The Moscow Times
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Russian University Students Schooled on Patriotism by Orthodox Priest

December 14, 2016



Dmitry Polushin **nios.ru**

Law students in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk have been forced to attend lectures on patriotism by a Russian Orthodox priest.

Regular classes at the Novosibirsk Institute of Law were replaced with lectures given by local Archpriest Dmitry Polushin who spoke about "Russia's spiritual heritage," the Taiga.info news site reported.

Polushin urged the audience to have faith in Russian President Vladimir Putin, students claimed. They said the lectures also condemned homosexuality, "revolution" and "the turmoil in Ukraine."

Polushin, who heads the archdiocese's cooperation with the armed forces, police and Cossacks, claimed that patriotism was a "spiritual and moral concept" which needed a priest's guidance.

The archpriest said that understanding patriotism was of vital importance to future lawyers.

“This country is called Russia, and the primary source of law there was a set of Byzantine Canon Law,” he told Taiga.info.

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The university defended the lectures, saying that they were part of a national drive to prevent extremism.

Institute Director Lydia Chumakov said her students faced a, “slew of threats spreading extremist ideas."

“President Vladimir Putin defines patriotism as one of the most important national ideologies,” she told Taiga.info.

Russian officials are considering introducing classes dedicated to Orthodox Christian culture into Russian schools, local media reported last month.

Under the new curriculum, teachers would be expected to cover subjects including "moral culture in the Orthodox family” and “the Christian warrior.” Older students would be expected to describe different church bells, name the seven Ecumenical councils, and use the Orthodox calendar.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/12/14/russian-university-students-schooled-on-patriotism-by-orthodox-priest-a56524