

Curriculum Vitae

John Haitham A. Issak, Ph.D.

Affiliate Associate Professor of Historical Theology and Patristics
Director of Centre for Patristics and Early Christianity
McMaster Divinity College
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Hamilton, ON, L8S 4K1, Canada
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Education

- Doctor of Philosophy (Christian Theology) (Ph.D.)
McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON, 2018
“The Spirit of Truth: Johannine Pneumatology in the Letters of Athanasius to Serapion”
- Diploma in Eastern Christian Studies (Dip ECS.)
University of Toronto, St. Michael College, 2008
- Master of Theological Studies (MTS)
University of Toronto, St. Michael College, 2006
- Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Theology (BA)
University of Athens, Greece, Department of Social Theology, 1999
- Diploma in Theology (Dip. Th.)
Syriac Seminary in Nineveh, Iraq, 1993

Academic Appointments: MDC

- Lecturer in Patristic and Syriac 2023–2026
- Associate Professor of Historical Theology and Patristics 2026–Present
- Director of Centre for Patristics and Early Christianity 2026–Present

Current Academic Supervision

- Secondary Supervisor
 - Paul Robinson (Ph.D., MDC.)
 - Djuro Samac (Ph.D., MDC.)
 - Scott Barth (Ph.D., MDC.)

Teaching Experience

McMaster Divinity College, 2023–Present

- Syriac Language 1
- Syriac Language 2
- Ephrem the Syriac: A Theologian of Hymns
- The Holy Spirit in the Early Church
- Early Christian Spirituality
- Athanasius of Alexandria: Defender of Faith

The Pappas Patristic Institute

- Teaching Fellow: The Pappas Patristic Institute. The Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, June 25–29, 2018
- Teaching Fellow: The Pappas Patristic Institute, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, July 30–August 4, 2017
- Teaching Fellow in Training: The Pappas Patristic Institute. The Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, July 17–22, 2016
- Teaching: Syriac Seminary in Damascus, Syria (a dialect of Aramaic), Greek language and Patristics, 2000–2001
- Teaching: Syriac Seminary in Nineveh, Iraq, New Testament and Syriac, 1999–2000

Director

- The Syriac Orthodox Seminary, Nineveh, Iraq, 1999–2000
- The Centre for Patristics and Early Christianity in MDC, 2026–Present

Academic Papers/Presentations

- Defending Christ: Celebrating 1700 Years of Nicaea. Redeemer College. October 3–4, 2025. (St. Ephrem the Syriac and the Nicene Term *ὁμοούσιος*)
- The graduate student conference: The Centre for Patristics and Early Christianity, MDC. February 1, 2024 (Syriac Patristics: Ephrem: A Theologian of Hymns)
- Theological Research Seminar: McMaster Divinity College. November 22, 2023 (Athanasius' interpretation of Amos 4:13 & 1Timothy 5:21)

- Early Christianity: Transitions, Continuities. McMaster Divinity College. November 15, 2023. (Athanasius of Alexandria and Ephrem the Syriac)
- New Horizons in Early Christian Studies. University of Toronto. March 26–27, 2021 (St. Ephrem the Syrian and the Arians: Hymns on Faith)
- Canadian Society for Syriac Studies (CSSS) University of Toronto, November 9, 2019 (The Concept of the Eucharist in St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Ephrem the Syriac)
- The Pappas Patristic Institute. The Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, conference, February 28–March 2, 2019 (Medicine of immortality: The Eucharist in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch)
- The Pappas Patristic Institute. The Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, conference, March 1–3, 2018 (Amos 4:13 & 1Tim 5:21 in the letters of Athanasius to Serapion)
- The Pappas Patristic Institute. The Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, conference, March 2–4, 2017 (Symbolic Theology: Ephrem the Syriac)
- Canadian Evangelical Theological Association. University of Calgary, May 29, 2016 (The Church Fathers and Culture: The Struggle of Christians ‘the New Community’ in the Early Church)

Lectures

- St. Behnam Syriac Orthodox Church, Mississauga, ON, January 14, 2017 (Hope–Eternal Life–Promises of God)
- Syriac Youth Global Gathering (SYGG), Sweden, July 30–August 4, 2019 (Build on Him: Matthew 16:16)
- St. Behnam Syriac Orthodox Church, The Philo’s Project Group. Mississauga, ON, May 4, 2019 (History of the Syriac Orthodox Church)
- St. Behnam Syriac Orthodox Church, Mississauga, ON, January 14, 2017 (The Eucharist in the thought of Ignatius of Antioch)

Publishing

Books

- The Spirit of Truth: Johannine Pneumatology in the Letters of Athanasius to Serapion. September 12, 2023.

Articles

- “The Concept of the Eucharist in St. Ignatius and St. Ephrem”
Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies (CSSS), vol. 20, pp. 78–88, Gorgias Press. 2020.
- “Litany Christianity World Christianity”
Article for the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* (EBR), Vol. 16, Berlin. Germany. December 13, 2018.
- “Eyewitness Reflections”
The Globalization of Christianity: Implications for Christian Ministry and Theology. Edited by Gordon L. Heath & Steven M. Studebaker. 2014.

Translations

- Several letters of Timothy I of Baghdad from Syriac into English
- The Syriac church history titled “The Syrians: Faith and Civilization” from Arabic into English—five volumes

Editor Responsibility

- Editor of the Patristic Theology Journal, MDC, 2026–Present

Languages

- Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic)
- English
- Greek
- Arabic
- Having a good knowledge of French

Scholarships

- University of Athens, Greece (1994–1999)

Societies

- Member of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies (CSSS)
- Member of the Society for Biblical Literature (SBL)

Pastoral Work, 2001–2020

- Pastoral ministry
Syriac Orthodox Church, Hamilton, and GTA 2001–2020

Youth Ministry Program

- Summer youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, August 31–September 2, 2019
- Winter youth retreat
Mount Mary Retreat Centre, Ancaster, ON, February 1–3, 2019
- Summer youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, September 1–3, 2018
- Winter youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, February 17–19, 2018
- Youth leaders retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, March 1–3, 2018
- Summer youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, September 2–4, 2017
- Winter youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, February 18–20, 2017
- Summer youth retreat
Nottawasaga Inn Resort and Conference Centre, Alliston, ON, September 3–5, 2016
- Summer youth retreat
YMCA Geneva Park, Orillia, ON, July 30–August 1, 2016
- Winter youth retreat
Beaverton, Brock, ON, February 19–21, 2016
- Summer youth retreat
Horseshoe Resort, Barrie, ON, September 5–7, 2015
- Summer youth retreat
Nottawasaga Inn Resort and Conference Centre, Alliston, ON, August 2–4, 2014
- Summer youth retreat
Nottawasaga Inn Resort and Conference Center, Alliston, ON, August 3–5, 2013

- Summer youth retreat
Nottawasaga Inn Resort and Conference Center, Alliston, ON, August 31–September 2, 2012.
- Summer youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, July 30–August 1, 2011
- Youth day
University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus, ON, May 28, 2011
- Winter youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, February 19–21, 2011
- Summer youth retreat
Coptic Monastery, Mono, ON, September–6, 2010
- Youth day
University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus, ON, May 15, 2010
- Summer youth retreat
Mount Alverno Retreat Center, Orangeville, ON, September 11–13, 2009

Teaching Syriac Language Online via Zoom

- From May 1, 2020, to October 10, 2020. (Church)

Media Engagement: TV Program

- ABN Channel: Aramaic Broadcasting Network, Michigan, USA, 2010