# St Andrew's Theological College

# L9291A Iconography: The Art of Seeing



**Semester One, 2024**

*Teaching Staff:*

| | |
|---|---|
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| Consultation times: | By appointment |

# L9291A Iconography: The Art of Seeing

## Semester One, 2024

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| **Unit Weighting:** | 9 credit points |
| **Type of Unit:** | Postgraduate |
| **Exclusion**: | L7291 Iconography: The Art of Seeing |

**Scheduled Times and Venues**:

| **Teaching Staff:** | Name: | Dr Andrew Mellas |
|---|---|---|
| | | Senior Lecturer, Church History and Liturgical Studies |
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| | Consultation times: By appointment | |

**Learning Management System**: http://sagotc.elearn.net.au

| **Workload:** | Teaching/Lectures | 3 hours per week |
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| | Study & assignments: | 8 hours per week x 12 weeks |
| | | (devoted to readings and assessable tasks) |

## Curriculum Objectives

This course unit explores the spiritual, liturgical and theological significance of icons and their sacred spaces. It will investigate the relationship between iconography, architecture and the Orthodox Liturgy in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods, inviting students to engage with and interpret the symbolic language and theological meaning of icons and sacred space in Orthodox worship today.

## Learning Outcomes and Threshold Concepts

At the end of this course unit, students should be able to:

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| 1) demonstrate an understanding of the inter-relationships between Byzantine iconographic programs, architectural symbolism, and the liturgical uses of architectural spaces; |
| 2) explain the symbolism of the church building as an image of the cosmos, or as 'heaven on earth'; |
| 3) critically interpret the symbolic language of icons; |
| 4) enter into constructive dialogue on the Christian use of images and the theology of the Eastern iconographic tradition; |
| 5) appreciate the significance of the icon in liturgical celebration and personal devotion. |

During this course unit, students may acquire the following threshold concept.

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| The Christianisation of the private and public space in Late Antiquity was hastened by artistic and architectural developments within the Byzantine empire. Expressed through iconography and other forms of materiality, these developments continued in the Middle Ages and even after the fall of Constantinople. Even today, iconography shapes the worship of Orthodox Christians across the world. This unit is therefore important for students wishing to have a deeper and more holistic understanding of the symbolic language and spiritual significance of Byzantine iconography. |

## Learning Activities

Lectures, tutorials, student presentations, seminars—face to face and/or online.

## Content

1. The origins and emergence of Christian iconography
2. The symbolic language of iconography: Chora Monastery
3. The relationship between icons, sacred space and 'lightscape'
4. The emergence of the Christian church building, Byzantine architecture and iconographic programs
5. Hagia Sophia
6. The sixth-century icon of Christ at St Catherine's Monastery (Sinai)
7. The theology of the icon: Iconoclasm and the Seventh Ecumenical Council
8. Icons of the Theotokos
9. Icons of the great feasts of our Lord in the liturgical cycle of the Orthodox Church
10. The icon of the Holy Trinity (Andrei Rublev)
11. Post-Byzantine iconography
12. The spiritual and theological significance of iconography today.

## Weekly Schedule of Topics and Readings

### Topic 1: The origins and emergence of Christian iconography

#### Prescribed readings are from:
- Thomas F. Mathews, 'The Origin of Icons' in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Art and Architecture*, edited by Ellen C. Schwarz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 21–30.
- Cyril Mango (ed.) *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 3–54.
- Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of the Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999), 3–53.

### Topic 2: The symbolic language of iconography: Chora Monastery

#### Prescribed readings are from:
- Robert Ousterhout, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (London: Scala, 2002), 9–22, 70–85.
- Kallistos Ware, "The Meaning of the Divine Liturgy for the Byzantine Worshipper," in *Church and People in Byzantium*, edited by Rosemary Morris (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1990), 7–28.
- St Maximus the Confessor, *On the Ecclesiastical Mystagogy: A Theological Vision of the Liturgy*, edited and translated by Jonathan J. Armstrong (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2020).

