Approaches to the Study of Religion: BCRE06

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture Hours
Lecturer: Prof. Alexandra Grieser (griesera@tcd.ie/ext. 4714)

Module Description:
This module introduces the Academic Study of Religion in two steps. First, it gives an overview of the history of studying religion beyond religious criticism or affirmation, and how the development of this discipline has been deeply embedded in the European history of religion and modernisation. Secondly, it is demonstrated that studying religion as a cultural phenomenon means to study how religion is interrelated with possibly all aspects of human life, and that diverse approaches are needed to understand the role of religion in different cultures.
Therefore, the course will provide an introductory understanding of “classical” approaches such as the sociology, the anthropology and the psychology of religion, and of more recent concepts such as the economy or the aesthetics of religion, as well. The essay assignment will be linked to some “fieldwork” in order to get in touch with religion as a “lived” phenomenon.

Indicative Reading:

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- Recognize religion as a complex and interrelated cultural phenomenon.
- Identify key approaches in the development of the academic study of religion.
- Recognize the multi-methodical structure of the discipline and distinguish different methodologies and perspectives.
- Characterise classical positions and their foundational concepts and relate them to their historical, social and philosophical contexts.
- Apply concepts to empirical cases.
- Critically reflect on their own notion of and interest in religion.

Methods of Assessment: 3000 word essay, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016