

**Course Title:**

The History of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch

**Level:**

Certificate

**Course Objective:**

This course provides a comprehensive study of the history of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, tracing its journey from the dawn of Christianity to the present day. It covers the significant stages of the Church's development, its rich heritage and rituals, and its influence on Christian theology. The course will explore the contributions of the most famous Fathers and scholars of the Church, the Syriac language which has been integral to its tradition, and the Church's spread across the Arab world, India, and later the diaspora. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the Syriac Orthodox Church's enduring legacy and its impact on global Christianity.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the Historical Development of the Syriac Orthodox Church: Gain a detailed understanding of the key historical stages the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch has passed through, from its establishment in the early Christian period to its modern-day presence.
2. Explore the Heritage, Rituals, and Traditions: Examine the rich liturgical and theological heritage of the Syriac Orthodox Church, including its unique rituals, liturgies, and the theological significance of its traditions.
3. Study the Syriac Language and Its Role: Understand the role of the Syriac language in the Church's liturgical practices, theological writings, and its spread in the Arab world and India. Explore the influence of Syriac among early Christian communities and its significance today.
4. Learn about the Fathers and Scholars of the Church: Analyze the lives and contributions of the most famous Syriac Fathers and scholars, understanding their theological writings and their lasting impact on the Church and wider Christian thought.
5. Examine the Global Spread of the Syriac Church: Explore the spread of the Syriac Orthodox Church among the Arab nations, India, and its expansion in diaspora communities, with a focus on its adaptation and growth in new cultural contexts.

**Course Structure:**

1. Introduction to the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch:
  - Overview of the Church's origins and foundation in the early Christian era.
  - The role of the Church of Antioch in the development of early Christian doctrine.
2. Key Historical Stages of the Syriac Church:

- The evolution of the Church through significant historical periods, including Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic eras.
- Challenges and growth during times of persecution and doctrinal disputes.
- The Church's endurance through modern times.

### 3. Heritage and Rituals of the Syriac Orthodox Church:

- Exploration of Syriac Orthodox liturgical practices and rituals.
- Understanding the unique theological significance of these rituals within the Syriac tradition.
- The role of feasts, sacraments, and prayers in shaping the faith community.

### 4. The Syriac Language and Its Influence:

- The adoption of the Syriac language for liturgy and scripture.
- Study of Syriac as a theological and liturgical language.
- The influence of Syriac on early Christian communities, particularly in the Arab world and India.

### 5. Fathers and Scholars of the Syriac Church:

- Examination of the lives and theological contributions of the most notable Fathers and scholars, such as St. Ephrem the Syrian, Jacob of Serugh, and Bar Hebraeus.
- Understanding their works, writings, and influence on both the Syriac Church and broader Christian theology.

### 6. The Spread of the Syriac Orthodox Church:

- The spread of the Syriac Orthodox Church among the Arabs and in India, and its integration into local cultures.
- The Church's establishment in diaspora communities, particularly in Europe, the Americas, and Australia.
- Challenges and opportunities faced by the Church in expatriation and its efforts to preserve its heritage.

#### **Assessment:**

- Two term exams to evaluate comprehension of the course material, including understanding of the Church's history, heritage, and the significance of the Syriac language.

#### **Prerequisites:**

- GCSE certificate, high school, or equivalent certificate.

#### **Delivery Method:**

The course will be delivered entirely online through a learning management system.

- Lectures via Zoom
- Access to recorded lectures and reading materials on the course website.

#### **Duration:**

October 2024 - June 2025

#### **Certificate:**

Upon successful completion of the course and passing the final exam, participants will receive the "TEACH Certificate in the History of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch". The certificate will be awarded upon completion and passing of the two term exams.

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This curriculum offers a deep dive into the rich history and heritage of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, exploring its unique rituals, language, and contributions to Christian thought. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the Church's journey through history and its continued significance in modern Christianity.