BÍBLICOS DEL BALAMAND)**

<http://cbb.cursos-balamand.net/>

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*Cursos Bíblicos del Balamand* is an e-learning program in Spanish at the Institute of Theology committed to provide Eastern Christian Education for Christian Orthodox in Latin America and Spain. The academic mission of the program is to prepare church leaders, catechists and youth coordinators with a competent knowledge of Scripture and its interpretation considering both the Orthodox hermeneutical tradition and modern linguistic and historical-critical methods. CBB is offered in a collaborative learning environment based on the MOODLE platform. Our program encourages teamwork, creative thinking and community service spirit.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The curriculum of this program aims to:

1. Provide students with fundamentals on biblical theology and biblical methods of interpretation.
2. To distinguish traditions, schools and stages of formation in both the Old and New Testaments.
3. Assist students to develop a more systematic and reflective approach to Scripture and the liturgical context of the Bible in the Orthodox Church.
4. Equip students with skills and tools to act as Orthodox catechists and religion teachers.
5. Sensitize students about engagement and research in the message of the Bible and its tradition of interpretation in the Church through courses that reflect timely discussions and current issues.
6. Provide students the opportunity for an interactive communication with scholars specialized in the various fields of Biblical exegesis.
7. Form students to be engaged in the life and pastoral work in their parish.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will demonstrate:

- a. Familiarity with the central narratives of the Bible.
- b. The ability to interpret Biblical passages with accuracy and responsibility.
- c. Effectiveness to communicate Biblical truths in teaching settings.
- d. Familiarity with the essential beliefs of the Christian faith by being able to defend reasons for those beliefs with good arguments and evidence from the Bible.
- e. The ability to explain the different historical backgrounds that moved authors to write certain contents in a certain form and style.
- f. Introductory knowledge of hermeneutical principles in order to develop an interpretation of a Biblical text.
- g. The ability to describe the Biblical fundamentals for the existence of the church and articulate the

relevance of the Bible for the contemporary church and her ministry in the world.

h. A basic understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of the Bible's original authors and audiences.

i. The ability to use some Biblical resources available online and in libraries.

j. An understanding of the ways in which the Old and the New Testament are interpreted in different Christian denominations.

k. Knowledge to write articles in biblical-related topic areas.

## **REGISTRATION**

- Applicants to CBB must follow the instructions given on the program's webpage (see above).
- Students may register for all offered courses or only one of them, knowing that at the end of the semester they will be granted a certificate stating that they have attended and passed the courses.
- The tuition fee for each course varies according to the residence region between 30 USD and 75 USD. Fees are expected to be paid before the end of the second week of the semester.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- Students are to abide by all rules and regulations in terms of attendance, course requirements and assignment submissions.
- Students must follow the lessons on a regular weekly basis, and must never fail to attend the courses. After a two consecutive week absence the student will be dropped out of the course.
- Students are subjected to a weekly evaluation, and a final exam in all courses. The general average of the course consists of the grades given in the weekly evaluations and the final exam.
- Students must submit all assignments given by the course instructor. Assignments are graded according to the policy that the instructor has announced at the beginning of the course.
- If the student's grade is less than 60/100, he/she will be considered as having failed the course and will not get a certificate of attendance.
- Students may drop the course at any time providing that they inform the instructor or the program's director in written form.
- A certificate is awarded to those who have successfully completed each one of the courses and a **Diploma in Biblical Interpretation** is submitted to those who have followed the whole program and have satisfied the faculty final evaluation.
- The courses given in the framework of e-learning are not transferable to any degree program at the University.

## **CURRICULUM**

### **OLD TESTAMENT COURSES**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
Interpretation of the Pentateuch	CBBE 220	3	14
Interpretation of the Prophets	CBBE 221	3	14
Interpretation of Psalms	CBBE 222	3	14



Interpretation of Historical Books	CBBE 224	3	14
Interpretation of Wisdom Literature	CBBE 225	3	14

### **NEW TESTAMENT COURSES**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
Interpretation of the Pauline Letters	CBBE 210	3	14
Interpretation of Matthew and Mark	CBBE 211	3	14
Interpretation of Luke and Acts	CBBE 212	3	14
Interpretation of John and Revelation	CBBE 213	3	14
Interpretation of The Pastoral and Catholic Letters	CBBE 214	3	14

### **THE E-LEARNING MOODLE PLATFORM**

The CBB program offers its courses through the MOODLE platform, which is an “open source” program. The system allows applying collaborative learning methods and provides each instructor the possibility to administer his/her own education room.

