Religions and Theology 2017-18 Visiting and Erasmus Students

Apart from 4th year modules which carry 10 ECTS, all other modules carry 5 ECTS. Apart from modules marked “CA”, with different elements of Continuous Assessment, Visiting, Erasmus and Broad Curriculum students write one 3000 word essay per module, while the Department’s four-year degree students also sit exams (for details, see Departmental Handbook).

BCRE32/HE110C Introduction to World Religions
Semester: A
ECTS Credits: 5
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None

This course seeks essentially to give students an experience of religion in Southeast Asia. Emphasising the heterogeneity of religion in Asia, it will present an overview, while concentrating on Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. There will be an examination of the various cosmologies, gods and goddesses, and important concepts dharma, bhakti, samnyasa as well as the caste system. Students will engage critically with the scriptures, notably the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. The course will deal with the question of Hindu identity and the more recent politicisation of Hinduism in the Hindutva movement. The use of iconography is an important element of the course as it will help to give students an understanding of the wider cultural world of Asian religions.

Learning Outcomes:

Identify and engage with several important religious traditions in Southeast Asia

Appreciate the heterogeneity of Asian religion and culture

Have a knowledge of the various cosmologies, Gods and Goddesses, and important concepts

Engage critically with the scriptures of these religions

Understand the social significance of religion in Asia

Indicative Reading:


Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of lecturer
Dr Patrick Claffey
This course introduces discourse about God in Eastern and Western European Christianity from the patristic to the modern eras. It examines key turning points in theological history: the role and achievements in Christology of the Ecumenical Councils in the patristic period with a focus on Nicaea (325); Byzantine Iconoclasm, the Schism East and West in relation to theologies of the Holy Spirit; the rise of the monasteries with a focus on the Rule of St Benedict; the medieval synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology (Aquinas); the Reformation (Luther) and Counter-reformation (Council of Trent); theology in Modernity (Schleiermacher) and contemporary theology, including the reception of humanist atheism (Feuerbach) and ‘nihilism’ (Nietzsche).

**Learning Outcomes:**

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

- appreciate the historical development of theological discourse
- explain some major theological achievements in each epoch
- discuss the challenges for theology in the modern period
- be familiar with strategies of academic reading, different types of literature and sources, and skills in academic writing
- present and investigate these concepts and interpretations in class and in a written assignment.

**Indicative Reading:**


**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Cathriona Russell
BCRE08/HE111Q Religion in Public: Great Speeches (CA)

Semester: A  
ECTS Credits: 5  
Duration: 11 weeks  
Contact Hours: 22  
Quota: None  
Prerequisite subjects: None

This module investigates “Great Speeches” – famous, influential, remembered speeches that made an impact on cultural and political changes in different areas of the world – with a special focus on the many and diverse roles religion has been playing in important moments of cultural change. The goal of the module is to provide different scholarly perspectives on the diversity of how religion is mediated and has been part of public debate in many, and often unexpected ways. Through the lenses of Biblical, Islamic and Literary Studies, Theology and the Cultural Study of Religion we will analyse the speeches and their contexts, from politics and cultural life, linked to the relevance of religion as argument, as rhetoric and as value background. Names such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Arundhati Roy and Albert Camus, Mohammad the Prophet and Friedrich Schleiermacher at the turn of the Enlightenment into Romanticism, demonstrate the scope of backgrounds we will address. Knowing about the impact of religion as a cultural force will build up a competence which is most important for the encounter within a multi-cultural globalized world.

Learning Outcomes:

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

Acquire insight into the diversity of forms in which religion and religions impact on public debate

Distinguish different conceptions of the “public sphere” and “public reason”

Contextualize the authors and speeches discussed

Identify and assess the way in which religion is involved in public communication: as topic, as part of an argument, as object of critique, as rhetoric or as position

Identify religion as an aspect of culture and historical developments in its variety

Understand and critically assess the problems raised about the construction of a “public sphere”, and the regulation of religion within.

Apply the speeches, their histories of interpretation as well as the analytical concepts to their own perception of public life.
Indicative Reading:

Johnson, P., Habermas: Rescuing the Public Sphere (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Assessment: CA and one 3,000 word essay

Lecturers: co-taught. Enquiries to: Professor Alexandra Grieser

BCRE30/HE1023C Ethics in Sport and Media Ethics

Semester: A
ECTS Credits: 5
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22 (Lectures and conference)
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None

