Christian-Muslim Dialogues in the Arab Christian
Theology of Theodore Abū Qurrah

(June. 9-13. 2014)
9:00 am-5:30 pm

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-Course Description:
This course aims at visiting some of the earliest Christian-Muslim theological debates
and then looking specifically at the Arabic apologetic theological texts of the mutakallim,
Theodore Abū Qurrah, one of the earliest original theological writers in Arabic, who
belonged to the Melkites community during the Abbasid kingdom in the Ninth century.
The course aims at taking the students through some of the major theological texts which
Abu Qurrah and some others wrote in Arabic to defend Christian faith and to respond to
critical questions against Christian theology from the Muslims.

-Course’s Objectives:
by the end of the course, students would:

1- acquire sufficient knowledge on Theodore Abū Qurrah’s and some other Christian
authors theological discourses in his Arabic apologetic texts.
2- examine if Theodore Abū Qurrah’s theological claims remain within the orthodox
doctrinal stream of thought, or they diverge from it, or even compromise it, sometimes
for the sake of making Christian theology acceptable to Islam
3- learn to analyze and interpret the theological content, and reconstruct the dialogical
and apologetic strategies, of some exemplary Arabic Christian conversing voices with
early Islam.
- Text Book:


This text is going to be used during the whole course. So, the students are expected to purchase their own copy of the book.

- Course’s Schedule:

  (the Historical and Contextual)

  Setting

- Monday, June 9, 2014:

  I- Session.1 (9:00 am-10:30 am): Introducing the Syllabus and the subject of the course

  *(short pause- 10:30 am-10:45 am)*

  II- Session .2 (10:45 am-12:30 pm): the Arab Christians and Islam

  *(Lunch Break- 12:30pm-2:00 pm)*

  III- Session .3 (2:00 pm-3:30 pm): Christians in the Shadow of Islam

  *(short pause- 3:30 pm- 3:45 pm)*

  IV- Session .4 (3:45 pm-5:30 pm): the Beginning of Christian-Muslim *Kalam*

  *(Christian Muslim Controversies before)*

  *Abū Qurrah*

- Tuesday, June 10, 2014:

  I- Session .5 (9:00 am-10:30 am): Dialogue of Patriarch John I and ’Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ (1) *(task in Library)*

  *(short pause- 10:30 am- 10:45 am)*

  II- Session .6 (10:45 am-12:30 pm): Dialogue of Patriarch John I and ’Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ (2) *(discussion & analysis)*
III- Session .7 (2:00 pm- 3:30 pm): John of Damascus (1)  (task in Library)

(short pause- 3:30 pm-3:45 pm)

IV- Session .8 (3:45 pm-5:30 pm): John of Damascus (2)  (discussion & analysis)
[R.R: John Damascene, “the Chapter 100/101 of the De Haeresibus,” in John of Damascus on Islam, pp. 133-141]

- Wednesday, June. 11, 2014:
I- Session .9 (9:00 am-10:30 am): Dialogue between Patriarch Timothy I and The Caliph al-Mahdī (1)  (task in library)

(short pause- 10:30 am-10:45 am)

II- Session .10 (10:45 am- 12:30 pm): Dialogue between Patriarch Timothy I And the Caliph al-Mahdī (2)  (discussion & analysis)

(Lunch Break- 12:30 pm-2:00 pm)

III- Session .11 (2:00 pm- 3:30 pm): the Melkite text of On the Triunity of the One God (1)  (groups’ preparation)

(short pause- 3:30 pm-3:45 pm)

IV- Session .12 (4:35 pm-5:30 pm): the Melkite Text of On the triunity of the one God (2)  (discussion & analysis)

(Christian-Muslim Controversies in) Abū Qurrah’s Texts

-Thursday, June. 12, 2014:
I- Session .13 (9:00 am- 10:30 am): On Theodore Abū Qurrah (1)  (task in library)

(short pause- 10:30 am-10:45 am)

