



T9291A The ‘Nicene Creed’



Semester Two, 2025

Teaching Staff:

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Consultation Times:	By appointment

T7291A The Nicene Creed

Semester Two, 2025

Unit weighting:	9 credit points
Mode of study:	Face to Face/ Synchronous and Asynchronous ZOOM.
Prerequisites:	T8101 Introduction to Theology
Corequisites:	Nil
Exclusions:	None

Scheduled Times and Venues: Friday, 25 July 2025, 9:30am—11:30am (P.K)
(all times are Sydney time) Friday, 1 August 2025, 8:00am—10:00am **(P.B) (via ZOOM)**
Friday, 8 August 2025, 8:00am—10:00am **(P.B) (via ZOOM)**

On-Campus Intensive Seminars

Prof. Peter Bouteneff, five intensive sessions

Thursday 21 August, 10:00am—1:00pm (P.B on campus)

Thursday 21 August, 5:00pm—8:00pm (P.B on campus)

Friday 22 August, **Symposium Day 1**, incl. Keynote #1 & #2

Saturday 23 August, **Symposium Day 2**, incl. Keynote #3

Saturday 23 August, 3:00pm—6:00pm (P.B on campus)

Sunday 24 August, 2:00pm—5:00pm (P.B on campus)

Friday, 5 September 2025, 8:00am—10:00am
(P.B) (via ZOOM)

Teaching Staff: **Prof. Peter Bouteneff**
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Learning Management System: <https://sagotc.elearn.net.au/>

Workload:	Weeks in Teaching Session:	12
	Timetabled hours/week:	3 hours / week
	Study and Assignments	9 hours personal study/week
	Total Demand Hours	143

Background and Context

The Nicene Creed holds a place of profound importance within the life of the Church, not only for its theological precision in affirming the divinity, unity, and particularity of Christ in relation to God the Father—proclaiming Him as "true God from true God, begotten not made, of one essence with the Father"—but also as a unifying symbol and authoritative summary of the Christian faith. It emerged from the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (AD 325) as a response to heretical distortions, particularly Arianism, and was later expanded at the Council of Constantinople (AD 381), thereby securing the Church's commitment to the full truth of the Trinity. Beyond its doctrinal clarity, the Creed serves as a shared confession that transcends time and geography, uniting believers across the ages and throughout the world in a common proclamation of faith. Recited in the Divine Liturgy and in personal prayer, it continues to shape the Church's theological consciousness and liturgical identity, safeguarding the integrity of the apostolic teaching and offering a concise yet rich expression of the mystery of salvation.

Curriculum Objectives

The postgraduate course unit examines the major doctrines found in the fourth century 'Nicene Creed' with a view to demonstrating the slow emergence of what came to be defined as pro-Nicene orthodoxy. In so doing students will have been immersed deeply in those doctrines which lie at the very heart of the Christian faith and been exposed to the perennial power latent in that ancient text.

Contribution to Graduate Attributes

This unit contributes to the attainment of the Course Outcomes in alignment with the distinctives of the Specific Discipline Outcomes, as follows:

Specific Discipline Outcomes	<i>analyze the historically significant development of Christian theological and ethical thought and liturgical practice</i>	<i>articulate and defend clear statements of theological and ethical belief and practice</i>	<i>engage with appropriate levels of scholarship in the critical reading of primary and secondary texts</i>
Course Outcomes			
<i>broad and coherent body of biblical and theological knowledge</i>	✓		
<i>skills to review, analyse and act on information in the exercise of critical thinking and judgement</i>	✓		✓
<i>communicate a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas</i>		✓	

Learning Outcomes

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

1. display a perceptive understanding of the development of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed;
2. demonstrate thorough knowledge of pro-Nicene theology;
3. evaluate recent scholarly literature on Nicene orthodoxy;
4. Critically analyse the major doctrines formulated in the Creed within the broader historico-theological phenomenon of the time;
5. assess the relevance of the creed to contemporary Christian.

During this course unit, students may acquire the following threshold concept. This concept is fundamental to a proper understanding of the unit or course. It is essential for further progress in the discipline. It is often troublesome for students.

Nicene theology forms the bedrock of Orthodox theology today, grounding its understanding of the Trinity, Christology, and the divine economy in the definitive confession that the Son is consubstantial with the Father. This theological framework continues to shape the Church's liturgy, doctrine, and spiritual life, ensuring continuity with the apostolic faith and the witness of the early Councils.