### Topic 3: The relationship between icons, sacred space and 'lightscape'

#### Prescribed readings:
- Beatrice Caseau, "Experiencing the Sacred" in *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Newcastle and Durham, April 2011*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 59–77.
- Claire Nesbitt, "Shaping the Sacred: Light and the Experience of Worship in Middle Byzantine Churches," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 36, no. 2 (2012): 139–60.
- Amy Papalexandrou, "Perceptions of Sound and Sonic Environment Across the Byzantine Acoustic Horizon," in *Knowing Bodies, Passionate Souls: Sense Perceptions in Byzantium*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and Margaret Mullett (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2017), 67–85.

### Topic 4: The emergence of the Christian church building, Byzantine architecture and iconographic programs

#### Prescribed readings:
- Thomas F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 3–33.
- Helen G. Saradi, "Space in Byzantine Thought." In *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art*, edited by Slobodan Ćurčić and Evangelia Hadjitryphonos (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 73–112.
- St Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation*, in

*St Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy*, edited and translated by John Meyendorff (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984).
- Vasileios Marinis, "The *Historia Ekklesiastike kai Mystike Theoria*: A Symbolic
- Understanding of the Byzantine Church Building." *Byzantinische Zeitschrifte* 108, no. 2 (2015): 753–70.


## Topic 5: Hagia Sophia

### Prescribed readings:
- Brian Croke, "Looking, Listening and Learning: Justinian's Hagia Sophia" in *Hymns, Homilies and Hermeneutics in Byzantium*, edited by Sarah Gador-Whyte and Andrew Mellas (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 139–167.
- Bissera V. Pentcheva, "Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics." *Gesta: International Centre for Medieval Art* 50, no. 2 (2011): 93–111.
- Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 1–17.
- Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia and Ekphrasis of the Ambo* in Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 91–102.


## Topic 6: The sixth-century icon of Christ at St Catherine's Monastery

### Prescribed readings:
- Maximos Constas, *The Art of Seeing: Paradox and Perception in Orthodox Iconography* (California: Sebastian Press, 2014), 15–98.
- Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2005), 67–82.
- St Maximus the Confessor, *On the Ecclesiastical Mystagogy: A Theological Vision of the Liturgy*, edited and translated by Jonathan J. Armstrong (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2020), prologue and chapter 1.


## Topic 7: The theology of the icon: Iconoclasm and the Seventh Ecumenical Council

### Prescribed readings:
- John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*. Translated by Andrew Louth (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 81–158.
- Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 1–40.
- Leslie Brubaker, "Icons before Iconoclasm?" *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 45, no. 2 (1998): 1215–54.
- Jaś Elsner, "Iconoclasm as Discourse: From Antiquity to Byzantium." *The Art Bulletin* 94, no. 3 (2012): 368–94.


## Topic 8: Icons of the Theotokos

### Prescribed readings:
- Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 96–108.
- Robert Ousterhout, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (London: Scala, 2002), 35–47.
- Andreas Andreopoulos, *Gazing on God: Trinity, Church and Salvation in Orthodox Iconography* (Lutterworth Press, 2013), 82–101.

## Topic 9: Icons of the great feasts of the Lord in the liturgical cycle of the Orthodox Church

**Prescribed readings:**
- Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 59–83.
- Robert Ousterhout, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (London: Scala, 2002), 58–69.
- Andreas Andreopoulos, *Gazing on God: Trinity, Church and Salvation in Orthodox Iconography* (Lutterworth Press, 2013), 62–81.

## Topic 10: The icon of the Holy Trinity

**Prescribed readings:**
- Gabriel Bunge, *The Rublev Trinity: The Icon of the Trinity by the Monk-Painter Andrei Rublev* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 13–44.
- Constantine Cavarnos, *Guide to Byzantine Iconography: Volume Two* (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 2001), 60–100.

## Topic 11: Post-Byzantine iconography

**Prescribed readings:**
- Henry D. Schilb, "'Byzance après Byzance' and Post-Byzantine Art from the Late Fifteenth Century through the Eighteenth Century" in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Art and Architecture*, edited by Ellen C. Schwarz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 255–70.
- Sister Daniilia, Elpida Minopoulou, Konstantinos S. Andrikopoulos, Andreas Tsakalof, Kyriaki Bairachtari, "From Byzantine to post-Byzantine art: the painting technique of St Stephen's wall paintings at Meteora, Greece" *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35 (2008) 2474–485.
- Maria Parani, "The Joy of the Most Holy Mother of God the Hodegetria the One in Constantinople": Revisiting the Famous Representation at the Blacherna Monastery, Arta," in *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by Sharon E. J. Gerstel (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 113–146.
- Michalis Kappas, "Approaching Monemvasia and Mystras from the Outside: The View from Kastania," in *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by Sharon E. J. Gerstel (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 147–184.