II- Session .14 (10:45 am- 12:30 pm): On Theodore Abū Qurrah (2)  (Lecture)
III- Session .15 (2:00 pm- 3:30 pm): Abū Qurrah’s Maymar, *On the Existence Of God and the True Religion* (1)  
([R.R: Theodore Abū Qurrah, *On the True Religion*, in Theodore Abū Qurrah, J. Lamoreaux, Ch.1, Ch. 3-5, pp. 1-25, 41-57])

*(short pause- 3:30 pm- 3:45 pm)*

IV- Session 16. (3:45 pm- 5:30 pm): Abū Qurrah’s Maymar, *On the Existence Of God and the True Religion* (2)  
*(discussion and analysis)*

- Friday, June, 13. 2014:

I- Session .17 (9:00 am- 10:30 am): Abū Qurrah’s Maymar, *On the Trinity* (1)  

*(short pause- 10:30 am- 10:45 am)*

II- Session .18 (1:45 am- 12:30 pm): Abū Qurrah’s Maymar, *On The Trinity* (2)  
*(discussion & analysis)*

*(Lunch Break- 12:30 pm- 2:00 pm)*

III- Session .19 (2:00 pm- 3:30 pm): Abū Qurrah’s Maymar, *On The Death of the Messiah* (1)  

*(short pause- 3:30 pm- 3:45 pm)*

IV- Session .20 (3:45 pm- 5:30 pm): Abū Qurrah’s Maymar, *On The Death of the Messiah* (2)  
*(discussion & analysis)*

- Course Requirements

1) **Assigned readings’ preparation and active class participation:** Students are required to read the required texts as thoroughly and perceptively as they can and then to demonstrate an active class participation by coming to the sessions with questions or comments on them and the taught materials therein.

2) **Tasks in the Library:** students are going to be asked to work in the library on writing **600-1000 words-long** entries on specific figures related to the course’s subject. They will be asked to collect the content of these entries from the resources and books available in the library and come back with their written texts to the instructor.
3) **Final Essays**: students will be required to write a short essay of **3000 words-long** on the following question: *what are the lessons on Christian-Muslim dialogues one can learn from Theodore Abū Qurrah’s dialogues with Muslims, and how are these lessons useful in and relevant to today’s interreligious relationships?* The essay must be submitted to the instructor via email no later than, **June 20, 2014, 10:00 pm**.

**- Grading Division:**

1- reading’s preparation and class participation (30%)
2- Tasks in Library: (30%)
3- Final Essay: (40%)

**- Grading Criterion**

Students are graded using the **A, B, C, or F** system, with “+” and “−” markings allowed. For purposes of this course, these grades mean:

A  Exceptional in several or most ways; completes all tasks, is creative and even original in content, and displays mastery of expression.

B  Adequate in all basic ways; parts of the task are slighted, the content has minor weakness, and expression is competent yet not compelling.

C  Inadequate in some ways; does not address significant tasks, shows weak or erroneous content, and expression sometimes obstructs understanding.

**- Additional Policies:**

1) **Forbidden in the Classroom:**
   
   - mobile phones, unless shut down completely, are disallowed in the classroom.
   - while bringing laptops or electronic Tablets is allowed for the purpose of recording or writing lecture notes, surfing the net or using any other program on the internet during the session is strictly forbidden.

2) **Attendance**: Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

3) **Plagiarism**: Plagiarism is the failure to give proper credit for the words or ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, and is strictly prohibited. Credit will not be given for written work in this course containing plagiarism, and plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the entire course. Please consult the Plagiarism Policy on pp.
Selected Bibliography:
The books enlisted here are by no means exhaustive of all the literature on christology that is available in the field. Students are encouraged to look for other primary and secondary literature and to use every theological book they believe is helpful for their study of the course’s subject.


Ricks, Thomas W. Early Arabic Christian Contributions to Trinitarian Theology, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.