Course Schedule (Times according to Sydney Time AEST) and Readings

- Session 1: Friday 25 July 2025, 9:30am—11.30am (Philip Kariatlis)
Requirements of the Course Unit & The Nicene Creed as a Summary, Statement Symbol and Standard of Faith
- Cyril Hovorun, *Eastern Christianity in Texts*, Chapter 4, parts 7 & 8. (pages 408-427)
- Session 2: Friday 1 August 2025, 8.00am—10.00am (Prof. Peter Bouteneff) (via ZOOM)
The Nicene Faith—Knowing Christ
- Peter Bouteneff, *Sweeter Than Honey: Orthodox Thinking on Dogma and Truth*, Chapter 6
- Session 3: Friday 8 August 2025, 8:00am—11:00pm (Prof. Peter Bouteneff) (via ZOOM)
Christ and Creation
- Georges Florovsky, "Creation and Creaturehood," in his *Creation and Redemption*.
 - Dumitru Staniloae, "Creation: The Visible World," in *The Experience of God, Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. 2, 1-20.
- Session 4: Thursday 21 August 2025, 10:00am—1:00pm (Prof. Peter Bouteneff) (on campus)
Christ and the Father

- Peter Bouteneff, “What do you Think of the Christ: Whose Son is He?” – Nature and Provenance’, *SVTQ* 61 (2017), 253-272.

Session 5: Thursday 21 August 2025, 5:00pm—8:00pm (Prof. Peter Bouteneff) (on campus)

Christ and the Trinity

- Thomas Hopko, “The Trinity,” in McGinn, et al., eds, *Christian Spirituality I*, 260-276.
- Christos Yannaras, “God as Trinity,” in *The Elements of Faith*.

[Symposium Day 1, incl. Keynote #1 & #2](#)

[Symposium Day 2, incl. Keynote #3](#)

Session 6: Saturday 23 August 2025, 3:00pm—6:00pm (Prof. Peter Bouteneff) (on campus)

Christ and Salvation

- Peter Bouteneff, “Christ and Salvation,” in Theokritoff/Corran, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Theology*, 93-106.

Session 7: Sunday 24 August 2025, 2:00pm—5:00pm (Prof. Peter Bouteneff) (on campus)

Christ and the Church

- Peter Bouteneff, “Ecclesiology and Ecumenism,” in Augustine Casiday, ed., *The Orthodox Christian World* (Routledge, 2012), 369-382

Session 8: Friday 5 September 2025, 8.00am—10.00am

(Prof. Peter Bouteneff) (via ZOOM)

Christ and Death and the Age to Come

- Seraphim Rose, “The Aerial Toll Houses,” in *The Soul After Death*, 64-87.
- Lazaar Puhalo, *The Soul, The Body, and Death*, chapters 3, 5, 6.

Assessment

All students must complete all assessment requirements as set, and conform with AUCD Policy requirements.

Assessment tasks are designed both to help students attain the unit outcomes and to enable teachers to assess student attainment. In this unit, the required assessment tasks will enable students to demonstrate how successfully they can:

Assessment Schedule

Type of Assessment Task	Value (%)	Date due	Unit Learning Outcome(s) assessed
1. Show capacity to critically assess the significance of relevant literature (Essay)	40%	19 August 2025	1, 2 and 3
2. Analyse one of the doctrines formulated in the Creed and evaluate	60%	21 October 2025	4 and 5

its existential and salvific significance for today (Essay)			
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Detailed information on assessment tasks and assessment standards

Assessment Item 1

Essay 1

Due date: Tuesday, 19 August, 2025

Value: 40%

Length: 2400 words

The Development of the Homoousion: Historical Trajectory and Theological Debate:

Critically assess the role and significance of the term *homoousion* (“of one essence”) in the Nicene Creed. How have various scholars interpreted the origins, theological function, and reception of this term in the 4th-century debates and beyond?

Suggested themes for discussion:

- Patristic reception (e.g., Athanasius, the Cappadocians)
- Debates on semantic and ontological meanings
- Modern reassessments of *homoousion* (e.g., Ayres, Anatolios, Bouteneff)

Marking Criteria:

Criteria	Weight
Demonstrated knowledge of historical and theological context	25%
Critical engagement with relevant scholarly literature	30%
Clarity and coherence of theological argument	20%
Use of primary sources and integration with secondary scholarship	15%
Style, referencing, and academic writing	10%

Assessment Item 2

Essay 2

Due date: Tuesday 21 October 2025

Value: 60%

Length: 3600 words

Write an essay on one of the following topic:

1. The Incarnation of the Word

“He came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human.”
Explore the meaning of the term Incarnation found in the Creed and also its salvific and existential implications.

2. The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

“He was crucified... suffered and was buried. And on the third day He rose again.”
Discuss the soteriological centrality of Christ’s death and resurrection. How is this doctrine to be understood and lived in a world increasingly marked by suffering, secularism, and loss of hope?

