

## Six-Week Summer Course

### Russian Orthodox Christian and Appalachian: The Complexities of Russian Orthodox Christian and Appalachian Identities.

#### Course description:

This course explores the intersections of being Appalachian and Russian Orthodox Christian in Appalachian states. The course offers students a look into what it is like to embody these identities through different materials, including academic journal articles, website articles, and book chapters. During each three-hour long class, students will engage in open discussions based on readings, films, and other materials provided. The students will thoughtfully engage with each and every one of the readings through weekly discussion posts. Because the course is offered in an institution that is located in one of the Appalachian states, some students are expected to have a personal relationship with the content of the course that touches upon the issue of being an Appalachian. No knowledge of Russian is required or expected of students to take this course. Anyone can take the course, regardless of their major or minor. Some university Russian Studies prerequisites may apply.

#### Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to recognize and interpret the complexities of what it means to be a Russian Orthodox Christian in the United States
- Students will be able to recognize and interpret the complexities of what it means to be Appalachian in the United States
- Students will be able to recognize and examine the development and spread of Christian Orthodoxy across the world
- Students will be able to recognize and examine the impact of Russian orthodoxy on the American society, especially the communities in Appalachia
- Students will be able to recognize and examine the nature of identity, how complex it can be, and the power (or lack thereof) of intersectionality
- Students will be able to apply the intersectionality framework establish connections between intersecting identities
- Students will be able to analyze the topics concerning identity, intersectionality, and identity/intersectionality issues

#### Evaluation:

You are expected to attend all class sessions. The readings are to be done before each class so you can be ready to discuss the assigned material. Due to the nature of this course, ideas need to be exchanged and discussed with openness. You should be willing to listen even if you disagree with someone's point of view. That is an integral part of learning. Listen carefully, seek to understand, and if you do not understand, ask questions. We will make use of our university website to participate in discussion boards.

Course materials:

The instructor will provide all readings assigned in this class. The readings will be available through the links that you can find in the schedule of work.

Grading

10% - attendance and participation (in class)

60% - weekly discussions posts

20% - final paper

Evaluation summary:

**Weekly discussion posts (60 percent)**

Before each class, you will be required to post a discussion post on our university website. In your discussion, you need to thoughtfully and thoroughly engage with each reading. You may choose to respond to any aspect of the reading (e.g., identify questions or puzzling aspects of the reading, identify concepts or arguments you found to be generative or problematic, make connections between readings and between the reading and relevant “real world” examples, etc.). Your response to the reading is an opportunity to play with different ways of expressing ideas. Because each discussion is worth 10 percent of your grade, it is imperative that you engage with every single reading and that you post on each of them. While there is no post due before the first meeting, you will be expected to make two posts before the second meeting: One post on in-class Week 1 readings and the other on Week 2 readings.

Each blog post should be at least 300 words but should not exceed 500 words. Your blog posts are due by 12 p.m. on the day of class.

**Final paper (20 percent)**

You will be offered a great opportunity to reflect on the entire course content in your final paper. In your final paper, you will get a chance to address anything that stands out to you out of all topics raised and discussed in at least two or more readings we have read in this course. The readings should support your argument. For example, you may choose to write about the reductive nature of identity thinking and write about the complexity of experience that Russian Orthodox converts have in Appalachian states. Alternatively, you can write about the power of intersectionality as a framework and how it better helps to understand why some people in Appalachia choose to convert to Russian Orthodox Christianity.

Your final paper will be due a week after our last class meeting by 11:59 p.m. The paper should be 3-5 pages long, exclusive of the reference list, font size 12, double-spaced. There should be a reference list provided at the end of your paper. To format your paper, as well as reference list, follow the latest APA or MLA standards, which you can access at the following links, respectively:

MLA:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html)

APA: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html)

Schedule of work can be found on the next page. The schedule of work is subject to change.

