

ECUMENICAL CATHOLICITY: THE OLD CATHOLIC WITNESS

PROGRAMME

12 July 2026 – 17 July 2026

 OUD-KATHOLIEK SEMINARIE
summerschool
UTRECHT



WELCOME



Prof. Dr. Peter-Ben Smit
Course director

Marian Brand, BA
Course coordinator

Dear visitor!

I'm very glad that you're interested in our summer school in Old Catholic theology. Since 2012 we have been welcoming students to Utrecht to explore Old Catholic theology together. More than just taking a course, the experience has been an experience of intercultural, ecumenical, even interreligious and intergenerational fellowship for all participants, students and professors alike.

Because of the success of what is now our "classic", the introductory course Old Catholic Theology: Faith, History and Praxis we will continue to offer it. It is a unique opportunity to acquaint yourself with the basic tenets and key voices in Old Catholic theology.

If you want to go beyond the basics, then the advanced course is the right choice for you. In 2026, this course is titled Ecumenical Catholicity: The Old Catholic Witness. It was first offered in 2023 and the enthusiastic feedback that we received encouraged us to offer it again this year.

Of course, you can also choose to combine both courses in one 'track' - two weeks of full immersion in Old Catholic theology! This even comes with a discount on your course fee.

We're delighted that the faculty of the Old Catholic Seminary at Utrecht University is again offering its time and talent for the summer schools. They include some of the best and brightest minds in Old Catholic theology, such as The Rev. Dr. Mattijs Ploeger, dean of the Seminary, who will be lecturing on liturgy and systematic theology and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Dick Schoon, Bishop of Haarlem, who will lecture on church history. Also, we're honoured that Prof. Dr. Andreas Krebs, a theologian with a strong interest in queer and ecological approaches, will visit us again from the Old Catholic Institute of Bonn University.

Last but certainly not least, excursions are also included into both courses, for instance to St. Gertrud's Cathedral, seat of the Archbishop of Utrecht; to the leading museum of religious art and history in the Netherlands, the Catharijneconvent; to the hidden history of (Old) Catholicism in Amsterdam during its suppression, and to the medieval cathedral of Utrecht, the Dom Church.

As course director, I'd be very happy to be able to welcome you to join us in Utrecht in 2026. This is your chance to be part of a unique community of learners in Old Catholic theology. While you connect with participants from all over the globe, you will engage intensively with Old Catholic systematic theology, liturgy, history, spirituality, ecumenical relations, canon law, and praxis.

If you ask yourself: is this for me? the answer is probably: yes, it is! Courses are suitable for theologians, clergy and interested lay persons alike. Please feel free to get in touch with me through p.b.a.smit@uu.nl should you have any questions.

Oh, and before I forget, there's one final piece of good news: despite the rise in prices all over the world, we've decided to keep our course fee the same!

With every good wish,

Prof. Dr. Peter-Ben Smit, course director

P.S. Given the positive feedback on the 'in person' experience of 2023 and 2024, we will continue to teach our classes physically in 2025. As participants in 2023 told us, this provides by far the best conditions for creating an intense community of learners and a direct encounter with the Dutch context.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The advanced course 'Ecumenical Catholicity: The Old Catholic Witness' focuses on the ecumenical commitment, witness, highs and lows of ecumenical theology of the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. These churches are part of an exceptional global communion of communions that includes the European Old Catholic churches, the churches of the Anglican Communion, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, the Philippine Independent Church, and the Church of Sweden. The Old Catholic Churches also maintain a very active role in local, national and international bodies, such as the World Council of the Churches and the Conference of Churches in Europe.

The key question that the course asks, is how and why this life in ecumenical communion came about and what its impact is on catholic theology in the Old Catholic tradition. Taught by the staff of the Old Catholic Seminary in Utrecht and invited experts, the course answers this query in four ways:

- by tracking the growth, characteristics and challenges of this worldwide network;
- by exploring the theological and liturgical exchange and enrichment that takes place through life in communion;
- by engaging with dimensions of lived ecumenical catholicity in praxis are explored in relation to churches and communities in Utrecht and beyond;
- by giving attention to the missionary, diaconal, and public theological aspects of being church in ecumenical communion.

The course is shaped as an ecumenical community of learners, with ample opportunity for informal exchange and fellowship and for exploring the ancient episcopal city of Utrecht with its rich history.