The system offers, amongst other things, the administration of study groups, forums, file upload/download, calendars, chat, various evaluation and grading methods. The program is available on the internet entirely for free.

### **FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION**

CBB instructors are faculty members at the Institute, who can teach their courses in Spanish, as well as Institute Alumni, who live in Spanish-speaking countries and have either achieved a graduate degree or an excellent academic experience. The latter maintain assiduous contact with the Institute’s professors in order to consult them about the course content, bibliography and teaching as well as learning strategies.

The program has a Spanish-speaking general coordinator, who is part of the faculty at the Institute. Besides, it counts with an assistant coordinator and a technical administrator of the operating system and the website of the program community.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

#### **CBBE 210 INTERPRETATION OF THE PAULINE LETTERS**

The course treats the exegesis of selected passages from the Pauline Corpus, chosen in sequence to highlight the main theological issues raised in the Corpus as a whole. The historical and present debates of Low and High Criticism are within the scope of the course. It also traces the development in perspectives resulting from the changing circumstances that necessitated the writing of the epistles.

#### **CBBE 211 INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW AND MARK**

The Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Mark belong to a common literary tradition, and together

with Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels. However, Mark has the particularity of being the first Christian writing that belongs to the literary genre of Gospels. On the other hand, Matthew's most characteristic feature is its strong liturgical and ecclesiastical accent. The present course studies a selection of Marcan and Matthean texts that help students discover the key contents of both literary works.

### **CBBE 212 INTERPRETATION OF LUKE AND ACTS**

This course covers a study of the Luke-Acts diptych through the interpretation of selected passages chosen in sequence. The student is introduced into the guidelines of the Lucan thought regarding history, salvation and the role of the disciples after the resurrection. Special attention is given to the influence of Luke Acts to the form and contents of Orthodox Liturgy.

### **CBBE 213 INTERPRETATION OF JOHN AND REVELATION**

The Johannine writings are an essential part of the New Testament Canon that covers the Fourth Gospel, three letters and the Book of Revelation. In this course, we study the Gospel and the Book of Revelation from different aspects: their authors, literary genders and theological themes. We interpret selected texts in a synchronic and narrative approach that leads us to the most outstanding theological concepts of the Johannine School in these books.

### **CBBE 214 INTERPRETATION OF THE PASTORAL AND CATHOLIC LETTERS**

Throughout this course, we delve into two – of the three known – epistolary bodies frequently considered as “secondary”: the Catholic Epistles and the Pastoral Epistles. However - as we will see during the course - we will be able to assess the utmost importance of these epistolary bodies and their role in our lives. The purpose of this course is to understand these writings: first as a corpus, and then individually. In this way, it highlights the value of each of these epistolary bodies and their importance in the Church.

### **CBBE 220 INTERPRETATION OF THE PENTATEUCH**

This course is designed to give the student a basic knowledge of the Pentateuch. In a selection of texts dealing with Creation, the Exodus narratives, and the dwelling in the wilderness, the student perceives in a critical way the main theses and approaches regarding these texts. The students read the Old Testament along with modern studies and in this process gain a deeper appreciation of the Bible.

### **CBBE 221 INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHETS**

This course offers a systematic and critical study of the prophetic movement in ancient Israel and Judah from Amos up to the post-exilic prophets. The lectures focus on the distinctive features of the prophetic writings dealing with important issues such as kingship, the temple, the word of God, the prophetic call, the election, and judgment. Special emphasis is put on the books of Amos, Isaiah and Ezekiel.

### **CBBE 222 INTERPRETATION OF PSALMS**

In this course the student is introduced to the most distinctive literary genres found in the Psalms going through a selection of texts that deal with crucial theological questions such as the figure of the Messiah, God's intervention in history and the kingship of the Lord.

### **CBBE 224 INTERPRETATION OF HISTORICAL BOOKS**

The course offers an interpretation of the Deuteronomist and Priestly History in the Old Testament. Particular interest is given to the Book of Joshua and the Books of Kings. During the semester, the students read this

section of the Old Testament along with modern commentaries in order to gain a deeper appreciation of these books.

