2022

AGORA UNIVERSITY
THE AGORA OF ALEXANDRIA

STUDENT HANDBOOK
& ACADEMIC CATALOG

Revised 11.28.2022
www.agora.ac | 1.866.GO.AGORA

Handbook Effective Beginning: 11.28.2022

Contact Information
7406 Alban Station Court • Suite B207
Springfield, VA 22150
Phone: 1.866.GO.AGORA
Fax: 202.930.7909

Agora University is a religious institution
exempt from state regulation and oversight in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Hours of Operation

Agora University's programs and courses are always
available through our Learning Management System.

Our faculty and support staff are available:
Monday – Friday   9:00 am to 4:00 pm EST

Agora University offices are closed during the following holidays:
Martin Luther, King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Eastern Orthodox Holy
Week, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day,
Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Week, and the final two weeks of
December through January 7th of every year.

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A LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Welcome to Agora University's Holy Transfiguration College! We are dedicated to academic distinction, theological inquiry, and groundbreaking research, where we strive for excellence and relevance in every course we offer.

With a world-class faculty who possess degrees from the greatest educational institutions in the world including, University of Oxford, University of St. Andrews, UCLA, University of Aberdeen, University of Toronto, and Claremont University to name a few, we are able to make available to our students some of the most outstanding thinkers in the world. This allows us to offer courses that will challenge students in a multitude of fields through an engagement between Orthodox Christian theology and the humanities.

We believe the true value of education starts with experience and praxis, actualizing theory into a lifestyle of communal mission and service. It is our pleasure to "give instruction to a wiseman, [knowing]…he will be still wiser" (Proverbs 9:9a). By participating in our activities and experiencing the depth, diversity and modernity of Early Christian thought, it will equip those with a desire to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ (Matthew 28:16) to the world of today.

Rev. Fr. Michael Sorial, M.litt.
Chancellor

ABOUT AGORA UNIVERSITY

At the heart of the great city of Alexandria in Egypt and at the intersection of Canopic Street and Pharos Street stood one of the most well-known public squares in the World. The Agora of Alexandria, which was only a few steps west of the Great Library of Alexandria, witnessed some of humanity's most astute thinkers, teachers and philosophers, the formation of profound teachings and free speech. Carefully situated between the Roman quarters (west), the Hellenic quarters (east) and the Coptic quarters(north), the Agora of Alexandria has been regarded as the melting -pot of the ancient world. Today, Agora University is a continuation of this indigenous Alexandrian heritage.

Agora University is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit pioneering global Orthodox Christian University dedicated to the Humanities.

2012 – Agora University was co-founded by Dr. Emmanuel Gergis and Rev. Fr. Michael Sorial in 2012 as a venue for engaging the Oriental Orthodox Christian tradition and the Humanities.

2013 – His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church and His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II Karim of the Syriac Orthodox Church granted their blessings for the Mission and activities of the University.

2014 – Agora began cooperation with the Alexandria School Journal publishing its first academic journal in English and helped establish the Alexandria School Foundation in Egypt.

2015 – His Grace Bishop Epiphanius (of blessed memory) of the Monastery of St. Macarius in Scetis, Egypt became the President of the Advisory Board.

2016 – Mr. Naguib Sawiris became the Chairman of the Boards of Agora University.

2019 – Agora University's degree programs were fully accredited in the European Union.

AGORA UNIVERSITY MISSION

Agora University is a pioneering global Orthodox Christian University dedicated to building bridges between Orthodox Christianity and the Humanities to address the challenges of the contemporary world via distance learning. Agora University is committed to build ing a community of inspired students through innovative learning, open discussion, and research to become whole persons, and creative leaders to advance their communities. We welcome students from all faiths and backgrounds and provide them the intellectual freedom to express their diverse voices in open dialogue while preserving and upholding the particularity of our Orthodox Christian identity.

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION COLLEGE MISSION

Our Mission is to establish a community of Christian thinkers, where members can grow spiritually and academically, develop in character, and witness in the contemporary world. We believe in a future where our graduates are ready to impact their society by building bridges between Orthodox Christianity and the humanities through distance learning.

CORE VALUES

Our Core Values are:
1. Embodying Orthodox Christian Faith and Community
2. Imprinting Orthodoxy Globally
3. Providing Cutting-Edge Academic Content
4. Maintaining Financial Responsibility

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

The keyword in our organization is "Community". Agora University strives to maintain a close relationship between students and staff. Members of our faculty are deeply involved in shaping and guiding students during the academic year. Faculty members encourage students as they grow in their paths, discuss things they are learning in class, and challenge them in areas where the student may be struggling. Students have ready access to any staff or faculty member and are encouraged to seek help both academically and personally.

At Agora University, we aim to build well-rounded students by developing a well-balanced approach to Christian education through:

1. The Humanities— Being committed to shaping our curriculum and programs to ask the fundamental questions of human existence and to situate our knowledge guided by Eastern Christian Wisdom.

2. Our Eastern Christian Identity—the realization that the self-understanding of who we are and what we do is grounded and informed by what it means to be an Eastern Christian.

Educational Objectives and Outcomes

- Provide quality distance education programs for graduate students to impact their communities.
- Provide credentialed faculty members who have experience in teaching. Our goal is that at least 90 percent of our faculty have doctorates in their fields. Others with at least exceptional expertise in the courses they teach.
- Provide adequate administrative staff to facilitate coordination of student services, financial accountability, and technological support.
- Provide structured graduate-level programs in a semester-long format that is readily accessible in a flexible manner through technologically sound, cost-effective educational systems.
- Provide effective interactions between students and faculty, as measured by at least a 90 percent positive rating on our end-of semester survey. All student complaints will be investigated by the Dean within 14 days.

Holy Transfiguration College Student Learning Outcomes

- Theological knowledge: a coherent understanding and spiritual encounter of the Orthodox Christian theological tradition in light of Eastern Christian wisdom.
- Theological skills: the ability to reflect, analyze, synthesize, communicate, interpret, and apply that tradition in a religiously and culturally diverse world.
- To create a communal environment that nurtures collaboration, inspires an apostolic spirit, and supports the development of the spiritual life appropriate to work and ministry in a changing world.
- Leadership skills: the ability to interact with others in a spirit of openness and collaboration, to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- Spiritual maturity: an integration of affective and intellectual growth and commitment to the practice of spiritual disciplines, both personal and communal.
- To affirm the richness of intercultural diversity through the ways in which we foster community, construct our learning environments, and invite students, staff, and faculty to share their intercultural experiences and insights as a means of shaping students' academic understanding, spiritual development, and pastoral practice.
- Intercultural communication: an ability to interact with persons of diverse cultures with empathy, mutuality, and respect.

These broad goals arise out of the ways in which students and faculty, staff, and public partners participate in the school's programs. Each of these, in turn, aligns with Program Learning Outcomes for degree programs, and Student Learning Outcomes in individual courses.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

As an indigenous Orthodox Christian organization, our Statement of Faith is the Scripture-based Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 325 and 381 A.D. as follows:

We believe in one God, God the Father the Pantocrator who created heaven and earth, and all things seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not created, of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary and became Man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried. And on the third day He rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, ascended to the heavens; He sits at the right hand of his Father, and He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end. Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-Giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the coming age. Amen.

STATE LICENSURE AND EXEMPTIONS

STATE OF VIRGINIA

Agora University is a religious institution exempt from state regulation and oversight in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Agora University (formerly St. Cyril Society) is exempt as a religious institution in the State of California, and operates under the Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009, California Education Code (CEC) Section 94874 (e) of the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE).

STATE OF ARIZONA

Agora University is not required to obtain state authorization in Arizona since the university has no physical presence in Arizona as defined by A.R.S. § 32-3001(5).

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Agora University is not required to be licensed by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education since the institution does not have a physical presence in Connecticut.

STATE OF ILLINOIS

Agora University is not required to be licensed by the Illinois Department of Higher Education since the institution does not have a physical presence in Illinois.

STATE OF KANSAS

Agora University is not required to be licensed by the Kansas Board of Regents since the institution does not have a physical presence in Kansas.

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Agora University is not regulated by the Louisiana Board of Regents since it offers courses and programs fully online and does not maintain physical facilities in the State of Louisiana.

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Agora University is not required to seek licensure with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to enroll residents of Massachusetts into online courses and programs.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Agora University is not required to seek licensure with the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education to

enroll residents of New Jersey into online courses and programs.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Agora University is not required to seek licensure with the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina to enroll residents of North Carolina into online programs.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Agora University is exempt as a religious institution by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

STATE OF MONTANA

Agora University is exempt from authorization as it meets the requirements set forth in 34 CFR § 600.9 b. 2 by the State of Montana University System.

OTHER STATES

Agora University is not currently pursuing state authorization in other States and has no students who reside in those states. Additionally, Agora in unable to accept applications for admissions from the states where it is not licensed or exempt.

ACCREDITATION

European Union

Agora University's programs are fully accredited in the European Union through our collaboration and accreditation agreement with the Catholic University of Murcia, Spain. UCAM is not recognized by the USDE.