The course is suitable for those with a grounding in Old Catholic theology, either through attending the course 'Old Catholic Theology: Faith, History and Praxis' or studies of Old Catholic theology in other settings. In case of doubt, please contact the course director, prof. dr. Peter-Ben Smit, p.b.a.smit@uu.nl. To combine both courses, you can apply to the track 'Old Catholic Theology: Contexts and Calling' which will give you a reduction of €50 on the total costs.

Target audience

The course is suitable for students of theology interested in Old Catholicism and ecumenism; Clergy and theologians interested in Old Catholicism and ecumenism; Laypersons with formal or informal theological training interested in Old Catholicism and ecumenism.

As it is an advanced course, evidence of prior (academic) studies in Old Catholic theology, which may include the introductory summer school course, or an equivalent is required.

Aim of the course

Upon completing the course:

1. Students will be familiar with the historical emergence of Old Catholic ecumenical commitment and relationships
2. Students will have gained insight into the theological dimensions of Old Catholic ecumenism
3. Students will be able to relate the historical and ecumenical dimensions of the Old Catholic tradition to their own position

Study load

4 contact hours/day; about 40 hours of preparatory self-study will be required.

Costs

Course fee: € 425
Housing € 275

Application deadline

1st of May 2025

LECTURERS (a.o.)



The Rev. Prof. Dr.
Peter-Ben Smit

Prof. Dr. Peter-Ben Smit holds the Chair of Ancient Catholic Church Structures at Utrecht University, on behalf of the Old Catholic Seminary. Lecturer in Biblical and Ecumenical Theology at the Old Catholic Seminary in Utrecht.

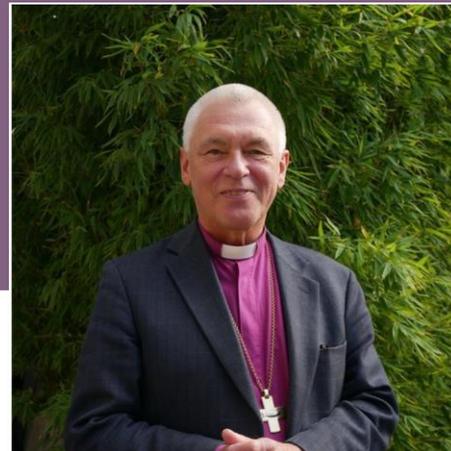
Ecumenism



The Rev. Dr. Mattijs
Ploeger

Dr. Mattijs Ploeger is the dean of the Old Catholic Seminary in Utrecht. Lecturer in Systematic Theology and Liturgy.

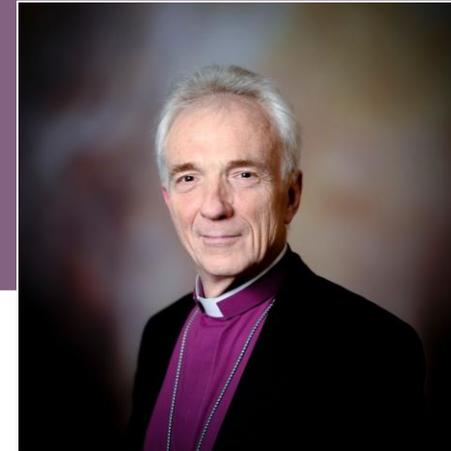
Systematic Theology
and Liturgy



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Dirk
Jan (Dick) Schoon

Dr. Dick Schoon is lecturer in Church History at the Old Catholic Seminary in Utrecht. He is also the Bishop of Haarlem.

Church History



The Most Rev. Dr. Joris
Vercammen

Dr. Joris Vercammen was Archbishop of Utrecht from 2000 until 2020, he served concurrently as lecturer in ecclesiology at the Old Catholic Seminary, of which he also was the rector from 1996-2000.

Ecclesiology

LECTURERS (a.o.)



Rev. Can. Leonie van
Straaten

Rev. Can. Leonie van Straaten is an assistant pastor in the Old Catholic parish of St. Mary Magdalene in Eindhoven, chaplain to the Old Catholic Seminary in Utrecht, and board member of the ecumenical community De Hooge Berkt in Bergeijk.



