GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Spring 2015
Instructor: Dr. Marcus Plested
Course #: THEO 8422
Course Title: Monastic Theology

Content:
Monastic Theology. Will cover the classical ‘canon’ of early monastic literature. Beginning with a survey of sources, principal themes, and historical overview the course will move on to Syrian ‘proto-monasticism’ (Aphrahat and Ephrem). It will then turn to the ‘golden age’ of Egyptian Monasticism: The Life of Anthony, the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, the Lausiac History, Pachomius, and related materials. Due attention will be paid to the distinctive Cappadocian and Palestinian manifestations of monasticism. The chief fountainheads of monastic spirituality, Evagrius of Pontus and the author of the Macarian writings, will be treated in some depth. We shall also consider the ways in which monastic theology impacts mainstream mystical and dogmatic theology (Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor being prime examples). We shall conclude with the origins and early development of monasticism in the West (from Cassian to Benedict).