LEADERSHIP

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARDS

Mr. Naguib Sawiris
Chairman of Orascom Telecom Media & Technology Holding

THE ADVISORY BOARD

Mr. Alex Shalaby
President of the Board
Chairman and Former CEO of Mobinil, Egypt

H.G. Bishop Angelos
Board Member
General Bishop, Egypt

H.E. Archbishop Dionysius John Kawak
Board Member
Patriarchal Vicar of the Syriac Archdiocese of Eastern USA

Mr. George Sorial, *J.D., M.B.A., L.L.M.*
Board Member
Founder and Principal of Sorial Consultants

Mr.Mark Morgan, *J.D.*
Board Member
Partner at Day Pitney, LLP

Ms. Lana Sawiris
Board Member

Ms. Natalie Ramsis
Board Member

Board Members Emeriti

H.G. Bishop Epiphanius (June 27, 1954 – July 29, 2018)
First President of the Advisory Board
Bishop of the Monastery of St. Macarius, Egypt

THE GOVERNING BOARD

Rev. Fr. Michael Sorial, *M.Litt.*
President of the Board and Chancellor

Dr. Emmanuel Gergis, *M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D.*
Vice President of the Board

Ms. Lydia Dimyan, *C.P.A.*
Treasurer

Ms. Mora Sorial, *M.A., M.Ed.*
Secretary

Dr. Michael Wingert, *M.A., M.A.T., Ph.D.*
Board Member

Ms. Monica Ghattas, *J.D.*
Board Member

Rev. Fr. Seraphim El-Baramos, *M.Litt.*
Board Member

Mr. Ramy Adeeb, *M.Sc., M.B.A.*
Board Member

Mr. Onsi Sawiris
Board Member
Co-Founder, Managing Partner at HOF Capital

THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

Dr. Emmanuel Gergis, M.A., M.Litt., *Ph.D.*
Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Sylvana Selim, M.A., M.Fin.
Chief Operating Officer

Mr. Amir Hanna, *M.Sc.*
Chief Financial Officer

Mr. John Saad
Chief Technology Officer

Dr. Michael Wingert, M.A., M.A.T., *Ph.D.*
Dean of Holy Transfiguration College

Mr. Pablo Diaz, *M.A.*
Senior Director of Educational Services and Partnerships

Mr. Avram Ibrahim, *M.B.A.*
Director of Public Relations

Ms. Sandy Agban
Operations Manager

Ms. Norma Joseph
Director of Digital Marketing

Ms. Mary Ghattas, *Ph.D. (ABD)*
Agora University Press, Editor-in-Chief

Mr. Bassem Massoud
Director of Finance

Ms. Iriny Guirguis
Director of Admissions

Mr. Remon Michel
Media Production Specialist

Mr. Andrew Amir
Information Technology Manager

Ms. Monica Mansour
Senior Admissions Officer

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

	MTh	MTS
Application & Registration	Jan. 15 – Aug. 15	Jan. 15 – Aug. 15
Fall Semester	Sept. 1 – Dec. 15	Sept. 1 – Dec. 15
Spring Semester	Jan. 15 – May. 13	Jan. 15 – May. 13

Agora University offices are closed during the following holidays: Martin Luther, King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Eastern Orthodox Holy Week, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Week, and the final two weeks of December through January 7th of every year.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

General Admissions

1. Each applicant must be at least 18 years of age at the time of registration.
2. Each applicant must submit their undergraduate degree transcript and diploma. Average GPA of 3.0 in USA and the equivalent of 85% or a "B" worldwide.
3. Evidence of passing English language proficiency requirements by satisfying one of the following categories:
   a. Native speaker.
   b. Graduation from an English-speaking institution in USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, or any other country whose native language is English.
   c. Graduation from an English-speaking institution worldwide (i.e. American University in Cairo).
   d. A GCSE or iGCSE graduate with at least a "C" grade in English.
   e. An IB Diploma graduate.
   f. IELTS 6.5 or equivalent, with nothing lower than 5.5 in any of the four elements (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
   g. TOEFL iBT score of 78, with nothing lower than 17 in any of the four elements (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Equivalency Guide: (TOEFL 550/ TOEFL CBT 213/TOEFL iBT 78).
   h. The Admissions Committee reserves itself the right to take into consideration other proofs of English proficiency not stated above.
4. Submit two professional or academic letters of recommendation.
5. Complete Admission application and financial declaration forms.
6. Payment of Admission Application Fee. Fees can be paid by visiting https://htc.agora.ac/admissions-and-tuition/
7. Submit a letter of intent detailing your reasons for joining the program.
8. All applicants must submit a 2000-word writing sample.
9. All applicants must submit a government issued Photo ID.
10. All applicants must submit a passport sized photograph (in JPEG format, recent color photo, plain/white background, bright, centered/front view of full face, eyes open and visible and cropped from just above the top of the head to the collarbone)
11. Submit an updated Resume/CV

Agora University accepts foreign transcripts from universities officially recognized by their respective governments in their country of residence. An official stamped and sealed transcript is required from all foreign students.

Special Admissions to Holy Transfiguration College

Individuals with extensive ministry experience and a high school degree, but without an accredited bachelor's degree, may petition for provisional acceptance into the MTh program. They must submit an essay and other evidence that they are capable of doing graduate-level work and evidence of experiential learning. A committee will review the petition and if it qualifies an interview will be scheduled with the applicant and a final decision will be communicated thereafter. Students must earn a GPA of at least 3.0 in their first four courses. No more than 5 percent of the students in the MTh program can be admitted without a bachelor's degree.

Audit Change of Status

Students may petition the instructor to have their work and participation graded. Students who have successfully audited a course and earned a passing grade and provided all application materials may submit a change of status request to the registrar to be regarded as a full- or part-time student.

Students with Disability

Students must register their disability status at the time of the admission application. If a diagnosis is received after the student has been enrolled, the student must inform the registrar of the disability status. Students diagnosed with and possessing appropriate documentation of a learning disability (or other disability impairing some aspect of distance learning) are given additional time added to the due dates of assignments and examinations without penalty.

Interview Process

Upon submitting all required items and completing the application form, the Director of Admissions will send an email within 3 business days to schedule a Zoom Interview. Usually interviews are 20-30 minutes. The Interview Committee consists of the Director of Admissions and two other faculty/staff members. After the interview, the Committee will make a decision.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against academic and non-academic selection criteria. Methods of assessing applications vary between courses but may include: prior and predicted academic achievement, references, personal or supporting statements, and a personal interview. Applicants may not omit any requested or relevant information, make any misrepresentation (for example, through plagiarism) or give false information at any point of the application process including after an offer is made. Should this occur the University reserves the right to dismiss the application, or withdraw an offer admission. Scanned copies of documents are generally accepted during the admission process but original documents can be requested at any stage.

Decisions

Agora will notify the applicant of its decision of the interview and application by email. This notification is

usually made within 10 days of the completion of the Application and Interview Process. The admission status made is either full admission or denied admission.

Full Admission
Full admission is offered to the applicant for which Agora has received all admission documentation as required or requested, no additional demonstration of qualification is needed, and the applicant appears to be the kind of student who would benefit from study at Agora.

Denied Admission
An applicant denied admission does not meet the qualifications for admission.

Transfer Credit

Agora University may consider for transfer coursework completed at accredited institutions of post-secondary education whose accrediting agencies are recognized by the European Union or by an agency recognized by CHEA. Only coursework completed at a C average or better may be considered for transfer after a review by, and at the discretion of the Dean. Students will need to provide a transcript for all accredited coursework taken and indicate a desire to transfer coursework before enrolling in the current term. A maximum of 50% of graduate coursework can be transferred. A minimum of 50% of graduate coursework must be undertaken at Agora University.

Coursework earned at a non-accredited institution may be submitted for review with an official transcript and course descriptions. Coursework earned at non-accredited institutions will be considered on a case by case basis by the Academic Dean. In most cases, refusal to transfer work will be based on content or academic standards incompatible with the courses required for graduation at Agora University.

Please note that Agora University courses might not be transferable to other institutions. It is only at the discretion of the receiving institution to make that decision.

Technology Requirements and Policy for Studying at Agora University

This policy was established to aid in the planning of computer purchase(s) throughout the completion of the Agora University programs.

The University strongly recommends that students entering our programs have appropriate and updated mid-range consumer-grade laptop. Students should consider using a laptop that is already owned or another existing computer if possible. If you do not have access to a laptop already and must purchase a new one we have some recommendations below. Again, please note that if you already have a laptop it does not need to meet the specifications below. These specifications are only for people who don't already have access to a laptop and must purchase a new one. Some courses in the university may require a more robust system, so be sure to verify any class/software requirements before making a purchase. The College will update these specifications on an annual or biannual basis to match advances in software and hardware requirements.

Example minimum hardware specs:
- Intel ® Core™ i5 (4 cores recommended)

- 4GB Memory

- 256GB Hard Drive

- 15.6 HD Widescreen LED Display

- Wireless Network Adapter

- Microphone

- Webcam

Software Requirements:

- Operating System of Choice (i.e.. Windows or Mac)

- Word Processor of Choice (ex. Microsoft Word)

You must have access to a computer connected to the internet. If you are reading this Handbook, you probably already meet the requirements. Dial-up connections will be sufficient for accessing readings in most classes, but all courses have substantial video materials, which will display better if you have a DSL or cable connection. You may use any of the common browsers: Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari. Most of our course reading materials are in PDF format. There is a link to three free PDF readers on our public information page. The PDF pages are designed for full-size computers; tablets may provide an adequate display, but the materials may be difficult to read on smaller devices. We require that you have a word-processing program, such as Microsoft Word. Free word-processing programs are also suitable. We require that you a l s o have a webcam with a microphone, for identity verification and live sessions. Your internet connection must be able to transmit video.

ENROLLMENT

Upon receiving a Letter of Admission from Agora University, the Student will also receive an Enrollment Agreement which must be signed and returned to the University for the Admissions process to be finalized. Upon receiving the signed Enrollment Agreement, the University Registrar will enroll students in their respective courses.

The normal full-time enrollment for a graduate student is nine credit hours per semester. Part-time students may register in up to six hours per semester. Auditing students may register in courses on a-la- carte basis. Students who register as full-time may file a request with the Registrar to change their status to part- time. However, students who are in the part-time schedule may not upgrade to full-time status.

It is the responsibility of students to keep the Registrar apprised of their activities and to ensure that the Registrar is aware of their enrollments and progress. Any leave of absence must be approved by the Dean and submitted to the Registrar for proper filing.

Enrollment Status

- Enrolled
- On Leave (officially recognized after petitioning the Dean)
- Withdrawn (were once enrolled but have not been for one or more semesters.
    - This status may require you to be reactivated which requires a fee of $50.
- Dismissed (officially acted upon by the Dean)
- Graduated (once all requirements have been met and verified by the Registrar, the Director of Finance, and the Dean)

STUDENT RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

The student understands and agrees that:

1. If English is not the student's primary language, and the student is unable to understand the terms and conditions of the enrollment agreement, the student shall have the right to obtain a clear explanation of the terms and conditions as well as all cancellation and refund policies in his or her primary language.
2. Agora University agrees to provide current, accredited, distance education content and instruction, as well as reasonable educational and student services including but not limited to course registration, assessment, maintenance of student records, and transcripts. Instruction is provided online through www.agora.ac.
3. Agora University does not guarantee job placement to graduates upon program/course completion or upon graduation.
4. Agora University reserves the right to reschedule the program start date when the number of students

enrolled does not meet the minimum required number.