## Topic 12: The spiritual and theological significance of iconography today

**Prescribed readings:**
- Archimandrite Vasileios, "The Icon as a Liturgical Analogy," in *Hymn of Entry: Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 81–90.
- Vassa Larin, "'Active Participation' of the Faithful in Byzantine Liturgy," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (2013): 67–88.
- J. B. Bullen, "The Byzantine Revival in Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Art and Architecture*, edited by Ellen C. Schwarz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 271–82.

# Learning Resources

## Representative References

### Primary Sources

*The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453*. Edited and translated by Cyril Mango. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

### Secondary Sources

Constas, Maximos. *The Art of Seeing: Paradox and Perception in Orthodox Iconography.* California: Sebastian Press, 2014.

Maguire, Henry. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*. Princeton University Press, 1981.

Marinis, Vasileios. *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople: Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Nesbitt, Clare and Jackson, Mark (eds). *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Newcastle and Durham, April 2011*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

Ouspensky, Leonid. *Theology of the Icon*, 2 vols. Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1992.

Patricios, Nicholas. *The Sacred Architecture of Byzantium: Art, Liturgy and Symbolism in Early Christian Churches*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2013.

Pentcheva, Bissera (ed). *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. 2014.

Safran, Linda. *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Schwarz, Ellen C. (ed). *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Art and Architecture*. Oxford University Press, 2021.

## Assessment Profile

**Assessment**

Assessment tasks are designed both to help students attain unit outcomes and to enable teachers to assess student attainment. In this unit, assessment of student achievement with respect to the unit outcomes will be based on:

1. Critical interpretation of the symbolic language of icons and explain the symbolism of the church building as an image of the cosmos [Outcomes 2 and 3]

2. Demonstration of a broad understanding of the main themes in iconography and its various inter-relationships [Outcomes 1 and 5]

3. Engage with and interpret the spiritual, liturgical and theological significance of icons and sacred space. [Outcomes 4 and 5]

**Assessment Schedule**

| Type of Assessment Task | Value (%) | Date due | Unit Learning Outcome(s) assessed |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Homily** Prepare and record a 'homily' that engages with and interprets the liturgical and theological significance of icons. | 30 (15 minutes) | Week 5 (6 April 2024) | Outcomes 4 and 5 |
| **Contextual analysis** Demonstrate a broad understanding of iconography and its various inter-relationships by contextualising a key element of iconography. | 30 (1,800 words) | Week 8 (27 April 2024) | Outcomes 2 and 3 |
| **Major essay** Critically interpret Byzantine art by exploring the symbolic language of icons. | 40 (2,400 words) | Week 12 (7 June 2024) | Outcomes 1 and 5 |

**Detailed information on assessment tasks and assessment standards**

The College's cover sheet, available on Moodle, and from the Library or the Registrar upon request, should be attached to the front all assignments. These tasks should be uploaded to Moodle or emailed to me by the end of the prescribed week at amellas@sagotc.edu.au.

1. **Homily**

   Produce a short video of you delivering a 'homily' on iconography. Please note that the recorded homily can remain private and you do not need to upload it onto a public forum (such as YouTube). The homily is your opportunity to convey information and concepts in a clear, succinct and engaging way. It could be as simple as recording yourself speaking in front of a camera (any camera, including a smartphone camera is fine) with

no other effects or images for several minutes. However, if you prefer the video to showcase other images and sounds, accompanied by your voice, that is perfectly fine. Ultimately, the most important thing about this video is *what* you say and *how* you say it. A student who produces an audio-visual tour de force (using iMovie or similar software) could receive the same grade as a student who simply speaks in front of the camera for several minutes—but does so persuasively, clearly and succinctly.

You will be required to:
- **select** an Orthodox icon
- **introduce** your icon and describe its key elements
- **explore** the liturgical and theological significance of your icon
- **upload** your video and **send** your completed video to your lecturer.