Beginning with an overview of traditions of ethics, this module treats two key areas of applied ethics. Sport in contemporary society has been described both as an expression of the highest human and social values, and as a legally secured parallel world of the elite pursuit of victories and medals. On the one hand, as a sphere of physical self-realization, social formation and of moral training in fairness, it is seen as an area with standards of excellence that can be closely aligned to ethics. On the other hand, individual sport stars and the institutions of organized sport have been subject to multiple enquiries and critiques: for example, on doping, corruption, sponsorship, the power of mentors and child protection. The variety of facets to the question of ethics in the domains of sport requires a multidisciplinary response. In order to connect to the necessary element of “field work”, an integral part of this module will be attendance in a conference on Ethics in Sport which will take place in the Trinity Long Room Hub on Saturday Nov 4th, 2017. It will feature some leading personalities in Irish sport of the past and present to give the practitioners’ perspective on ethics and sport. The concluding part of the module with deal with Media Ethics. At a time of “fake news” and of debates on the effects of social media, its importance is inescapable.
Module Learning Outcomes:
Evaluate how ethical issues in sport are shaped by the particular socio-political contexts of the time. Assess the continuities and discontinuities between the present and the past by appraising the influence of the Greek, Corinthian and Olympic ideals. Outline the principles and values stated in current ethics charters and relate them to current controversies in sport. Identify traditions of ethical thought in the work of leading writers on the topic of ethics and sport, and locate them in relation to relevant developments in sport today.

Indicative Bibliography
Tamburrini, Claudio Marcello and Tännsjo, Torbjörn (eds), *Genetic Technology and Sport: Ethical Questions* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of lecturers
Dr. John Scally, Prof. M. Junker-Kenny. Enquiries to: Dr. J. Scally

BCRE01/HE111B Religions in the Ancient Mediterranean

Semester: A
ECTS Credits: 5
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22 (Lectures and conference)
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None

Module Description:
Why did the ancient Egyptians build the pyramids and mummify the dead? Did the Phoenicians practise human sacrifice, as some ancient sources say? Did the Greeks and the Romans believe in
their myths? This module investigates the religious beliefs of the people who lived and prospered in the ancient Mediterranean world with particular emphasis on Egypt, Syria-Palestine, Carthage, Greece and Rome. We shall study literary sources, inscriptions and archaeological evidence in order to understand the religious institutions, rituals and burial customs of some of the most significant civilisations of the ancient Mediterranean in their socio-cultural contexts. The module will focus on Mediterranean myths and mythologies, with special emphasis on dying and resurrecting Mediterranean deities, the theory and practice of sacrifice and prayer in the ancient world, and the difference between public and private religious devotion in ancient societies.

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

Identify the main methods of investigation and the core methodological issues and problems in the study of ancient religions. Students should be able to demonstrate familiarity with relevant primary sources (literary, documentary and archaeological) and to assess the principal questions and trends of the historiographical debates on ancient Mediterranean cults.

Demonstrate knowledge of the most important myths and religious ideas of the ancient Mediterranean world, showing an informed understanding of the structures of ancient Mediterranean societies and main historical and cultural factors which contributed to their development.

Read ancient religious texts in English translation with competence and awareness of their religious and practical implications and premises. Students will have improved their ability to interpret and assess the evidence beyond the simplifications found sometimes in modern views of ancient ‘paganism’. This includes an increased facility in expounding scholarly views about ancient religions to both specialists and non-specialists, to write well-structured essays and to use and compile well-reasoned bibliographies.

Understand the importance of the study of ancient religions for further research and independent thinking on the theory of religion.

**Indicative Reading:**

**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Daniele Pevarello
This module will explore the historical development of the various institutions that shaped religious and scientific knowledge in Islamic civilization. It will examine philosophical/scientific and religious contexts of learning in their symbiotic relationship, with an emphasis on the connections between science and religious tradition, revelation and rational methods of investigation. The module will survey the main institutions that marked the full development of classical Islamic scholarship, ranging from the hospital and observatory, to the library, mosque, caliphal palace and especially the madrasa or Islamic university. Topics covered in class will include patterns and practices of knowledge production in medieval and postclassical Islam (circles of learning, patronage, medieval Islamic curricula, etc.), the place of science in medieval Islamic scholarship, modern scholarly debates about the relationship between science and Islam, and the development of the madrasa from its medieval origin up to the modern period and its relation European universities.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- extensive knowledge of the various institutions that shaped Islamic civilization
- a basic understanding of the timeline of Islamic dynasties and the major period of Islamic history
- insight into the scholarly discussions and debates about the place of science in Islam
- the ability to navigate and assess scholarly literature on specific issues pertaining to Islamic education and history
- a deeper and more detailed understanding of modern and contemporary issues related to the Near and Middle East

**Indicative Reading:**


**Name of lecturer**

TBA
BCRE28/HE231B The Historical Jesus and the Gospels

Semester: A
ECTS Credits: 5
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None

Who was the historical Jesus – the Jewish Galilean whose activities and death resulted in the emergence of Christianity? This class explores questions about Jesus the man, his world, his Jewish disciples and their literary activities. The earliest literary witness to his life—namely the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke—occupy a significant amount of our attention. In order to assess Jesus’ environment and social milieu we shall engage with material culture and archaeology, as well as other ancient literature such as Josephus and selected Dead Sea Scrolls. You will have the opportunity to study literary theories and approaches used to read ancient literature in order to develop and articulate your own viewpoint on the origins of Christianity. In conclusion to this module issues that arise in the assessment of Jesus as a historical figure will be explored as they relate to other religious traditions, particularly ancient Judaism and early Islam (i.e. the historical Muhammad).