5. Agora University will not be responsible for any statement of policy or procedure that does not appear in the University catalog

6. Agora University reserves the right to discontinue any students' training for unsatisfactory progress, nonpayment of tuition, or failure to abide by University rules.

7. Students who have non-academic grievances may contact Agora University Management by phone at 1.866.GO.AGORA or by email at ceo@agora.ac

8. Course enrollees agree that all information within Agora University courses, course texts, accompanying workbooks, and websites, etc. are protected by intellectual property rights, including copyrights, trademarks and other proprietary rights, which rights are valid and protected in all media existing now or later developed, and contractually agree not to create derivative works based on the information and not to use the information for the purpose of enhancing competing works. Course enrollees are granted a limited license to use, search, display, or print the Information contained on Agora University websites for their own personal non-commercial use only, provided the information is not modified and a copy of this agreement is attached to any copies that are made. Any other use of the information is strictly prohibited. None of the information may be otherwise reproduced, republished or re-disseminated in any manner or form without the prior written consent of Agora University. All rights, including copyright, in any information which are linked to but not hosted on the website continue to be owned by their respective owners. Note that by using agora.ac, you signify your agreement to this and future Copyright Notices. Your continued use of agora.ac after changes to this Copyright Notice will mean that you accept the changes.

9. Information concerning other universities that may accept the University's credits toward their programs can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Dean. It should not be assumed that any programs described in the University catalog could be transferred to another institution. The University does not guarantee the transferability of credits to a university or institution. Any decision on the comparability, appropriateness and applicability of credits and whether they should be accepted is the decision of the receiving institution.

10. This document does not constitute a binding agreement until accepted in writing by all parties.

11. Students are free to speak with professors to express concerns about final grades. If a student does not feel his or her professor has resolved the issue satisfactorily, he or she may express in writing a grievance or complaint to the dean. (If the complaint is against his or her dean, the student may appeal directly to the CEO)

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition fees for the full program is $6000 excluding the administrative fees. A special discount is applied for students from Part II Countries as per the second table below. Tuition fees include all textbooks, instructional materials, and educational services. Payment of at least one semester's tuition and administrative fees is due upon a student's enrollment in the program and before the start of classes. All payments are to be made in USD (or the equivalent amount in EGP). In exceptional cases, tuition could be paid over a maximum of two installments. Students should email accounting@agora.ac in such cases.

MTh Tuition Fees (USA, Canada, Europe Australia, and New Zealand)	2023- 2024
Application Fee (one time)	$50
Library Fee (per year)	$100
Technology Fee (per year)	$100

Tuition per Year	$3000
Tuition per Module	$600
Graduation Fee (One time)	$300

MTh Tuition Fees (Middle East, Africa, and Asia)	2023- 2024
Application Fee (one time)	Waived
Library and Technology fees (per year)	Waived
Tuition per Year	$450
Tuition per Module	$75
Graduation Fee (one time)	$50

MTS Tuition Fees (Worldwide for all regions)	2023- 2024
Application Fee (one time)	$50
Library Fee (per year)	$100
Technology Fee (per year)	$100
Tuition per year	$3000
Tuition per module	$600
Graduation Fee (One time)	$300

Students may apply for the Bishop Epiphanius Scholarship. The Bishop Epiphanius Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship and is awarded in recognition of exceptional or outstanding academic achievement.

Discount Groups

Part II countries include developing countries of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Applicants residing in Part II countries receive an 85% discount on tuition fees. Employees of the Alexandria School Foundation receive a 30% discount of the discounted tuition rate if they reside in Part II countries.

Cancellation Policy

A student requesting cancellation of their enrollment within seven (7) calendar days after signing an enrollment agreement is entitled to a full refund of all amounts paid. A student requesting cancellation more than seven (7) calendar days after signing an enrollment agreement, but prior to beginning a course or program, is entitled to a refund of all monies paid minus the application fee and the library fee.

Cancellation and withdrawal requests are accepted only by writing an email to the Registrar (registrar@agora.ac).

Agora University will issue a full refund for courses or programs that have been cancelled by the University.

Refund Policy

Tuition is refunded if a student cancels their enrollment, withdraws from the program, or withdraws from one or more courses. Funds are returned on a weekly basis as per the refund schedule below (please refer to the Cancellation policy above for refunds such as the application fee).

No tuition refunds will be issued if a student does not submit a cancellation/withdrawal request, and tuition fees cannot be carried over to the next semester unless the student files for a leave of absence prior to the start of the semester. Otherwise, no unused tuition funds from past semesters can be applied to future semesters. Refunds will be issued using the same method of payment within 30 days from the date the University receives the student's withdrawal request. After the start of the 9th week of classes, no refunds will be issued.

Refund schedule (*applicable to the program as a whole or to individual courses)***:

	Percent of tuition refunded after start of
(Before start of classes)	100%
1st week	100%
2nd week	100%
3rd week	100%
4th week	50%
5th week	40%
6th week	30%
7th week	20%
8th week	10%
9th week	0%

Sample Refund Calculation

If a student sends a withdrawal request during the fifth week of the semester, the student will receive a refund of 40% of the tuition. For tuition of $1,500 per semester, the refund amount would therefore by $600 ($1,500 x 40%).

Methods of Payment

Tuition and fees can be paid electronically in USD. Invoices emailed to the students will have a payment link that provides the fastest, most secure, and convenient way for students to make payments.

For students residing in Egypt, cash payments in EGP can be arranged at a fixed exchange rate. Payments can be made through the University's partner in Egypt, the Alexandria School Foundation. For more information, please contact admissions@agora.ac.

Enrollment Modes of Study

Students may enroll in the master's programs as full-time or part-time students. To switch from one modality to the other, the student must submit a written request via email to the Registrar (registrar@agora.ac) which must also be approved by the Dean. The schedules pertaining to the two different modes as follows:

Full Time

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Intro to Theology	Liturgical Theology	Pastoral Theology	Thesis		
Church History I	Church History II	Theology of Mission	Writing&Critical Thinking		
Old Testament	New Testament	Patristics			

Part Time

Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring + Summer
Intro to Theology	Writing&Critical Thinking	Church History I	Church History II	Pastoral Theology	Thesis
Old Testament	New Testament	Patristics	Liturgical Theology	Theology of Mission	

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Electronic mail is the best way to correspond with Agora Staff and Faculty. Since many instructors are part-time, they do not necessarily check their messages every day. If an instructor does not respond to a message within two days, or it is an urgent matter, please email the Agora University Director of Educational Services at pablo@agora.ac, or call us at1-866-GO-AGORA.

Administration	Student Services
Office of the Chancellor frmichael@agora.ac	Office of Admissions admissions@agora.ac
Office of the CEO emmanuel@agora.ac ceo@agora.ac	Office of the Registrar registrar@agora.ac
Office of the COO sylvana@agora.ac coo@agora.ac	Office of Finance and Accounting accounting@agora.ac
Office of the CFO amir@agora.ac	Office of Information Technology support@agora.ac
Office of HTC Dean michael@agora.ac	Agora University Press aupress@agora.ac
Office of Wealth Management bassem@agora.ac	Office of Public Relations avram@agora.ac
Marketing Team marketing@agora.ac	Director of Digital Marketing norma@agora.ac
Office of Operations operations@agora.ac	Operations Manager sandy@agora.ac

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION COLLEGE

Established in 2015 as Holy Transfiguration College (HTC), Agora University initiated innovative, interdisciplinary Master's degree programs aimed at community-building through Orthodox Christian tradition thought across divergent domains. In March 2017, the institution was renamed Agora University, designating HTC as the Department of History, Philosophy and Religion. HTC aims to be the nucleus of Agora University's vision to be a pioneering institute dedicated to the humanities from anEastern Christian perspective. HTC continues to focus on developing interdisciplinary venues between the Eastern Christian tradition and the humanities. HTC is committed to providing high quality Orthodox Christian foundations while also maintaining a vigorous tradition of high-quality research on subjectspertaining to the intersection between theology and the humanities.

Our world-class faculty come from renowned institutions worldwide including University of Oxford, University of St. Andrews, University of Aberdeen, UCLA, King's College London, University of Toronto and Claremont Graduate University. Our diverse student body comes from all over the world including USA, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, and Iraq with various professional experiences ranging from engineering, medicine, social work to physics and ministry.

FACULTY

Ani Shahinian, D.Phil.
Ani.Shahinian@agora.ac
Lecturer on Armenian Studies and Apologetics

Ani Shahinian holds a D.Phil. from the Oriental and Theology Faculties at the University of Oxford. Her doctoral research examines the political, social, economic, and ecclesiastical history of Armenia and applies innovative approaches and strategies to understand complex, enduring issues. She has lectured and held seminars in several faculties at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), including courses on Philosophy of Mind, Political Philosophy, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and International Relations. Shahinian's academic and professional interests meet at the intersections between the disciplines, where she endeavors to bridge different fields by exposing entwined questions of technology, ethics, and sustainability in uncertain environments. Prior to her academic career, Shahinian worked for the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), where she assisted with investigations and prosecutions of human trafficking cases and criminal civil rights abuses. While working at the DOJ, she detected parallels between contemporary and historical human rights violations, and the evolving significance of the role of national ethics. These realizations impelled her to seek answers hidden in history. Her academiccareer continues this journey of investigation and discovery, directing her research interests toward innovative methodologies to problem solving for our current world.

Fr. Andreas Andreopoulos, Ph.D.
FrAndreas@agora.ac
Visiting Professor of Eastern Christianity and Spirituality

Dr. Andreas Andreopoulos is Reader in Orthodox Christianity at the University of Winchester, UK. He studied in Greece, Canada and the UK, obtaining his PhD in Theology and Artat Durham University. Since

then, he has worked all over the UK, America and Canada, in addition to delivering conference papersand lectures across the world. Dr. Andreopoulos has been at the University of Winchester since 2010 and is Program Leader for the MTh Orthodox Studies.