The key elements of this task on which you will be assessed are your ability to:
- demonstrate that you have a good understanding of your chosen icon (**10%**);
- meaningfully and cogently engage with your audience (**10%**);
- persuasively and concisely portray the significance of your icon (**10%**).

Remember that the key difference between this assessment task and the essays that will follow is that this task asks you to engage with an audience that is interested in, but perhaps unfamiliar with the richness of Orthodox icons. The homily will prove whether you can simply and persuasively showcase the richness and complexity of sacred art in a liturgical context. Although the final product will be a short video, this task requires a great deal of preparation and strategy, which is why the total value of this assessment is 30% of your overall mark.

2. **Contextual Analysis**
   Each student is required to write an essay of 1,800 words on one of the following topics:
   a) The cultural and political catalysts of the iconoclastic crisis in Byzantium and how these intersected with the theological discourse of sacred art.
   b) The liturgical significance of iconography, focusing on at least one well-known icon of the Orthodox tradition.
   c) The theological and spiritual significance of the icon of the Nativity of Christ and the Dormition of the Theotokos (compare and discuss).

   Students should show they can contextualise and assess at least one significant theme of sacred art by carefully considering any cultural, political and/or theological dimensions of the theme(s). The emphasis is on demonstrating skill in mounting a cogent argument and supporting it with evidence.

   A minimum requirement for the essay is 3 bibliographical titles. The essay should be in accordance with the standard scholarly requirements, as expressed in the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Assessment Tasks* and on Moodle: 'Reading, Writing, Thinking, and Communicating.' As a rule, students should remain close to the prescribed word limit, which includes footnotes but not the bibliography.

   The **marking criteria** for this essay are: capacity to accurately highlight main ideas and their connections (20%); identification and analysis of relevant primary and secondary sources (20%); contextualisation within broader history of iconography (30%)**;** critical thinking (20%); literary quality and consistency (10%).

3. **Major Essay**
   Each student is required to write a research essay of 2,400 words on one of the topics below or a topic to be selected in conversation with the lecturer. Three potential topics are:
   a. The symbolic language and spiritual significance of the icon of Christ's descent into Hades (the *Anastasis* icon).
   b. Continuity and change in the icon of the Holy Trinity by Rublev.

c. The timeless significance of Byzantine iconography in the liturgical life of the Orthodox church today.

In conversation with the lecturer, students can refine one of these topics to suit their interests or propose another topic. In writing this essay, students should show they can critically engage with the symbolic language and theological significance of icons for the modern ecclesial experience. The emphasis is on demonstrating skill in mounting a cogent argument and supporting it with evidence. Students are required to show evidence of wide reading and rely on primary and secondary sources.

A minimum requirement for the essay is 5 bibliographical titles. The essay should be in accordance with the standard scholarly requirements, as expressed in the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Assessment Tasks* and on Moodle: 'Reading, Writing, Thinking, and Communicating.' As a rule, students should remain close to the prescribed word limit, which includes footnotes but not the bibliography.

The **marking criteria** for this essay are: capacity to interpret key themes and their spiritual and/or theological significance (30%); identification and analysis of relevant primary and secondary sources (20%); understanding any relevant connections with the broader history of Byzantine art (20%); critical thinking (20%); literary quality and consistency (10%).

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## Course Unit Revision

This course unit booklet was last revised on 27 February 2024.

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# Extension Policy

In accordance with the policy of the Sydney College of Divinity, it is a requirement of a student's course unit that all assessment tasks be completed by the due dates set by the lecturer and published in the Course Unit Booklets. Late assessment tasks without an approved extension will attract an automatic penalty deduction of 5% of the marks available for the item of assessment for every day (including weekends and holidays), or part thereof, beyond the date and time of submission (or any extension granted).

Example: A student submits an assignment worth 50 marks four days late. Total mark available = 50. Penalty for being four days late = (5% of 50) x4 = 10-mark penalty. The student's original mark for the quality of their work is 40. The student's final mark will be reduced to 30 (40 – 10 = 30).

Assessment tasks submitted without an approved extension beyond 10 days after the due date will receive a zero mark and will NOT be annotated by the lecturer.