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
Appraise at least three approaches to resolving the “synoptic problem.”
Assess the distinguishing characteristics of each of the “quests” for the historical Jesus.
Debate five of the approaches historians have developed to read the gospels.
Dialogue at an intermediate level about the significance of literary and historical approaches to the gospels for the study of religion in antiquity.
Compare the basic content of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Indicative Reading:

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of lecturer
Professor Benjamin Wold

BCRE03/HE233B Contemporary Theories of Religion

Semester: A
ECTS Credits: 5
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None
This course provides a survey of recent developments in the academic study of religion. We will get to know and discuss contemporary theories of religious thought and behaviour by comparing sociological, cognitive and anthropological approaches to myth, ritual, and religious experience.

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

- Recognize the multi-methodical, systematic structure of the discipline and distinguish different methodologies and perspectives.

- Identify, distinguish and characterise key concepts in the contemporary academic study of religion

- Identify the relevance and consequences of theorizing in the study of religion

- Understand and reconstruct critical discussion of theoretical issues

- Apply concepts to empirical cases.

**Indicative Reading:**


**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Alexandra Grieser

**BCRE23/HE235B Christology: Jesus in the first century, at turning points of Christian thinking, in music and film**

**Semester:** A

**ECTS Credits:** 5

**Duration:** 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None

This course investigates Christology, the study of the person of Jesus Christ, and Soteriology, the understandings of his work of redemption as they were developed in different eras. The first part will begin with the worship of Jesus Christ in the first Christian communities and conclude with the first Christian councils from Nicaea to Chalcedon which tried to resolve disputes about the understanding of his person in the intellectual categories of Greek philosophical culture. The second part will follow the developments in the theological understanding of his person and his work of redemption from the Middle Ages to Modernity. Specific elements of the cultural history of reception of Christology will be exemplified in classical music and modern film.

Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Demonstrate a basic understanding of the main theoretical stances in the study of Christology and of their importance for early Christian history and contemporary theology. This includes, for example, knowledge of the different stages and positions within the Historical Jesus debate and of the most relevant textual evidence for its study, as well as a basic understanding of the Christological doctrines of the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon.

Demonstrate basic familiarity with methods and tools of the study of Christology, including the ability to read primary sources and engage in summarising and explaining complex theological texts and formulations.

Understand the plural nature of the sources and recognise conflicting interpretations and contrasting theological positions (e.g. of Antioch and Alexandria, or Anselm and Thomas Aquinas) on the significance of the person and work of Christ.

Have learned how to handle academic bibliographies and textbooks and how to write an academic essay, and demonstrate the ability to communicate and explain the epistemological status and anthropological relevance of central questions and themes in the Christological debate (e.g. Resurrection), employing skills such as the ability to identify and synthesise classical Christological positions and to illustrate their significance for contemporary theology.

Have developed confidence in approaching classical and modern Christological texts and questions and the ability to undertake further study, understanding the role of Christology in the framework a pluralist theology of religions and its relevance for contemporary anthropological and ethical debates, such as feminist critiques and transhumanism.

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Names of lecturers
Professors Daniele Pevarello and Maureen Junker-Kenny
European thinking has been marked by great disputes in the encounter between the monotheistic religions and the philosophical and ethical thinking of their times. The module will treat key questions and turning points in the history of thinking from Antiquity to Modernity: the conflict between Gnosticism and a positive biblical understanding of creation, debates about free will and human sin between Augustine and Pelagius, and on determinism, predestination and human freedom in Islamic religious thought. The polemics on God as One or as Triune between Islam and Christianity will be investigated, before turning to the early modern ages with Las Casas’ defense of the humanity of the natives of Latin America. The controversy between Luther and Erasmus is followed by the religion versus science dispute of Galileo. The challenge of Kant’s demolition of the proofs for God’s existence for theology and Schleiermacher’s response will conclude the study of the series of conflicts that have constituted key elements of the West’s intellectual history.