Brian Butcher, Ph.D.
Brian.butcher@agora.ac
Visiting Professor of Liturgical Theology and Early Christianity

Dr. Butcher is currently a sessional lecturer in the Toronto School of Theology and a Fellow of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptysky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, relocated in 2017 to the University of St. Michael's College from Saint Paul University in Ottawa. From 2011-2017, he taught courses at the latter in both Eastern and Western Christian traditions, after stints at Simon Fraser University, Catholic Pacific College/Trinity Western University and Corpus Christi College—all in Vancouver. Liturgical Theology After Schmemann: An Orthodox Reading of Paul Ricoeur, Brian's first major book, was published in 2018 by Fordham University Press. His professional associations include membership in the American Academy of Religion—where he is a member of the steering committee for the Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit—as well as the Society of Oriental Liturgy, the International Society for Orthodox Church Music, and the North American Academy of Liturgy. A subdeacon in the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, he also conducts the Ottawa-based Sheptytsky Institute Choir. He enjoys taekwondo, training for triathlons, performing Celtic and other folk music, and cooking.

Emmanuel Gergis, Ph.D.
Emmanuel@agora.ac
Associate Professor of Dogmatics and Systematic Theology

Dr. Emmanuel Gergis is Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Agora University. Prior to his academic career, he worked for two decades as Vice President of Technology and Chief Technology Officer in government and private sectors where he successfully led multi-million-dollar projects. After finishing his International Baccalaureate at the Mahindra United World College of India, he studied Business Administration at Concordia University. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Applied Orthodox Theology from the University of Balamand in Lebanon with a focus on Patristic Theology and the Christology of St. Cyril of Alexandria. He also holds a Master of Letters degree in Divinity from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland where his thesis focused on the Theological Anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa and Ephrem the Syrian. Emmanuel completed his doctorate in Systematic and Historical Theology from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland where he focused on Coptic epistemology, the unitary reality of Christ, and the theology of T. F. Torrance. He is an author, translator and lecturer on contemporary Patristic topics including Orthodox Systematic Theology, Theological Anthropology, Trinitarian Theology and Personhood, Theological realism and Coptic Christianity.

Fr. Jacob Joseph, Ph.D.
frjacob@agora.ac
Associate Professor of Christian Mission

Fr. Dr. Jacob Joseph, a Syrian Orthodox Priest, is a visiting lecturer at Agora University. Before joining his theological studies, he completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in English Literature from

Mahatma Gandhi University, India, and Kerala University, India, respectively, and worked as a lecturer in India. After securing his Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology from Serampore University, Calcutta India, he served the church both in India and abroad in various capacities as a Na tional Youth Director (USA and Australia), Director of the Holy Cross College of Management and Technology, Puttady, Kerala, India, Editor of Vision Journal, Mumbai, India and Mission Director, Latur, Maharashtra, India. Fr. Joseph completed his Ph.D. in Christology of St. Severus and Social Margins in India (Patristic Theology and Contextual Mission) from the University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia. His research interests focus on Patristic, Liturgical, Missional, and Contextual Theology. Currently, he also serves as a lecturer (sessional) at St. Athanasius Coptic Theological Seminary, Melbourne, in Patristic Theology and Orthodox Mission Theology and as a visiting lecturer at Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary, Ernakulam, India in Ecumenical and Mission Theology.

Joseph Youssef, Ph.D.
jyoussef@agora.ac
Associate Professor of Anthropology of Religion

Dr. Joseph Youssef is Associate Professor of the Anthropology of Religion at Agora University. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology from the University of Toronto. Joseph completed his doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Toronto where he focused on Coptic Orthodox Monasticism and its influence on Coptic laity. His research examines questions of exemplarity, virtue, and political theology, both in Egypt and the Coptic Diaspora in North America. His research interests include: Exemplarity, Monasticism, Asceticism, Transnationalism, Diaspora, Morality and Ethics, Political Theology, and Pilgrimage.

Mary Ghattas, Ph.D. (ABD)
Mary.Ghattas@agora.ac
Assistant Professor of Church History and Coptic Studies

Mary Ghattas is a PhD Candidate earning her degree in the history of Christianity, with a regional emphasis on the Middle East. Her Master's thesis examined ecclesial diplomatique in Medieval Egypt and Nubia. Her research projects explore the interstices between ecclesiastical relations and state politics in the East, the role that history and historiography play in shaping communal memory and narrative, and consequently, healing communal memory through history. At Agora University, she teaches Church History II: Oriental Church History After Chalcedon and electives in Coptic Studies. She also serves as Director of Agora University Press. She is currently an Assistant Managing Editor for the Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia, helping to update and expand an invaluable online reference tool for Coptic Studies. Her publications include: Martyria and Loving the Enemy: An Orthodox Response to ISIS (2014), The Trinity in the Alexandrian Tradition: Patristic, Copto-Arabic, and Modern Theologians (2015), and Notes on the Enaton After the Arab Conquest and Its Localization (2018).

Fr. Mebratu Gebru, Ph.D.
frmebratu@agora.ac
Visiting Professor of Liturgical Theology

Fr. Dr. Mebratu K. Gebru got his theological formation from the Holy Trinity Theological College of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's Patriarchate in Addis Ababa. Upon the completion of his undergraduate studies at the college, he taught there as a graduate assistant instructor for about two years. In 2003 Fr. Gebru got a scholarship to pursue theological studies at master's level at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto. His master's thesis on the Christology of his own ecclesial tradition was revised and published by Gorgias Press, entitled: *Miaphysite Christology: An Ethiopian Perspective.* While working towards his Ph.D. in theology at the same university, he was ordained a priest in 2008 at St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox Cathedral in Toronto where he served as a youth educator. As he had developed a particular interest in the Ethiopian liturgy since he was pursuing undergraduate studies, such interest was ultimately demonstrated in his doctoral thesis which he wrote on the theological and sacramental dimensions of creation in the Ethiopian liturgical rite and successfully defended in April 2012. Aside from liturgy, Fr. Gebru's research interest includes Ethiopian Christianity, Orthodox spirituality and ecclesiology.

Michael Armanyous, M.D.
Michael.armanyous@agora.ac
Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spirituality

Dr. Michael Armanyous is a prominent Psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry who holds his medical degree from Cairo University. He is a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the United Kingdom. He holds a certificate in Adult psychiatry and substance abuse and a postgraduate degree in CBT from Royal Holloway University in London, UK. Dr. Armanyous is a distinguished lecturer on various topics including Orthodox Psychotherapy, Psychiatry, Spirituality and Pastoral Theology.

Fr. Michael Sorial, D.Min. (Cand.)
Frmichael@agora.ac
Assistant Professor of Ecclesiology, Missiology and Youth Ministry

Rev. Fr. Michael Sorial is Co-founder and Chancellor of Agora University. Since his ordination in 2005, and prior to his academic career, he also served as a Priest in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Pr ior to his ordination, Fr. Michael served in a dual role as US Director of Sales and Marketing and Director of Operations for a UK-based Biotech company. After completing his bachelor's in Biology with a Minor in Business from the University of Texas, he completed a Master of Letters degree in Divinity from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, where he focused on Orthodox Ecclesiology, the incarnational theology of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, and the intersectionality with culture. Fr. Michael is currently working on his doctorate at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Michael Wingert, Ph.D.
Michael@agora.ac
Dean of Holy Transfiguration College
Associate Professor of Old Testament and Syriac Studies

Dr. Wingert's research focuses on ancient medicine, Semitic scriptural literature, the linguistic and philological background to Semitic languages in contact with neighboring speech communities, Northwest Semitic epigraphy, the philosophy of language, and ancient Near Eastern religions. At UCLA, Wingert developed a course for undergraduate students on the origins of medicine based on ancients-Babylonian and Egyptian medicine. Additionally, he was the lead research assistant on the Sinai Palimpsests Project for the UCLA Digital Library's partnership with the Early Manuscript Electronic Library, a project that digitizes and recovers the washed away texts from the library of St. Catherine's monastery in the Sinai of Egypt. At Agora University, Wingert teaches Introduction to the Old Testament, Suffering and the Scriptures, Healing and the Word, and electives in Syriac studies. In addition to his appointment at Agora, Wingert serves on the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal committee for missions and has previously served on the advisory board for the Assyrian Arts Institute. He speaks Sureth (known by scholars as Northeastern Neo-Aramaic) with his family and is an advocate for the preservation of indigenouslanguages and cultures in the Middle East and beyond.

Programs and Degrees

A growing number of learners are finding that online learning opens educational opportunities that normally would not be available. With online education and supervision through a strong teaching community, Agora University is an adequate solution for students who wish a flexible schedule for professional or family circumstances.

Master of Theology in Orthodox Theology (M.Th.)

Agora University is offering a Master of Theology (M.Th.) in Orthodox Theology. Candidates for the M.Th. must successfully complete the first three terms of Graduate courses in Orthodox Theology. The candidate will then start research under the guidance of an advisor. The candidate will be expected to submit a research thesis of about 14,000 words in one term. The MTh program is 36 credit hours (27 Courses + 9 Thesis). The program is tailored to young professionals who have busy schedules yet are able to dedicate 10 to 15 hours of reading and writing per week. The program is designed to engage with roots of Eastern Christianity and make them relevant to our contemporary challenges. For full-time students, the program of study is 3 courses per term for 3 terms. For part-time students, the program of study is 2 courses per term for 5 terms. Each course is 16 weeks and requires an average of 2 re search papers.

Program Objectives

The M.Th. program is designed to offer a general introduction to Oriental Orthodox theology through the introductory graduate level study of church history, dogmatics, scripture, patristics, spirituality and liturgics. In addition to three semesters of academic study, students are afforded the opportunity to write a master thesis in a specialized area of study.

Program Outcomes

The MTh program outcomes are intended to prepare students to:
1. Demonstrate a broad familiarity with Orthodox theology and history as expressed by the Orthodox Christian faith and tradition.
2. Articulate a holistic understanding of the Orthodox religious heritage.
3. Think theologically and critically about the Orthodox Christian tradition both historically and within contemporary church and society.
4. Communicate coherently, effectively, and persuasively in writing.
5. Construct in a thesis a coherent, sustained theological argument in an area of specialized study.

Courses Offered

MTh 501 - Doctrine I: Introduction to Orthodox Theology and Methodology   3 credits

Description: This course explores an introductory discussion of the nature of theology. The aim of this course is to highlight the two-fold nature of theology both as an encounter of the human soul/heart and an expression of the human mind. Basic and fundamental themes and concepts of Orthodox theology will be discussed. Various sources, resources, and methodologies will be discussed to show the inner - coherence of theological loci and their relevance to everyday life.