Class	Topic	Homework (Do the readings in the order that they are given below)
Week 1	<p>The complexity of Appalachian identity</p> <p>Class viewing: Matewan  <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093509">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093509</a></p>	<p>Appalachian Regional Commission. (n.d.). <i>About the Appalachian Region</i>.  <a href="https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/">https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/</a></p> <p>Appalachian Regional Commission. (n.d.). <i>Appalachian states</i>.  <a href="https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/">https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/</a></p> <p>Drake, R.B. (2001). <i>A history of Appalachia</i>. University Press of Kentucky (Chapter 13. Appalachian Mind) – available on the university website</p> <p>WanderWisdom. (2022, May 14). <i>The real people of Appalachia</i>.  <a href="https://wanderwisdom.com/travel-destinations/The-Real-People-of-Appalachia">https://wanderwisdom.com/travel-destinations/The-Real-People-of-Appalachia</a></p>
Week 2	<p>What is the Orthodox Christian Church? Introduction to Orthodox Christianity in the world and in the United States</p>	<p>Geffert, B., &amp; Stavrou, T.G. (2016). Eastern Orthodox Christianity: The essential texts. Yale University Press. (Chapter “Beginnings, Scripture, and Patristics” (pp. 3-6))</p> <p><i>A brief history of the Orthodox Church</i>. (n.d.). Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.  <a href="https://www.stgeorge.ia.goarch.org/orthhist.htm">https://www.stgeorge.ia.goarch.org/orthhist.htm</a></p> <p>Britannica. (2022, 16 September). <i>Russian Orthodox Church</i>.  <a href="https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-Orthodox-Church">https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-Orthodox-Church</a></p> <p>Siewers, P. (2021, November 25). <i>Converts to Orthodox Christianity in America in the Russian Church today</i>. Christian Eco-poetics and Apologetic Theology.  <a href="https://ecosemiotics.com">https://ecosemiotics.com</a></p> <p>Sinelschikova, Y. (2018, September 04). <i>Why do some Americans join the Russian Orthodox Church?</i> Russia Beyond. <a href="https://www.rbth.com/lifestyle/329076-americans-join-russian-church">https://www.rbth.com/lifestyle/329076-americans-join-russian-church</a></p>
Week 3	<p>Intersectionality and identity thinking</p>	<p>Cooper, B. (2015). Intersectionality. In L. Disch and M. Hawkesworth (Eds.) <i>The Oxford handbook of feminist theory</i> (pp. 385-406). Oxford Press.</p> <p>Coaston, J. (2019, 28 May). <i>The intersectionality wars</i>. Vox. <a href="https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination">https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination</a></p> <p>Crenshaw, K. (2016). <i>The urgency of intersectionality</i>.  <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en">https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en</a></p>

		<i>Identity thinking</i> . (n.d.). Simon Fraser University. <a href="http://www.sfu.ca/~jaradul/identity">http://www.sfu.ca/~jaradul/identity</a>
Week 4	Russian Orthodoxy in Appalachia: Introduction	<a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn">https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn</a> Introduction: East of Appalachia. <i>The New Russian Turn in American Christianity</i> (pp. 1-22)
Week 5	Russian Orthodoxy in Appalachia: History of Russian Orthodoxy in the United States and Appalachia	<a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn">https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn</a> Chapter 1. Foreign Faith in a Foreign Land. <i>A Discursive History of the Russian Orthodox Church in the United States</i> (pp. 23 – 36) Chapter 2. Church of God. Traditionalism, Authenticity, and Conversion to Russian Orthodoxy in Appalachia. (pp. 37-63)
Week 6	Russian Orthodoxy in Appalachia: Why Appalachia Final thoughts	<a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn">https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn</a> Chapter 7. The “Holler Feast.” <i>Spiritual Geographies and Temporalities</i> . (pp. 161-177)

For a short description of each class, please see below:

**Week 1. The complexity of Appalachian identity. (3 hour class).**

In this first week of class, students will be introduced to the concepts of Appalachia and Appalachian. By discussing these concepts, students will be able to share their experiences of living and/or studying in an Appalachian state. Students will then do short readings in the classroom to enrich their understanding of the state and present each reading to their classrooms through mini-presentations. In the latter half of class, students will watch a film called *Matewn* in order that they get an even better understanding of Appalachia and complex Appalachian relationships.

Readings (presented in the order to be read):

Appalachian Regional Commission. (n.d.). *About the Appalachian Region*. <https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/>

Appalachian Regional Commission. (n.d.). *Appalachian states*. <https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/>

Drake, R.B. (2001). *A history of Appalachia*. University Press of Kentucky (Chapter 13. Appalachian Mind)

WanderWisdom. (2022, May 14). *The real people of Appalachia*. <https://wanderwisdom.com/travel-destinations/The-Real-People-of-Appalachia>

## **Week 2. What is the Orthodox Christian Church? Introduction to Orthodox Christianity in the world and in the United States. (3 hour class)**

This week, students familiarize themselves with the history of Orthodox Christianity in different parts of the world. Students learn about the development of the domination, its variations across the world, and take an in-depth look at the development of Orthodox Christianity in the United States.