Rev. Dcn. Thelma
Schoon

Thelma Schoon works as a youth pastor for the Old Catholic Church and also teaches religion at a high school. In 2023 she was ordained as a deacon and named 'Young Theologian of the Netherlands', in which role she brought a theological voice into the public domain.



The Rev. Dr. Frank
Ewerszumrode

The Rev. Dr. Frank Ewerszumrode served as interim professor for Systematic Theology at the *Europa-Universität Flensburg*. Holding both a doctorate and a *Habilitation* in theology, he currently serves as the parish priest of the Old Catholic parish of Essen, Germany.

Church History

PROGRAMME PART I

Time	Location	Description	Lecturer
Saturday, 11 July			
12.00-18.00	Key pick-up (for new participants)	You will find the exact key pick-up location in the pre-departure information, which becomes available after you have paid the course fee.	
Sunday, 12 July			
10.00	Mass at Gertrude's Cathedral, Willemsplantsoen 2, Utrecht	Attendance of Mass and subsequent coffee hour with the local priest and parishioners.	The Rev. Dr. Mattijs Ploeger and The Rev. Canon Louis Runhaar (Parish priest)
12.00	Informal lunch.	Mass will be followed by an informal lunch. Lunch will be provided.	
Monday, 13 July			
10.00-12.00	Introduction. Drift 27, room 0.72	Introductory Seminar: Ecumenical Catholicity	Prof. Dr. Peter-Ben Smit
12.00-13.30	Lunch Break		
14.00-16.00	Lecture. Drift 27, room 0.72	The Emergence of Old Catholic Ecumenism: Historical Perspectives	Rt. Rev. Dr. Dick Schoon
16.00-19.00	Afternoon/Dinner Break		
19.00-21.30	Garden at Gertrude's Cathedral	Old Catholic youth ministry in secular and virtual spaces	Rev. Dcn. Thelma Schoon
Tuesday, 14 July			
10.00-12.00	Lecture. Drift 27, room 0.72	Salvation, Atonement, Theosis: An ecumenically inspired overview on various concepts of salvation	The Rev. Dr. Frank Ewerszumrode
12.00-13.30	Lunch Break		
14.00-16.00	Seminar. Drift 27, room 0.72	Bread and/or the Body of Christ?: The debate on Christ's presence in the Eucharist	The Rev. Dr. Frank Ewerszumrode

PROGRAMME PART II

Time	Location	Description	Lecturer
Wednesday, 15 July			
10.00-12.00	Lecture. Drift 27, room 0.72	Becoming Yourself Through Dialogue: Old Catholic Systematic Theology in Its Ecumenical Context	The Rev. Dr. Mattijs Ploeger
12.00-14.00	Lunch Break		
14.00-16.00	Lecture. Drift 27, room 0.72	The Union of Utrecht and Global Ecumenism: Charism and Calling	The Most Rev. Dr. Joris Vercammen (Archbishop Emeritus of Utrecht)
16.00-19.00	Afternoon/dinner break		
19.00-21.30	Excursion. Dom Church Utrecht	Explorations of the Utrecht Dom Church	Rev. Willem Roskam
Thursday, 16 July			
10.00-12.00	Lecture. Drift 27, room 0.72	Celebrating Church: The Ecumenical Shape and the Ecumenical Contribution of Old Catholic Liturgy	The Rev. Dr. Mattijs Ploeger
12.00-14.00	Lunch Break		
14.00-16.00	Seminar. Drift 27, room 0.72	Believing in and Living as the Church of All Times and All Places: The Witness of the Hooge Berkt Community	Rev. Can. Leonie van Straaten
Friday, 17 July			
10.00-12.00	Lecture. Kappittelroom Gertrude's Cathedral	The Future of Ecumenical Catholicity: For the Life of the World	The Rev. Prof. Dr. Peter-Ben Smit
12.00-14.00	Informal lunch.	Lunch will be provided.	



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more INFORMATION or to APPLY for this course check:

[Ecumenical Catholicity: The Old Catholic Witness](#)

Not attended the FIRST course yet?

[Old Catholic Theology: Faith, History and Praxis](#)

Applying for BOTH? Book both courses as TRACK for discount:

[Old Catholic Theology: Contexts and Calling](#)

Scholarships:

For information regarding financial assistance, please contact the course director at P.B.A.Smit@uu.nl.

Disclaimer:

The programme is subject to change should unforeseen circumstances arise.