Philosophical and Theological Approaches to God: BCRE10 (HE 2327)

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Prof. Maureen Junker-Kenny (maureen.junker-kenny@tcd.ie/ext. 1044)

Module Description:
This module commences by reflecting on the key theological and philosophical terminology in which the question of God’s essence and existence has traditionally been debated. It examines the case for and against natural theology, drawing on the classical arguments for the existence of God (ontological, cosmological, teleological), before considering how the God question may be interpreted under the contested conditions of modernity. The course concludes with a discussion of the notion of revelation and of God’s action in history, as well as the debate on key attributes of God, such as freedom, love, wisdom, justice and mercy.

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Reflect critically on the interrelationships between western philosophy and Christian theology
• Articulate critically a range of ‘proofs’ for the existence of God, including the ontological (St Anselm), cosmological (St Thomas Aquinas), and teleological (Paley)
• Explain the impact of modernity on theological namings of God with reference to pivotal philosophers and theologians of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Hegel, Schelling, Kant, Schleiermacher, Barth)
• Compare positions taken by Christian theologians in conflicts on their interpretation in different cultural and historical contexts
• Examine the transformations in what E. Troeltsch has called “old” and “new Protestantism” regarding the doctrine of God

Indicative Bibliography

Methods of Assessment: 3000 word essay, deadline Fri, April 7, 2017