**Types of Extensions**

Lecturer's Extension
The lecturer may grant an extension of 1 to 7 days beyond the due date. An extension must be applied for in advance of the original due date. In cases of sudden serious illness or misadventure, the student may apply as soon as would be reasonably practical. Extensions of more than 7 days may only be granted by the Registrar.

Registrar's Extension
A Registrar's Extension must be applied for in advance of the original due date, or of the extended due date where a Lecturer's Extension has already been granted. A Registrar's Extension may provide up to 21 days of additional time beyond the original due date.

Faculty Board Extension
In exceptional circumstances, where the student's grade remains unresolved by the time of the end-of-semester Faculty Board meeting, the Board will determine whether to ascribe a unit grade of 'E' (Extension - with the possibility of any grade thereafter), or 'I' (Incomplete – with the final grade limited to a Pass only), or 'N' (Fail). The student will be invited by the Registrar to write an explanatory letter to the Board describing the exceptional circumstances. In making its determination, the Board will consider such things as supporting documentation, Faculty comments, the student's study load, and the student's level of engagement with the unit and overall academic track record. The student will be notified of the outcome within three (3) workings days of the meeting.

**Acceptable Grounds for an Extension**

An extension of an assessment task due date may be granted on the following grounds, generally understood to be beyond the student's control: illness or temporary disability (medical certificate); bereavement (funeral notice); unavoidable work commitments (letter from employer); accident (detailed account of incident); technical difficulties (screenshot or photo with detailed account of problem); family or personal circumstances or genuinely unavoidable commitments (detailed description).

**Unacceptable Grounds for an Extension**

The following are not ordinarily considered acceptable grounds for seeking an extension: where the student could reasonably be expected to avoid the circumstances that prevented timely submission; holiday arrangements including local, national and international travel; misreading the exam timetable; employment commitments unless the student is experiencing

financial hardship, has been refused leave, or has been directed to undertake unusual or extraordinary duties beyond their control; liturgical services or church-related activities. All Faculty members have such responsibilities too, both during and outside ordinary office hours including weekends; where it is a re-attempted assessment task.

At the end of a semester, no grade other than a 'Fail' will be ascribed by the Faculty Board to any unit where none of the assessment tasks have been completed.

## How to Apply for an Extension

With the Moodle home page for your unit, scroll down to the section labelled **Requesting an Extension**. It will typically be located below the Assessment Package and above the Week 1 topic / lecture.

Read the 'Extension Policy' and select the type of extension you wish to apply for: Lecturer's Extension or Registrar's Extension.

Complete the online Google form and upload supporting documents (e.g., medical certificate) if you have a Gmail account, or else complete the online form and send your supporting documents in a separate email to your Lecturer or to the Registrar, depending on the type of Extension.

Wait for a reply. Follow-up with an email if you have not received a response within 72hrs.

## May I Apply for an Extension after the Due Date?

Yes, but only if you were genuinely unable to apply before the due date due to serious illness or misadventure. In such cases, you should aim to do so within three (3) days of the due date and provide sufficient explanation and supporting documents.

## Additional Regulation(s)

A unit which is ascribed an Extension (E) grade, or an Incomplete (I) grade is considered to be an 'open' unit, with its final mark as yet unresolved. Any remaining assessment task(s) must be completed prior to the commencement of the subsequent semester.

If the remaining assessment task(s) are not completed prior to the subsequent semester, then the student's study load for the new semester will be reduced by one (1) unit for each 'open' unit from their previous semester. This reduction in a student's study load may affect eligibility for scholarship assistance provisions offered by St Andrew's and for government student allowance schemes (e.g. Austudy), both of which typically mandate a particular study load. If the student was enrolled in the final semester of their course, then any remaining assessment task(s) must be completed in order for the student to become eligible for graduation.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use or paraphrasing of another person's work, and the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. For more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, please refer to the College's website: http://www.sagotc.edu.au/policies/academic-misconduct.

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## Intellectual Property

The Course Unit Outline from which this Course Unit Booklet is derived is the property of the Sydney College of Divinity. The particular interpretation, amplification, and extension of the Course Unit Outline that expresses the theological values of the Member Institution and meets the needs of its stakeholder are the property of the Member Institution.