MTh 503 - Church History I: The Early Church   3 credits

Description: This course provides a survey of the history of the Christian Church from an Orthodox perspective from the coming of our Lord to the Council of Chalcedon (451). Topics to be covered include the Apostolic period, the Early Fathers, the Ecumenical Councils, and the development of the Church's ecclesiology noting the beginnings of East-West divergences.

MTh 508 - Liturgical Theology: Sanctification of Life   3 credits

Description: Here the student is introduced to the subject of Liturgical theology, Liturgical science and traditions. The readings emphasize the integral character of Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist constituting together the beginning of the Christian life. Also, it emphasizes the understanding of sacrament or mystery as an action of the Church, rather than a "private" rite. The course also focuses on the sacraments of penance, unction, marriage, and holy orders as well as on the liturgical services of Vespers, Matins, and the Eucharistic liturgy. It focuses on how the prayer of the Church transfigures the life of the Christian.

MTh 505 - Holy Scripture I: Introduction to. the Old Testament   3 credits

Description: This course provides a survey of the Old Testament within the context of Orthodox Christian theology as well as modern biblical criticism. The course content is divided into three parts, each focusing on different aspects of Old Testament studies: Part 1 focuses on the introduction to Old Testament studies as they are presented in the modern era; Part 2 is a (re)reading of the major portions of the Old Testament in light of the modern scholarly conversation; Part 3 looks at Byznato -Chalcedonian approach to the Old Testament in the modern era as a dialogue partner with our own Orthodox tradition within the non-Chalcedonian communion.

MTh 504 - Church History II: The Oriental Church   3 credits

Description: Council of Chalcedon to the present day by tracing key historical events and themes to gain a better understanding of the Oriental Orthodox Christian tradition and its legacy in the Middle Eastern religious mosaic. The examination of this trajectory provides an opportunity to delve into the Oriental Orthodox viewpoint of Christian history. Participants analyze historical themes in order to strengthen their knowledge of and develop an appreciation for this tradition.

MTh 506 - Holy Scripture II: Introduction to the New Testament   3 credits

Description: A survey of the New Testament, this course covers the life and redemptive work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the early development of the Church through the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. Readings outside of scripture set the historical background for the reading of the primary texts.

MTh 509 - Pastoral Theology and Spirituality   3 credits

Description: The purpose of this course is to help the student understand the basics of pastoral care, with an emphasis on "foundations," covering both theories and types of personalities and various methods in pastoral care. It will also help the student to discern the most important elements of the Spiritual life in the Eastern Christian experience. The course will highlight the importance of prayer and encounter as a key to theology and the different aspects of spiritual life.

MTh 507 - Patristics: Greek, Latin and Syriac Fathers   3 credits
Description: This course surveys the Church Fathers of the East and the West. Despite the emphasis of the course on the Fathers who wrote in Greek and Latin, it will touch on the Fathers who wrote on other languages like Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic. This Course also introduces the student to the historical context of the various Church Fathers. It also aims to give biographic information about those Fathers, their writings, how their thoughts were shaped, and what contributed to their formation. It then explores the literature of the various Fathers, the specific characteristics of each of them, and the contribution of the literature on the overall Christian thought that was preserved by the Church. Introducing the Patristic literature would require us to be introduced to the heretical teachings that urged the Fathers to confront them by their orthodox teachings.

MTh 502 - The Theology of. Mission   3 credits
Description: This course explores the theological evolution of Christian Mission with particular emphasis on Orthodox theology of mission. It provides an account of multiple ranges of biblical, theological, and liturgical perspectives of the theology of mission. By analyzing the works of Orthodox mission theologians, the course explains the relevance of the Orthodox mission theology in today's global and local contexts. It furnishes relevant missional narratives from various historical contexts for illustrating the Orthodox mission practices. The course also examines the salient features of mission theology in other Christian traditions to encourage a more comprehensive understanding of the theology of Orthodox Christian mission.

MTh 550 - Master Thesis Writing   9 credits
Description: Students will research, write and submit their 14,000-word Master thesis under the guidance of a supervisor from the Faculty. Typically, students have six months to complete and submit the dissertation. This course is required for the Master of Theological Studies and the Master of Theology programs. The purpose of this course is to complete the capstone project in the Master degree programs and validating the students as master practitioners. Based upon the thesis proposal and recommendation of the thesis supervisor with the approval of the University faculty, students are able to complete their thesis writing. Upon successful completion of this module, in addition to satisfaction of all other required academic and financial obligations, the students are deemed qualified to graduate with the Master of Theology or Master of Theological Studies degree.

In consultation with the thesis supervisor, each student will develop his or her own work schedule for the course. At the beginning of the course, all students are required to attend a virtual research and methodology orientation seminar. All students are entitled to a total of 10 hours of supervision per term by their thesis supervisor.

Sample schedule:

Date	Task
Week 1	Prepare work schedule and meet with the supervisor to work on the primary and secondary sources, the thesis statement, the research question, and the general outline of the thesis.
Week 2-4	Conduct research, read primary and secondary sources, and formulate literature review.
Week 5-7	Write Chapter 1
Week 8-10	Write Chapter 2
Week 11-13	Write Chapter 3
Week 14-15	Write Introduction and Conclusion
Week 16	Review, format, and Submit Thesis

Master of Theological Studies in the Christian East and the Contemporary World

The Master of Theological Studies (MTS) in Eastern Christianity and the Contemporary World is a 36 - credit hour graduate degree comprised of nine taught modules and a 14,000-word dissertation. Each term has three online modules where lectures, seminars, and other research related activities are provided.

Each module is comprised of 16 weeks of study. Within each week you will read required material in addition to researching other sources. Typically, each module will require that you submit 2 research papers. An average paper is 3000 words. It is possible to register for studying a -la-carte modules. For example, you can take one or two modules if you are interested in a topic but are not planning on pursuing the MTS degree.

At the end of your taught modules and upon satisfaction of the academic requirements, you will then advance to independent research where you will write your 14,000-word Master dissertation. The dissertation topic must be approved by one of the faculty members of Agora University who will act as a first reader. Agora University will then appoint a second reader based on the topic. Typically, students have six months to complete and submit the dissertation. There are nine 3 credit modules and a 9-credit hour thesis.

Program Objectives

The student will utilize the knowledge and skills attained through studying the theological foundations of Orthodox Christianity as a hermeneutic to understand contemporary issues, to challenge inaccurate or unsupported claims, to make careful comparisons across time, space, and culture, and to take an informed position as students at an international university and as global citizens.

Program Outcomes

The MTS program outcomes are intended to prepare. students to:
1. Equip students with the framework and tools to engage with contemporary challenges from Eastern Christian Wisdom.
2. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the specified theological discipline.
3. Exhibit a focused knowledge in a chosen theological discipline.
4. Conduct research and construct a theological argument.
5. Communicate coherently, effectively, and persuasively in writing.
6. Interpret and apply theological knowledge in relation to contemporary issues.
7. Construct in a thesis a coherent, sustained theological argument in an area of specialized study.

Courses Offered

MTS 601 - The Christian Doctrine of God and Diversity   3 credits
Description: The Christian faith confesses a Trinitarian God who is a diversity of persons in unity. This doctrine must present Christians with a model of appreciating diversity while also being rooted in a

unity. This course traces the development of the Christian doctrine of God and related themes from Scripture to the 20th century. The course pays close attention to significant texts in the Christian tradition to discussions of the doctrine of the trinity and its relationship to diversity. We explore how our Trinitarian faith should be lived daily by reflecting on contemporary challenges surrounding diversity of religion, sexuality, culture, and biodiversity.

MTS 602 - Suffering and the Scriptures   3 credits
Description: In this course, we will be examining the phenomenon of human suffering as our approach to encountering the scriptures, focusing on the Old Testament. By exploring the notion of suffering in the human condition, we will unlock some of the more important points of Christian theology that will provide us with the exegetical framework for reading, understanding, and integrating the Old Testament narrative into our lives.

MTS 603 - Healing and the Word   3 credits
Description: This course looks at the matter of the textualization of the incarnation event as the remedy for the ailing human condition and is a companion piece to the course Suffering and the Scriptures. In this course, students will approach the message of the Gospel from the lens of healing, examining the formation of the New Testament in light of the early Christian movement amidst the backdrop of the emergence of rabbinical Judaism and the transition from Hellenic to Roman rule in the region.

MTS 604 - From Cult to Culture: Retrieval and Re-appropriation in Orthodox Liturgy Today 3 credits
Description: This course examines the fundamental elements of Eastern Christian worship as it developed in the early centuries of the Church, in order to historically ground subsequent theological discussion of contemporary renewal. After several weeks exploring the common repository of Orthodox liturgical tradition, we consider examples of current scholarship on the extant Rites in use among the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches: Armenian, West Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian, East Syrian and Byzantine. The selected readings showcase key scholars in the field, highlight the value of comparative and interdisciplinary methodologies, and illustrate the challenges of integrating history and theology with pastoral practice. The final weeks invite students to synthesize what they have learned by means of reflection on their own identity as worshippers in the modern world—with all its challenges: how does the beauty of the Lex Orandi ("rule of prayer") relate to the truth of the Lex Credenda ("rule of belief"), while also cultivating the goodness of an authentic spirituality, that is, a faithful and fruitful Christian Lex Vivendi ("rule of living")?

MTS 605 - Church, Culture and Tradition   3 credits
Description: Church, Culture, and Tradition is a 3-credit module, which aims to investigate the meaning of the Church and its diverse expressions through a study of ecclesiology, Tradition and culture. The module will start by defining the term 'Tradition' followed by an overview of the true identity of the Church and its expression within different contexts throughout history. The module will then discuss our contemporary context and the appropriate ways of engaging with a theology of inculration by incarnating in a multi-cultural and pluralistic society.

MTS 609 - An Orthodox Approach to Theology and The Arts   3 credits
Description: What is beauty? Why does it matter so? How does it relate to the Christian experience of God and the Church's interpretation of divine revelation? What role should the arts play in

contemporary Orthodox faith and witness? This course engages such perennial questions (and more) through a survey of the sources, themes and media characteristic of Eastern Christian aesthetic theory and practice, drawing also upon pertinent Western dialogue partners.