**CBBE 225 INTERPRETATION OF WISDOM LITERATURE**

This course offers a systematic and critical study of Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament. Questions arising from the history formation and development of wisdom schools in Ancient Israel are discussed. The books of Proverbs and Job are studied with special emphasis. Some light is shed on Ecclesiastes and Wisdom of Solomon, as well.

# **SOFIA E-LEARNING PROGRAM IN SPANISH** **(SEMINARIO ORTODOXO DE FORMACIÓN PARA** **IBEROAMÉRICA)**

<http://sofia.cursos-balamand.net/>

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

SOFIA is an e-learning program in Spanish at the Institute of Theology committed to provide Orthodox formation for laymen and women in the service of the church. The academic mission of the program is to prepare leaders, catechists and youth coordinators with a competent knowledge of Orthodox Theology in its different fields. SOFIA is offered in a collaborative learning environment based on the MOODLE platform. Our program encourages teamwork, creative thinking and community service spirit. SOFIA is a unique program that makes qualitative theological formation in Spanish accessible from everywhere.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The curriculum of this program aims to:

1. Assist students in understanding the theory and practice of the Orthodox Faith.
2. Help students living in the Orthodox Antiochian Diaspora to remain closely associated with their Mother Church.
3. Awake interest in advanced theological studies and encourage priest vocations.
4. Equip students with skills and tools to act as Orthodox catechists and religion teachers.
5. Sensitize students about engagement and research in the Holy Tradition of the Christian faith through courses that reflect timely discussions and current issues.
6. Provide students an opportunity for an interactive communication with scholars specialized in the various fields of Orthodox Theology.
7. Form students to be engaged in the life and pastoral work in their parish.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Graduates of this program will demonstrate:

- a. Familiarity with the fundamentals of Orthodox theology.
- b. The ability to interpret Orthodox theological literature with accuracy and responsibility.
- c. The ability to argue in favor of the essential beliefs of Orthodox faith with good arguments and evidence from the Bible and Church writings.
- d. A basic understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of the most relevant dogmatic, patristic and liturgical texts.
- e. Effectiveness to communicate the truths of Orthodox faith in teaching settings.
- f. Basic knowledge of hermeneutical principles in order to study a theological source.
- g. The ability to describe the fundamentals for the existence of the church and articulate the relevance of Orthodox Tradition for the contemporary church and her ministry in the world.
- h. The ability to use some Orthodox theological resources available online and in libraries.

- i. The ability to establish dialog with different Christian denominations.
- j. Knowledge to write articles in related topics.
- k. The capacity to contribute actively in community service programs.

## **ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION**

- Applicants to SOFIA must fill in the registration form available on the program’s website.
- Students may register for all offered courses or only one of them, knowing that at the end of the semester they will be granted a certificate stating that they have attended and passed the courses.
- The registration fees can be paid either by an electronic payment system available in the courses’ platform, or through other payment systems announced in the same platform.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- Students are to abide by all rules and regulations in terms of attendance, course requirements and assignment submissions.
- The student must follow the lessons published weekly, and must not fail to enter the program and read the material. A repeated absence for more than two weeks makes the student subject to dropping that course, and accordingly, cannot access the following lessons.
- Students are subjected to a weekly evaluation, and a final exam in all courses. The general average of the course consists of the grades given in the weekly evaluations and the final exam.
- Students must submit all assignments given by the course instructor. Assignments are graded according to the policy that the instructor has announced at the beginning of the course.
- If the student’s grade is less than 60/100, he/she will be considered as having failed the course and will not get a certificate of attendance.
- Students may drop the course at any time providing that they inform the instructor or the program’s director in written form.
- A certificate is awarded to those who have successfully completed each one of the courses and a Diploma of Religious Studies is submitted to those who have followed the whole program and have satisfied the faculty final evaluation.
- The courses given in the framework of e-learning are not transferable to any degree program at the University.