3. The Ascension and the Coming Judgment

“He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.”
Analyse the theological and existential implications of Christ’s ascension and promised return. What does this doctrine offer the Church’s witness in a time of injustice, moral ambiguity, and eschatological confusion?

4. The Four Marks of the Church ‘One Holy Catholic and Apostolic’

Critically examine the *notae ecclesiae*—the four marks of the Church—as articulated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. How have these attributes been understood and developed in the theological tradition, and how do they continue to shape ecclesial identity and mission in the context of contemporary challenges such as ecumenism, secularism, and internal ecclesial division? Engage with both patristic sources and modern theological reflections in your response.

5. The Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the Age to Come

“I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.”
Analyse the eschatological vision presented in the Creed. How might this hope shape Christian anthropology, ethical responsibility, and the meaning of eternal life in the contemporary world?

IMPORTANT:

The purpose of an essay is to demonstrate an awareness of what **other publications have argued** and then to bring your own understanding into dialogue with these. For this reason, you will be expected to identify quotes and to engage with primary and secondary sources pointing out why they are significant and in what way they add to your argument.

Students are not to use **web based material**.

Learning Resources

Primary and Patristic Sources

Athanasius of Alexandria. *On the Incarnation.* Trans. John Behr. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011.

Basil of Caesarea. *On the Holy Spirit.* Trans. Stephen M. Hildebrand. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011.

Gregory of Nazianzus. *Theological Orations*. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7*. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14*. Edited by Henry R. Percival. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

St Cyril of Alexandria. *On the Unity of Christ*. Trans. John McGuckin. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995.

Representative Reference

Alfeyev, Hilarion. *Orthodox Christianity, Volume 2: Doctrine and Teaching of the Orthodox Church*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2012.

Andrew Louth. *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*. London: SPCK, 2013.

Ayres, Lewis. *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Anatolios, Khaled. *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

Beeley, Christopher A. *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Behr, John. *The Nicene Faith, Vols. 1 & 2*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004.

Bouteneff, Peter. *Sweeter Than Honey: Orthodox Thinking on Dogma and Truth*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006.

Bouteneff, Peter. *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

Calhoun, Robert. *Scripture, Creed, Theology: Lectures on the History of Christian Doctrine in the First Centuries*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.

Edwards, Mark. *We Believe in the Crucified and Risen Lord*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.

Hildebrand, Stephen M. *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006.

Johnson, Luke. *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003.

Lossky, Vladimir. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997.

McGuckin, John Anthony. *We Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ*. Ancient Christian Doctrine Series, Vol. 2. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.

McGuckin, John Anthony. *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

Meyendorff, John. *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. 2nd ed. New York: Fordham University Press, 1983.

Rausch, Thomas. *I Believe in God: A Reflection on the Apostles' Creed*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008.

Siecienski, A. Edward. *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Twomey, Vincent, and Janet Rutherford, eds. *The Holy Spirit in the Fathers of the Church: Proceedings of the Seventh International Patristic Conference*. Dublin/Portland: Four Courts Press, 2010.

Course Unit Revision

This course unit booklet was last revised in July 2025.

St Andrew's Marking Criteria for Written Assignments

<i>Criteria</i>	F	P	Cr	D	HD
Relevance and Task fulfilment Relevance to task question; Relevance to unit materials; Identifying key issues	Insufficient number of elements addressed. Little or no evidence of relevancy. Inadequate display of knowledge and understanding of key concepts.	Adequate number of elements addressed, mostly relevantly. Evidence of limited but satisfactory knowledge and understanding of key concepts to attain the outcomes.	Most elements satisfactorily addressed. Relevant response and evidence of extensive knowledge and good comprehension of key concepts.	Almost all of the elements substantially addressed. Highly relevant and excellent response incorporating distinctive insight with depth and subtlety. Evidence of very high level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts.	All elements of writing task comprehensively addressed. Highly relevant and outstanding response incorporating highly distinctive insight with depth and subtlety. Evidence of superior knowledge and understanding of key concepts.
Argument and organisation Logical and cogent argumentation; Coherence and cohesion;	The argument in response to task question not adequately articulated in the introduction and not	The argument in response to task question adequately articulated in the introduction and	The argument in response to task question clearly articulated in the introduction and developed	The argument in response to task question very well articulated in the introduction, extensively	The argument in response to task question excellently articulated in the introduction, comprehensively developed in the