MTS 606 - Anthropology of Asceticism   3 credits
Description: One definition of asceticism is that it is a practice of bodily discipline and self-deprivation, usually for religious purposes. Some ascetical practices include prayer, fasting, prostration, and night - vigil. While asceticism plays an important role in cultivating morality in Christianity generally speaking, reducing these practices as simply reflections of religious belief diminish their broader social importance. In order to understand asceticism, this course uses anthropological tools to contextualize the wider conditions that influence how ascetical practices come to be understood in different Orthodox Traditions. What do people of various socio-cultural and Orthodox Traditions understand asceticism to be? How are ascetic practices linked to the wider-socio-political conditions of respective communities? How can we understand morality in relation to asceticism? Using ethnographic and historical examples, the course considers these questions as they relate to a wide range of Orthodox contexts. It offers an overview of the ways in which anthropological analyses of ascetical life can provide scholars new perspectives with which to make sense of larger questions of theology, religious identity, politics, imagined community, nationhood, and belonging.

MTS 607 - Human Will and Divine Will   3 credits
Description: In this course, we will be examining the human will, divine will, and the paradox notion that arises from discussions on the freedom of the human will. The approach to the topic is grounded in how this phenomenon is envisioned in scriptures, then interpreted by church fathers, and medieval archimandrites in different schools of philosophical thought. By exploring the notion of human will (human desire) and divine will, the course offers venue into how to think about larger questions of what it means to be human, especially in our current technological world.

MTS 608 - Theology and Encounter: Navigating the Christian Reality   3 credits
Description: This course explores the epistemological grounds for understanding Christianity's view of concrete truth. The concrete reality of truth in Christianity is fully revealed through a life of encounter and rational expression. While encounter is a mystical experience, theological expression is a colorful tradition that utilizes a spectrum of human philosophies and ideologies. This course traces the commonality of the Christian encounter while investigating the diversity of theological expression from ancient times until our post-modern frames of mind.

MTS 650 (MTh 550) - Master Dissertation   9 credits
Description: Upon satisfaction of the academic requirements, you will then advance to independent research where you write your 14,000-word Master dissertation. The dissertation topic must be approved by one of the faculty members of Agora University who will act as a first reader. Typically, students have six months to complete and submit the dissertation. This course is required for the Master of Theological Studies and the Master of Theology programs. The purpose of this course is to complete the capstone project in the Master degree programs and validating the students as master practitioners. Based upon the thesis proposal and recommendation of the thesis supervisor with the approval of the University faculty, students are able to complete their thesis writing. Upon successful completion of this module, in addition to satisfaction of all other required academic and financial obligations, the students are deemed qualified to graduate with the Master of Theology or

Master of Theological Studies degree.

In consultation with the thesis supervisor, each student will develop his or her own work schedule for the course. At the beginning of the course, all students are required to attend a virtual research and methodology orientation seminar. All students are entitled to a total of 10 hours of supervision per term by their thesis supervisor.

Sample schedule:

Date	Task
Week 1	Prepare work schedule and meet with the supervisor to work on the primary and secondary sources, the thesis statement, the research question, and the general outline of the thesis.
Week 2-4	Conduct research, read primary and secondary sources, and formulate literature review.
Week 5-7	Write Chapter 1
Week 8-10	Write Chapter 2
Week 11-13	Write Chapter 3
Week 14-15	Write Introduction and Conclusion
Week 16	Review, format, and Submit Thesis

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Code of Ethics

Agora University is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and to upholding the public's trust. We recognize that our behavior affects not only our own individual reputation, but also that of AgoraUniversity. Accordingly, this Code of Ethics forms the ethical principles that will guide all members of the university community in all decisions and activities. These principles are:

Respect: We will nurture a climate of care, concern, fairness, and civility toward others while recognizing and embracing each individual's dignity, freedom, and diversity even in the face of disagreement.

Honesty and Integrity: We will act and communicate truthfully and candidly. We will uphold the university's values and make decisions based on the greater good, conducting ourselves free of personal conflicts or appearances of impropriety and self-dealing.

Communication: We will openly share information with stakeholders regarding the processes used in developing policies and making decisions for the university.

Stewardship: We will use university resources in a wise and prudent manner in order to achieve our educational mission and strategic objectives. We will not use university resources for personal benefit or gain.

Excellence: We will conduct all university affairs diligently, exercising due professional care and striving to meet the high expectations we have set for ourselves as well as the expectations of those we serve.

Responsibility and Accountability: We will be trustworthy and answerable for our conduct, decisions and obligations and will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures. We recognize our obligation to report unethical conduct to appropriate authorities.

Academic Grievance Policy

Academic Grievances and Complaints

Students are free to speak with professors to express concerns about final grades. If a student does not feel his or her professor has resolved the issue satisfactorily, he or she may express in writing a grievance or complaint to the dean. (If the complaint is against his or her dean, the student may appeal directly to the Chief Executive Officer, as described below.)

Submitting an Inquiry/Complaint to the Office of the Chief Executive Officer

When the Office of the CEO receives a formal letter of inquiry/complaint, the CEO will convene an Administrative Hearing Committee to consider the inquiry/complaint. The Administrative Hearing Committee will conduct an appropriate investigation and will render a written explanation/decision within 30 days of the filing of the inquiry/complaint to both the student who made the complaint and the Dean. The office of the Dean will keep a record of all student complaints and documentation of how

they were handled. The decision of the CEO is final.

Non-Academic Grievance Policy

Agora University takes all complaints very seriously. All complaints are treated in confidence, including those associated with bullying, racial and religious vilification, sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination allegations made by students.

NOTE: These complaints may be formal or informal, where formal complaints are communicated in writing and an informal complaint is one considered to be unwritten.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when a person's submission to such conduct is implicitly or explicitly made the basis for employment decisions, academic evaluation, grades or advancement, or other decisions affecting participation in a University program (quid pro quo), or when such conduct creates a hostile working environment. When complaints address the matter of sexual harassment, the university will allocate 60 days to investigate the matter.

Registering a Complaint

Option One: The complainant may initially raise an informal complaint (unwritten) with the appropriate university official (regularly, the Registrar). Following receipt of the informal complaint, the issue will be reviewed by the Dean within three (3) business days and a response will be provided to the complainant within five (5) business days. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Dean may choose to meet with the CEO to gain further information and resolution of the complaint raised. The Registrar will raise the complaint directly with the Dean if the complaint is perceived to be of an extreme, threatening, or criminal nature.

Option Two: In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she may submit a formal complaint in writing. As an alternative to the Option One informal complaint, the complainant may opt to go directly to the formal second stage. The formal written complaint must be received by the Registrar within 10 business days of the complainant receiving feedback. The formal complaint will be reviewed and addressed within three (3) business days and a response will be provided to the complainant within five (5) business days.

If not satisfied with the decision of the Registrar, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the Dean within 10 business days of receipt of the formal complaint decision. The complaint will be addressed within 15 business days of receipt of the complaint, and a response will be given within 30 business days. Complaints should be resolved within 30 days of the initial date of response from the Dean

Academic Integrity Policy

Agora University Faculty holds primary responsibility for ensuring that academic honesty is maintained in their classes. Individual students also share in this responsibility. Agora University students are required to refrain from all acts of academic dishonesty.

Procedures for Dealing with Violations of Academic Dishonesty

Actions taken by a faculty member who has evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, shall, after speaking with the student, take one or more of the following disciplinary actions:
1. Issue an oral reprimand.
2. Give the student an "F" grade or zero points or a reduced number of points on all or part of a particular paper, project or examination.

If the act of academic dishonesty results in a "F" grade or zero points being awarded to the student for that particular paper, project, or examination, and this result affects the student's overall grade in the class, then the student shall be issued the proper grade, as affected by the specific "F" or zero grade, by the faculty member. For any incident of academic dishonesty resulting in the instructor's issuance of an "F" or zero points – the instructor shall assess the severity of the student's misconduct and determine whether the incident should be immediately reported to the Dean. If the Academic Dean notes that multiple Academic Dishonesty Reports have been filed for particular students, from multiple instructors, however, then the Dean shall seek the suspension of the student for one full calendar year. If, upon this student's return from the one-year suspension, the Dean receives any further reports of academic dishonesty concerning this student, the Dean shall recommend the student be expelled permanently. The Dean shall keep the faculty member and Division Dean reasonably informed of the status of the studentdiscipline process and outcome.

Examples of Violations of Identity Fraud

- Taking an examination for another student or having someone else take an examination for one-self.
- Having another person or a company do research and/or writing of a report.
- Obtaining answers from another student before or during an examination.
- Knowingly allowing another student to copy one's work.
- Sharing answers for a take-home or on-line examination unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Receiving help in creating a speech, essay, report, project or paper unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

- Turning in a speech, essay, report, project or paper done for one class to another class unless specifically authorized by the instructor of the second class.
- Offering another person's work as one's own: copying a speech, essay, report, discussion board posting, project or paper from another person or from books, websites, or other sources.
- Using outside sources (books, or other written sources) without giving proper credit (by naming the person and putting any exact words in quotation marks).

Examples of Violations of Academic Dishonesty

Examples of academic dishonesty conduct warranting the imposition of disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Altering a graded examination/assignment and returning it for additional credit.
- Stealing or attempting to steal an examination or answer key.
- Printing an online exam without the express authorization of the instructor.
- Stealing or attempting to change official academic records.
- Forging or altering grades.
- Falsely reporting or claiming to have experienced technical difficulties with online instructional tests, quizzes, or assignments.
- Using unauthorized materials, such as notebooks, or other items, without the instructor's consent during an examination or placement test.
- Misreporting or altering the data in research projects.
- Intentionally impairing the performance of other students and/or a faculty member.
- Collusion – when any student knowingly or intentionally helps another student perform an act of academic dishonesty. Collusion in an act of academic dishonesty will be disciplined in the same manner as the act itself.

Academic Progress Policy

Agora offers several programs. Students may proceed step-by-step from one program to another, toward one of the degrees:
1. Master of Theology – (All MTh courses have to be taken in order)
2. Master of Theological Studies – 6 Courses

Maintaining Satisfactory Progress

Since all coursework for a Master of Theology degree must be completed within four years (for Full-time) and six years (for Part-time), and 9 courses are required, Full-time students who want to obtain a degree should plan on taking at least three courses per year, while Part-time students should plan on taking at least two courses per year. Since a GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation, you should aim for a grade of B or better in all of your classes. Most courses require you to log in to the website at least once or twice a week, either to participate in a forum or to submit a written assignment.