Readings (presented in the order to be read):

Geffert, B., & Stavrou, T.G. (2016). *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: The essential texts*. Yale University Press. (Chapter “Beginnings, Scripture, and Patristics” (pp. 3-6))

*A brief history of the Orthodox Church*. (n.d.). Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago. <https://www.stgeorge.ia.goarch.org/orthhist.htm>

Britannica. (2022, 16 September). *Russian Orthodox Church*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-Orthodox-Church>

Siewers, P. (2021, November 25). *Converts to Orthodox Christianity in America in the Russian Church today*. *Christian Eco-poetics and Apologetic Theology*. <https://ecosemiotics.com>

Sinelschikova, Y. (2018, September 04). *Why do some Americans join the Russian Orthodox Church?* *Russia Beyond*. <https://www.rbth.com/lifestyle/329076-americans-join-russian-church>

### **Week 3. Intersectionality and identity thinking. (3 hour class)**

Students will be invited to participate in a discussion on intersectionality as a framework for analyzing the identity issues. Through their before-class materials (both readings and video), students will familiarize themselves with the concept of intersectionality, reflect on it in their before-class discussion post, and bring their ideas to the classroom to have an in-depth discussion. Students will then be offered to discuss ways that intersectionality manifests itself in their lives. Students will also discuss Adorno's concept of "identity thinking" and agree or disagree with the author's view that identity thinking is reductive and makes identity abstract and individualistic. In the end, students will be introduced to two ways of looking at identity and identity complexities.

Materials (presented in the order to engage with):

Cooper, B. (2015). Intersectionality. In L. Disch and M. Hawkesworth (Eds.) *The Oxford handbook of feminist theory* (pp. 385-406). Oxford Press.

Coaston, J. (2019, 28 May). The intersectionality wars. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>

Crenshaw, K. (2016). The urgency of intersectionality. [https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en)

*Identity thinking*. (n.d.). Simon Fraser University. <http://www.sfu.ca/~jaradul/identity>

### **Week 4. Russian Orthodoxy in Appalachia: Introduction. (3 hour class)**

This week, students start applying the intersectionality framework to analyze the complexity of being an Appalachian and Russian Orthodox Christian in an Appalachian state. Students are introduced to the intersecting identities in one place through the assigned reading.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn>

Reading:

Riccardi-Swartz, S. (2022). *Between Heaven and Russia: Religious conversion and political apostasy in Appalachia*. Fordham University Press. (Introduction)

**Week 5. Russian Orthodoxy in Appalachia: History of Russian Orthodoxy in the United States and Appalachia. (3 hour class)**

This week, students learn more about the history of Russian Orthodox Church in the United States and in Appalachia in particular. Furthermore, students learn why people in Appalachia are converting into Orthodox Christianity.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn>

Reading:

Riccardi-Swartz, S. (2022). *Between Heaven and Russia: Religious conversion and political apostasy in Appalachia*. Fordham University Press. (Chapters 1 and 2)

**Week 6. Russian Orthodoxy in Appalachia: Why Appalachia. (3 hour class)**

This week, students learn why, out of all places, Appalachia is an interesting place to study the intersections of being rural and Orthodox Christian.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2c02bnn>

Reading:

Riccardi-Swartz, S. (2022). *Between Heaven and Russia: Religious conversion and political apostasy in Appalachia*. Fordham University Press. (Chapter 7)



## References:

*A brief history of the Orthodox Church.* (n.d.). Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.

<https://www.stgeorge.ia.goarch.org/orthhist.htm>

Appalachian Regional Commission. (n.d.). *About the Appalachian Region.* <https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/>

Appalachian Regional Commission. (n.d.). *Appalachian states.* <https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/>

Britannica. (2022, 16 September). *Russian Orthodox Church.* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-Orthodox-Church>

Coaston, J. (2019, 28 May). *The intersectionality wars.* Vox <https://www.vox.com/the->

[highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination](https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination)

Cooper, B. (2015). Intersectionality. In L. Disch and M. Hawkesworth (Eds.) *The Oxford handbook of feminist theory* (pp. 385-406). Oxford Press.

Crenshaw, K. (2016). The urgency of intersectionality.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en)

Drake, R.B. (2001). *A history of Appalachia.* University Press of Kentucky

Geffert, B., & Stavrou, T.G. (2016). *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: The essential texts.* Yale University Press.

*Identity thinking.* (n.d.). Simon Fraser University. <http://www.sfu.ca/~jaradul/identity>

Riccardi-Swartz, S. (2022). *Between Heaven and Russia: Religious conversion and political apostasy in Appalachia.* Fordham University Press.

Siewers, P. (2021, November 25). *Converts to Orthodox Christianity in America in the Russian Church today.* Christian Eco-poetics and Apologetic Theology. <https://ecosemiotics.com>

Sinelschikova, Y. (2018, September 04). *Why do some Americans join the Russian Orthodox Church?* Russia Beyond.

<https://www.rbth.com/lifestyle/329076-americans-join-russian-church>

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