essay and paragraph structure	adequately developed in the body paragraphs. Insufficient ability to construct logical argument and to express ideas clearly and succinctly within the structure of academic paragraphs. Inadequate summary of key argument in the conclusion. Inability to construct coherent argument.	developed in the body paragraphs in a sequence of ideas. Rudimentary ability to construct coherent patterns of argument and to express ideas clearly and succinctly and in a logical sequence within the structure of academic paragraphs. Adequate summary of key argument in the conclusion. Ability to construct sound argument based on evidence.	in the body paragraphs in a logical sequence of ideas. Good ability to construct coherent patterns of argument and to express ideas clearly and succinctly and in a logical sequence within the structure of academic paragraphs. Good summary of key argument in the conclusion. Ability to construct well-reasoned and coherent argument based on discriminating use of evidence.	developed in the body paragraphs as a logical sequence of ideas. Highly developed ability to construct coherent patterns of argument and to express ideas clearly and succinctly and in a logical sequence within the structure of academic paragraphs. Effective summary of key argument in the conclusion. Some evidence of imagination, originality and independent thought.	body paragraphs as a logical sequence of ideas. Superior ability to construct coherent patterns of argument and to express ideas cohesively and succinctly and in a logical sequence within the structure of academic paragraphs. Excellent summary of key argument in the conclusion. Sustained evidence of imagination, originality and independent thought.
<i>Analysis of primary source</i> Use of and engagement with primary texts	Inadequate selection and use of source material to support argument. Lack of detailed analysis and display of ability to identify key message and themes of text.	Satisfactory selection and use of source material to develop and support argument with some detailed analysis. Adequate ability to identify key message and themes of text.	Good selection and use of source material to develop and support clear argument with detailed analysis. Highly developed ability to identify key message and themes of text.	Very good selection and use of source material to develop and support critical argument with detailed analysis. Very highly developed ability to identify key message and themes of text.	Excellent selection and use of source material to develop and support critical argument with detailed analysis. Outstanding ability to identify key message and themes of text.
<i>Secondary sources</i> Selection and engagement with scholarly works	Inadequate selection and use of scholarly works. Secondary	Adequate selection and use of relevant scholarly works. Some	Good selection and use of relevant scholarly works. High level of critical	Very good selection and use of relevant scholarly works. Very	Excellent selection and use of relevant scholarly works. Sophisticated critical

	sources are irrelevant. Little or no engagement.	engagement with secondary sources to develop argument.	engagement with secondary sources to develop argument.	high level of critical engagement with secondary sources to develop argument.	engagement with secondary sources to develop argument.
Presentation Written expression; Presentation according to academic standards; academic referencing; word limit	Unsatisfactory standard of written expression and lack of accuracy in the use of academic English. Unsatisfactory presentation and inadequate ability to use Chicago style of referencing. Possible issues with academic integrity and compliance with word limit. Possible presence of AI generated content.	Satisfactory standard of written expression and adequate accuracy in the use of academic English. Satisfactory presentation and adequate ability to use Chicago style of referencing. Possible minor issues with academic integrity and compliance with word limit.	High standard of written expression and mostly accurate and effective use of language in academic style. Good presentation and use of Chicago style of referencing. Adherence to academic integrity and compliance with word limit.	Very good written expression and accurate and effective use of language in academic style. Very good presentation and use of Chicago style of referencing. Adherence to academic integrity and compliance with word limit.	Excellent written expression and sustained accurate and sophisticated use of language in academic style. Exemplary presentation and excellent use of Chicago style of referencing. Adherence to academic integrity and compliance with word limit.

Extension Policy

1. 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.
2. 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) x 4 = 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).

3. 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.

4. Types of Extensions

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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) working days of the meeting.

5. 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:

- a. illness or temporary disability (medical certificate);
- b. bereavement (funeral notice)
- c. unavoidable work commitments (letter from employer)
- d. accident (detailed account of incident)
- e. technical difficulties (screenshot or photo with detailed account of problem)
- f. family or personal circumstances or genuinely unavoidable commitments (detailed description).

6. Unacceptable Grounds for an Extension

The following are not ordinarily considered acceptable grounds for seeking an extension:

- a. Where the student could reasonably be expected to avoid the circumstances that prevented timely submission.
 - b. Holiday arrangements including local, national and international travel.
 - c. Misreading the exam timetable.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Liturgical services or church-related activities. All Faculty members have such responsibilities too, both during and outside ordinary office hours including weekends.
 - f. Where it is a re-attempted assessment task.
7. 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.

8. How to Apply for an Extension

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Read the 'Extension Policy'.
- 8.3 Select the type of extension you wish to apply for: Lecturer's Extension or Registrar's Extension.
- 8.4 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.

9. Additional Regulation(s)

- a. You may apply for an extension after the due date only if you were genuinely unable to apply before the due date because of serious illness or unexpected 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 effect 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.
- d. 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. In this Unit the use of AI to generate ideas or text is also considered plagiarism and will be penalised in the same way. For more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct refer to the *Academic Integrity Policy* on Moodle.