Incompletes

A student will be given an Incomplete grade when all the following conditions apply:
1. whenever required course work is missing,
2. when that missing work would result in the student receiving a lower final grade and
3. when the student has formally requested an extension.

In all other instances, a regular letter grade is given with the missing work counted as "zero" or "fail." If the extension is granted, all missing course work must be made up in consultation with the instructor within three weeks after the final paper was due, unless otherwise arranged. In cases of health or other personal difficulties, a grade of W may also be given. Students cannot register for more courses if they have an incomplete.

Withdrawing from Courses

Courses may be dropped any time prior to the due date of the final examination or paper. These requests should be conveyed in writing to the Registrar and the instructor(s).

If a student drops a course before the seventh week, a grade of W will be assigned whether or not the student is passing. If the withdrawal is initiated after materials have been posted for the seventh week of the semester, a mark of W for Withdrawal will be assigned if the instructor informs the Registrar that the student had a passing grade at the date of the official withdrawal. A mark of F will be assigned if 1) the student is failing at the time of withdrawal and 2) the student withdraws after the seventh lecture is posted.

Agora University certifies that students who cancel after paying in full, but are not eligible for a refund, receive all materials, kits, and equipment, as applicable.

Course Re-Takes

We do not allow students to take an examination again. We do allow students to take a course again (if they pay the tuition again), and only the highest grade is then counted in the GPA.

Academic Leave of Absence

If health or other unforeseen circumstances make it impossible for you to continue your studies for six months or more, please contact the Registrar for a leave of absence. There is no charge for this, and it will extend the length of time you have to complete your degree. The granting of a leave of absence indicates a continuing relationship with the University and allows students to resume studies at a specific time without reapplying for admission to the University. A leave of absence generally does not exceed four semesters in length.

Academic Probation

A GPA of at least 3.0 is required for the degree. Students are not put on academic probation

when their GPA falls below 3.0. Academic probation serves as a warning that a student is in danger of academic disqualification. A student who has not achieved both a term and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or higher at the close of a semester will be placed on academic probation. The student will be notified of this probationary status.

Academic   Disqualification

A student becomes academically disqualified and may not continue enrollment under any of the following conditions:
1. A student fails in six or more hours of coursework in any given year.
2. A student on academic probation fails to achieve both a term and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or higher.

The student will be notified within one week of any disqualification. The Dean may waive academic disqualification if individual circumstances warrant such action.

Appeal of Disqualification

A student who becomes disqualified may appeal the disqualification by filing an appeal to the Registrar within two weeks of the date of notification of disqualification. After the appeal has been considered by the Dean, the Registrar will notify the student of the decision. Once this decision has been made, no further appeal is allowed.

Disqualified students are not eligible for readmission until at least three semesters have elapsed. If readmitted, the student will be on academic probation and will be expected to satisfy the requirements for removal from probation by the end of the term.

Cancellation Policy

A student requesting cancellation of their enrollment within 7 calendar days aft er signing an enrollmentagreement is entitled to a full refund of all amounts paid.

A student requesting cancellation more than 7 calendar days after signing an enrollment agreement, but prior to beginning a course or program, is entitled to a refund of all monies paid minus: (i) the application fee, and (ii) the library fee.

Cancellation requests should be made in writing by sending an email to the Registrar (registrar@agora.ac).

Note: Agora University will issue a full refund for courses or programs that have been cancelled by the University.

Grading Policy

The work of all students at Agora University is reported in grade format. A final grade for each student registered in a course is assigned by instructors as required.

Graduate Courses

The following grades are used to report the quality of graduate student work at Agora University:

A Superior Achievement
B Satisfactorily demonstrated potentiality for professional achievement in field of study
C Passed the course but without doing work indicative of potentiality for professional achievement in field of study
F Fail
P Pass (achievement at grade C level or better)
I Incomplete
IP In Progress

The grades A, B, and C may be augmented by a plus (+) or minus (-) suffix. The grades A, B, and P signify satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students may apply a C grade toward graduate degrees unless otherwise prohibited by the program requirements. However, courses in which a grade of C is received must be offset by higher grades in the same term for students to remain in good academic standing. A grade of F yields no unit nor course credit.

Grade Points

Grade points per unit are assigned by the Registrar as follows:

Equivalency Guide

Letter Grade	100 Point Scale	GPA
A+	97-100	4
A	93-96	4
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	84-86	3
B-	80-83	2.7
C+	77-78	2.3
C	74-76	2
C-	70-73	1.7
D+	66-68	1.3
D	64	1
D-	60-62	1
F	Below 60	0

A plus (+) or minus (-) suffix added to a grade increase or decrease the grade-point value, except in the

case of A+, which carries the same number of grade points as the A grade. Courses in which students receive a grade of P may count toward satisfaction of degree requirements, but these grades, as well as I and IP are disregarded in determining the grade-point average. (After the removal of an I grade and assignment of a letter grade, units and grade points are included in subsequent grade point averages.

Grade-Point Average

The grade-point average is determined by dividing the number of grade points earned by the number of units attempted. The total grade points earned for a course equals the number of grade points assigned times the number of course units. For example, if a student takes three four -unit courses and receives grades of A-, B-, and C+, then the GPA for the term equals the total grade points (34.8) divided by the total course units (12). The GPA is 2.9. For satisfactory standing, students must maintain a Baverage (3.0 GPA).
Only grades earned at Agora University are calculated in the student's GPA. Grades earned at another institution do not affect the GPA at Agora University.

Incomplete Grades

Once a grade of Incomplete (I) is assigned, it remains on the transcript along with the passing grade students may later receive for the course. The instructor may assign the grade I when work is of passing quality but is incomplete for a good cause (such as illness or other serious problem). It is the student's responsibility to discuss with the instructor the possibility of receiving an Incomplete as opposed to lower mark impacted by the Incomplete (to include an F grade).

If a grade of (I) is assigned, students may receive unit credit and grade points by satisfactorily completing the coursework as specified by the instructor. Students should not re-enroll in the course; if they do, itis recorded twice on the transcript. If the work is not completed within one year's time, the I lapses toan F.

Correction of Grades

All grades except I are final when filed by the instructor in the end-of-term course report. After grades have been submitted, a grade change may be made only in case of a clerical or procedural error or other unusual circumstances. No grade may be revised by re-examination or, with the exception of grades ofI, by completing additional work. Students who are dissatisfied with a grade should review their workwith the instructor and receive an explanation of the grade assigned. All grade changes are recorded on the transcript.

Proctoring Policy

On occasion, professors may opt to offer students an opportunity to sit an oral examination. The professor teaching the course will proctor the examination via Zoom (or similar platform) and utilize a rubric shared in common by all university courses for oral examinations. These rubrics serve as a direct means of measuring student achievement in accordance with course and program outcomes. The professor will be required to verify student identity through both video and audio activation of the

online platform.

Instructors planning on offering oral examinations should include this policy on their syllabus and upload a blank copy of the oral exam rubric to the course module.

Graduation Policy

Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in order to graduate. A student cannot graduate if there are any outstanding obligations to the University, such as Tuition fees. Students are considered graduates when the thesis has been completed, and a diploma will be sent to the student. Formal Agora University graduation ceremonies will be held once a year, for all students who completed the degree requirements since the previous ceremony. Attendance is not required.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Agora University admits students of any race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the University. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin in its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships, and any other organization-administered programs.

Privacy Policy

Agora University recognizes that the protection of the rights of persons requires adherence to clearly formulated institutional policies governing the maintenance of student records. The privacy and confidentiality of all student records shall be preserved. Officers of administration, members of the faculty and staff of the University are bound to respect the rights of a student by holding in confidence information they acquire in the course of their work.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a federal law which defines permanent educational records as files, documents and other recorded materials which contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by Agora University or a person acting in an official capacity for the University.

Educational records do not include those maintained by instructional, supervisory, administrative and educational personnel in the sole possession of information which is not accessible or revealed to any other person. Additionally, educational records do not include records of a student 18 years of age or older or those of a student attending an institution of post-secondary education that are created or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional or paraprofessional personnel in connection with the provision of treatment to the student unless specifically requested by the student. Records of students as employees are not part of the education record unless the employment results from the employee's status as a student. Educational records do not include alumni records.

The Registrar coordinates the inspection and review procedures for student records which include personal, academic and financial files as well as placement records. The FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. They are; The right to inspect and review the student's

educational records within 45 days of the day the University receives an official request for access.

Students should submit to the Registrar a written request that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect.The Registrar will make arrangements for access with the custodian of the particular record and will notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

Official Agora University transcripts are released only when requested in writing or online through the Student Information System by the student. There is a fee for each copy. Transcripts will not be released for students who have failed to meet their financial obligations to the University. The University will not allow transcripts from other institutions sent or delivered to Agora University to be copied or released to a student. Those documents must be requested from the originating institution. Students may have access to an unofficial transcript online by making a request through the Student Information System.

The right to request an amendment of the student's educational records that he/she believes is inaccurate or misleading. The student should write the Custodian responsible for the particular record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed in 100 words or less and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

The Custodian of the record will notify the student of its decision to amend the record or deny the student request. If denied, the student may choose to appeal the decision to the appropriate executive official.

Agora University may disclose information on a student without violating FERPA through what is known as directory information. FERPA regulations define "directory information" as information contained in an education record of a student that would not usually be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. This generally includes a student's name, address, telephone number, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (full/ part time, undergraduate or graduate), degrees, honors and awards received, other educational institutions attended and related information. Federal law (Solomon Amendment) also requires that institutions of higher education provide military recruiters the names, addresses, telephone numbers and birth dates of currently enrolled students.

A student may restrict the release of his/her directory information by making a request in writing to the Registrar within two weeks of the start of the first enrolled semester of the academic year. This request must be made on a yearly basis.