## **CURRICULUM**

### **FIRST CYCLE**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
Introduction to the Faith of the Orthodox Church	SOFI 230	3	14
Major Milestones in the History of the Church	SOFI 240	3	14
The Fathers of the Church	SOFI 255	3	14
Introduction to Iconology	SOFI 279	3	14

## **SECOND CYCLE**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
Prayer and Spiritual Life	SOFI 200	3	14
Introduction to Liturgy	SOFI 204	3	14
The Creed of the Orthodox Church	SOFI 231	3	14
The Divine Liturgy	SOFI 272	3	14

## **THIRD CYCLE**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
Interpretation of Matthew and Mark or any other equivalent NT course from CBB	CBBE 211	3	14
Interpretation of the Pentateuch or any other equivalent OT course from CBB	CBBE 220	3	14
Christian Virtues	SOFI 235	3	14
The Sacraments	SOFI 271	3	14

## **THE E-LEARNING MOODLE PLATFORM**

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The program has a Spanish-speaking general coordinator, who is part of the faculty at the Institute. Besides, it counts with an assistant coordinator and a technical administrator of the operating system and the website of the program community.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

### **SOFI 200 PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Through prayer God communicates with man and vice-versa. Prayer can be practiced in any moment and in many ways. The Fathers of the Church have taught us diverse forms of prayer and its fruits on mankind.

In this course, we study the prayerful tradition of the Oriental Church through the analysis of Patristic and ascetic texts of those who throughout history have lived the grace of prayer.

### **SOFI 204 INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGY**

Liturgy comprehends all celebrations of the people of God who elevate their prayers to God. These prayers are in their big majority community prayers but there are individual prayers as well. In this course, we study the characteristics of the Orthodox Liturgy starting from a description of the Orthodox temple, following a study on the daily cycle of prayer, then the weekly and finally the liturgical year.

### **CBBE 211 INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPELS ACCORDING TO MATTHEW AND MARK**

The Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Mark belong to a common literary tradition, and together with Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels. However, Mark has the particularity of being the first Christian writing that belongs to the literary genre of Gospels. On the other hand, Matthew's most characteristic feature is its strong liturgical and ecclesiastical accent. The present course studies a selection of Marcan and Matthean texts that help students discover the key contents of both literary works.

### **CBBE 220 INTERPRETATION OF THE PENTATEUCH**

This course is designed to give the student a basic knowledge of the Pentateuch. In a selection of texts dealing with Creation, the Exodus narratives, and the dwelling in the wilderness, the student perceives in a critical way the main theses and approaches regarding these texts. The students read the Old Testament along with modern studies and in this process gain a deeper appreciation of the Bible.

### **SOFI 230 INTRODUCTION TO THE FAITH OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

This course studies in a simple way the fundamental symbols of faith in the Orthodox Church as well as its sources and the importance that these have in the life of the faithful. It is a concise initiation to the great mysteries of the Christian faith.

### **SOFI 231 THE CREED OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is prayed by all Orthodox faithful in the world in each Eucharistic celebration. This course presents an interpretation of its statements and terms in order to better comprehend the truths of our faith.

### **SOFI 235 CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

Christian virtues have been very appreciated by people since the day of Pentecost itself. Through them, the work of faith is expressed and the persons and Christian communities are consolidated, offering irrevocable testimony to the entire world. In this course, the concept of Christian virtue is studied according to the writings of the Holy Fathers and modern orthodox theologians.

### **SOFI 240 MAJOR MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**

It is an analytical presentation of the great moments of the Church since its formation until our days. A special concentration point is the Levant-Antiochian traditions and their expansion in Latin America.

### **SOFI 255 THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH**

In this course, we deepen the lecture of the life and work of the Holy Fathers that struggled for the Church since the death of the last Apostle until the convocation of the First Ecumenical Council in the city of Nicea 325. The life of the Fathers and a selection of their texts are studied.

### **SOFI 271 THE SACRAMENTS**

The sacraments are an open window to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The tradition of the Orthodox Church has a rich theology about the work of the grace of the Spirit within the faithful. This course presents an introduction to the theology of the sacraments and later an interpretation to the three sacraments of initiation (baptism, chrismation and communion). Further on, the other sacraments are worked upon, particularly those of marriage, Holy Unction of the sick, and the sacrament of penitence.

### **SOFI 272 THE DIVINE LITURGY**

The Divine Liturgy is the mostly known and served sacramental service by Orthodox Christians. In this course, we study the history of its formation as well as interpret its content. For this, important sources are taken in mind and classical works such as the interpretation of Nicholas Kabasilas and the one written by St. John of Kronstadt until the modern studies that give light to the spiritual richness of this celebration.

### **SOFI 279 INTRODUCTION TO ICONOLOGY**

In this course, the theological fundamentals of the Icon are presented departing from the doctrine of the Church. Later, the interpretation of the abovementioned is studied according to the different schools of art and according to the doctrinal content of the images.