In certain situations, a student's consent is not required to disclose educational information. These exceptions include;
- to school officials who have legitimate educational interests;
- to Federal, State, and local authorities involving an audit or evaluation of compliance with education programs;
- to persons or organizations in connection with financial aid;
- to organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of educational institutions;
- to accrediting organizations;
- to parents of students for violations of any law or institutional rule related to the possession of

alcohol or controlled substance;

- to comply with judicial order of subpoena
- health or safety emergency
- directory information;
- to the students themselves;
- results of disciplinary hearing to an alleged victim of a crime of violence;
- to the Attorney General of the United States in response to an exparte order in connection with the investigation or prosecution of terrorism crimes.

Requests to disclose educational information will always be handled with caution and approached on a case- by-case basis. The determination as to whether or not a legitimate educational interest exists willbe made by the custodian of the records. When the custodian of the record has any question regarding the legitimacy of the request, the custodian should withhold disclosure unless consent of the student is obtained.

The following is a list of the types of records that the University maintains, their custodian and their appropriate executive official.

Type of Record	Custodian	Appropriate Executive Official
Academic Records	Registrar	Academic Dean
Disciplinary	Academic Dean	CEO
Financial Aid	Director of Finance	CFO
Placement	Registrar	Academic Dean
News Releases	Director of Public Relations	Chancellor
Student Accounts	Director of Finance	CFO

**Agora University uses highly encrypted cloud-based servers to ensure the protection of student records.

Records Retention Policy

Agora University's Records Retention policy establishes the types of University records and their retention period for records. It is based upon legal and operational requirements and provides a framework for the life cycle management of University records.

This policy is intended to assist the University in properly protecting and managing the records it needs to maintain, while eliminating the records that are no longer legally or operationally required. This will help to ensure that the University is following all applicable laws and regulations governing records retention and eliminating unnecessary records storage costs.

This policy responds to the various local, state, and federal statutes and regulations and internal policies that apply to records retention.

Roles and Responsibilities

Office of the Dean
The Office of the Dean is responsible for identifying the academic records to be retained and determining the period of retention. The Office of the Dean must also make arrangements for the proper storage of the records and coordinate with outside vendors for that purpose, where appropriate. Finally, the Office of the Dean arranges for the handling of the disposal of records whose retention period has expired.

Office of the CEO
The Office of the CEO is responsible for providing guidance regarding the legal retention requirements for financial and administrative documents and coordinating document holds when litigation is ongoing, pending, threatened, or likely. The University's CEO will designate one or more individuals to serve as the point of contact.

Who Should Know This Policy
All University employees; All contractors who create, use, or store University records; All consultants who create, use, or store University records; All vendors who create, use, or store University records.

Exclusions and Special Situations
Any records relevant to pending or ongoing litigation, government investigation, or audit MUST BE RETAINED until such matters have been resolved, all appeals are exhausted, and the retention period has expired. All disposal of relevant records must cease, including the disposal of records according to approved retention periods, when such a document hold is in place. In cases where litigation is threatened or likely, consult the Office of the President to determine whether a litigation hold is required.

Records Policy Definitions

Definition of a Record: Records are documents and parts of documents contained on any media and in any format that: are made or received by the organization; provide evidence of its operations; document business decisions; and/or have value requiring their retention for a specific period of time.

Examples include, but are not limited to:
- Letters, memoranda and correspondence
- Policies, procedures and methods
- Invoices and receipts
- Purchase orders, contracts and certificates
- Tax forms
- Data stored in computers, data processing equipment, and off-line media
- Computer programs and documentation

Social Media and Email Policy

Agora University expects each student to use social media responsibly and respectfully in ways that reflect the moral and ethical guidelines set forth by Agora University. Agora University is primarily an online institution; therefore, all courses and instructional materials and correspondence is conducted online. Please check your email account daily. We know life is busy, nonetheless, failure to be aware of updated policies, procedures or other information does not relieve you from responsibility or obligation.

Solicitation
Students, staff or outsiders may not sell to or survey the University community.

Speaking for the University

Students should refer media inquiries to the Public Relations office which reports to the Office of the Chancellor, which can answer questions accurately and speak officially for Agora University. Students are not to release information or grant interviews to the news media without first checking with the Public Relations office or being asked by that office to do so. In addition, students are not to speak for the University on social media.

Student Identity Verification Policy

Agora University's Student Identity Verification Policy is in compliance with the requirements set forth by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). The HEOA requires that institutions offering online education have processes in place to ensure that the student registering for a course is the same student who participates in the course or receives course credit. The Act requires that institutions use one of the following three methods:
- A secure login and pass code;
- Proctored examinations; or

- New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Student ID and Password

All students registered for coursework at Agora University are provided with a secure user ID and password. Access to online courses is controlled by the use of the secure User ID and password.

Learning Management System (LMS)

Agora University uses Moodle as its Learning Management System. Students access the LMS with their unique Student ID and Password. The unique User ID and password are used to verify that a student who registers for an online course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program.

The small faculty to student ratio ensures close interaction between students and faculty and the ability of faculty to manage student identity via for any sudden change in academic performance, change in writing style, online discussions, or email inquiries. More importantly, constant contact between the students and faculty by phone, Skype, or other technological means assures the faculty of the student's identity.

Students enrolled in courses at Agora University are responsible for providing complete and true information in any identity verification process.

Verification of Identity

All students submit a personal photograph and a government-issued photo ID at the time of admission. Staff and Faculty verify the identity of all students using Zoom for interviews, online lectures, academic advising and general inquiry live video sessions.

Transcripts and Records Policy

Student records are confidential. The University cannot process a transcript request unless we receive a signed request or an online request through the Student Information System. Outstanding obligations to the University, such as Tuition fees, must be reconciled prior to release of student transcripts. Send all requests to the Registrar and include instructions on where the transcript should be mailed. We will retain your academic records permanently. You are allowed one free transcript for your own records. You may request official transcripts by visiting https://sis.agora.ac/portal/login

Official Agora University transcripts are released only when requested in writing or online through the Student Information System by the student. There is a fee for each copy. Transcripts will not be released for students who have failed to meet their financial obligations to the University. The University will not allow transcripts from other institutions sent or delivered to Agora University to be copied or released to a student. Those documents must be requested from the originating institution. Students may have access to an unofficial transcript online by making a request through the Student Information System.

Student Services

Library and Technology

Virtual Librarian
Agora University has an online Virtual Librarian available to students during the following hours:

Librarian Service Hours
Monday - Friday (7AM EST to 9PM EST)
Saturday - Sunday (12PM EST to 7PM EST)

All students will have access to Electronic Databases including ATLA Religion and Periodicals, ProQuest, Cengage and other digital resources.

All our students will have access to our online platform LMS (https://lms.agora.ac). The programs we are offering are mainly based on regular Internet access to the LMS, and this will require both a basic competence in skills related to Internet use and easy access to suitable computer. Each module has a designated website granting immediate access to vital information, electronic resources of various sorts, and providing a site for regular on-line tutorials.

Change of Contact Information

If your information changes, please login to https://sis.agora.ac/portal/login to update your information.

Student ID Cards

Agora University can issue Student ID cards which might be helpful for local library use or other student services and discounts. If you are interested, please send an email to the Registrar's office. Student IDs are valid for two years and are renewed based on the registration status of the student. If you lost your student ID, a $10 replacement fee is required and paid to Agora University.

Graduation Ceremony

Upon graduation, all students are issued their diplomas and transcripts via the postal service. However, Agora University organizes a graduation ceremony once a year at its headquarters in Springfield, VA for those interested in attending. The Graduation Ceremony is not required.

Alumni Network

Establishing a community is an integral part of Agora University's Mission. We invite all our graduates to join our Alumni Network which provides our students and faculty to stay connected and provide supporttothe University community. Please contact our alumni coordinator atalumni@agora.ac.

Student Community

Accomplishing the educational mission of Agora University requires an edifying community atmosphere and an environment that promotes spiritual growth. The student handbook is one way by which Agora University establishes a context for the student experience and indicates what we value.

The Keyword in our University is "Community". We would encourage you to consider ways and opportunities to impact the world and correspond with the modern challenges that face our society in the spirit of Early Christian Wisdom.

Students are to attend each class for which they are registered. In addition, students are expected to respect both professors and fellow students and exhibit deportment that helps create a positive learning environment in each classroom.

Agora University wants all students to achieve their highest academic potential and makes faculty and academic support resources available to assist each student in meeting his or her academic goals. Students, however, are ultimately responsible for their own academic success and should take the initiative to ask for assistance as needed.

Faculty— Students needing assistance with a specific course should first seek the help of the professor. Maintaining continued contact with a professor and staying informed of one's academic status in a course is highly recommended.

Registrar— The Registrar is knowledgeable about the degree the student is pursuing and available to help the student plan his or her semester course sequence, course load and class schedule.

Students and faculty are brothers and sisters in one family, and we expect each to treat the other with respect both in and out of the classroom. Appropriate discourse in a reasoned fashion is part of the education process, and strong opinions informed by fact, logic, spiritual maturity and insight are valued. Students are not only welcome but invited to discuss any matter with their professors in and out of class in the spirit of appropriate decorum and mutual respect.

Quick Guide to Research and Writing

Critical Use of Sources

Identify your sources:
- Books (textbooks)
- Encyclopedia Articles (The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church)
- Monographs
- Journal Articles
- Book Reviews
- Collection of Essays (Festschrift, Oxford/Cambridge Handbooks, Conference Papers)
- Primary Sources (Manuscript, liturgy, letters, church records, Systematic theologian)

Getting the Most out of your Sources

- Don't rely on your memory
- Take notes
- Notebook summary from books you read
- Recording your notes on ideas and synthesis
- Use Post-it notes
- Always ask, why am I using this book or article, what do I hope to gain from it?

Primary Sources

- Who is the author?
- What was his background?
- Was the source intended for publication (or was it a private letter, or a sermon?)
- Who were the intended audience?
- Do we know when it was written, and what was happening in the author's world at that date?

Secondary Sources

- Who is the author? (he or she may be an eminent professor, or a very new post-doc, publishing a first article, or somewhere in between. (Do not suppose that new scholars are less important)
- Where is the work published?
- When was it written? It matters whether the book you are reading was written in 1969 or 2009.
- It is important to note that at some time you need to stop reading and start writing!

Academic Presentation

All essays should be word-processed and set out with either 1.5 or double spacing. Footnotes or endnotes are included in the word count, but bibliographies are not.