**Learning Outcomes**
On successful completion of this module students should be able to

- Situate the interpretation of key passages of the Bible and of the Qur’an in relation to the philosophical currents of their time
- Identify key tenets of the monotheistic religions in relation to the great philosophical schools
- Examine the differences within and between the monotheisms on issues such as the status of their foundational scriptures, on reason and revelation, on the oneness of God, providence, predestination and human freedom
- Assess the effect of these encounters and efforts of translation, of conflicts and polemics on the subsequent histories of theological and philosophical thought
- Demonstrate the capability to analyse and reconstruct argumentations in key theological and philosophical disputes at relevant turning points of Western thinking.

**Indicative Bibliography:**


**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Names of lecturers**

**BCRE25/HE238C Approaches to Theological Ethics**

**Semester:** A  
**ECTS Credits:** 5  
**Duration:** 11 weeks  
**Contact Hours:** 22  
**Quota:** None  
**Prerequisite subjects:** None

The contributions Christian ethicists make to debates in the public sphere depend on the approaches they take to this discipline, basing it on the Bible or the worshipping community, on virtue, on classical or revisionist Natural Law, on principled autonomy in a Christian framework, or on different feminist positions. The module will investigate these approaches in terms of their methods and basic concepts, and on how they relate to movements of philosophical thought and to other theological disciplines, such as biblical studies and hermeneutics. How they evaluate some concrete ethical issues and justify their positions will also be compared.

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

- Recognise and illustrate with examples the typical uses of core ethical concepts in each School’s argumentation
- Analyse each approach regarding the relationship it proposes between faith and (practical) reason, biblical revelation and church community, theological ethics and the human sciences
- Relate the five theological ethical approaches studied to philosophical and theological anthropologies within the history of Western thinking
- Outline some transformations within this heritage arising from the interaction between philosophical and theological ethics
- Distinguish alternative positions in the philosophical debate on public reason and argue for their own view on the role of religion in civil society

**Indicative Bibliography:**
Harrington, Daniel/Keenan, James, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics* (Lanham, MD/Chicago: Sheed& Ward, 2002)  

**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Maureen Junker-Kenny

**HE404B The Dead Sea Scrolls & the New Testament – School and International Students Only, NO BC**

**Semester:** A
**ECTS Credits:** 10
**Duration:** 11 weeks
**Contact Hours:** 22
**Quota:** None
**Prerequisite subjects:** Competence in biblical, theological and/or religious studies

The focal point of this seminar is reading early Christian literature vis-à-vis new developments in the field of Dead Sea Scrolls studies. The Scrolls are our best witness to Palestinian Judaism in the Second Temple era and are therefore one of the most significant resources for the study of the Jewish context of writing collected in the New Testament. Literature discovered at Qumran is by no means monolithic, but rather represents religious traditions from a multiplicity of authors and a variety of communities. These Scrolls allow us to assess patterns of thought, religious matrices, and a variety of speech acts found in nearly 350 different compositions preserved in over 900 manuscripts. Although the eleven caves that held scrolls were found in the late 1940s and early 1950s the materials from Cave 4, where 574 manuscripts were discovered in 1952, were not published in critical editions until the mid 1990s through to the early 2000s. Therefore, our understanding of the significance of many Scrolls is still nascent since even approximately twenty years of research is insufficient time to thoroughly study the host of questions arising from them. In addition to learning about the content of the scrolls significant attention is given to manuscript studies and the archaeology of Qumran.

**Learning outcomes:**

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

Argue their own interpretation of Qumran as an archaeological site.

Develop a broad knowledge of the diversity of writings among the scrolls

Use tools acquired well enough to conduct research

Identify common matrices observable in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament
Articulate continuities and discontinuities between Christology and Messianism.

Discuss in basic terms the relationship of Palestinian Judaism to the New Testament

**Indicative Reading:**


**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**

Professor Benjamin Wold

**HE4049C Islamic Political Ethics from the Classical to the Modern Period – Dept. and International Students Only, no BC**

- **Semester:** A
- **ECTS Credits:** 10
- **Duration:** 11 weeks
- **Contact Hours:** 22
- **Quota:** None
- **Prerequisite subjects:** Competence in biblical, theological and/or religious studies

Political thought—especially the connections between politics, religion, and prophecy—was an important topic of discussion in medieval Islam and was addressed in a variety of literary genres. This module will explore some of the key texts, thinkers and issues of the Islamic political tradition, from the formative period of Islam to the present day. Among the topics covered in class are the historical differences between Sunnites and Shi'ites, medieval and modern theories of the caliphate and prophetology, Platonic and Aristotelian political thought in Arabic philosophy, and the use and interpretation of Islamic tradition by modern Muslim intellectuals.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Acquire a global understanding of Islamic political theory in its various forms from the beginning of Islam to the present day

Develop the ability to relate many modern events and movement to their historical roots and formative developments

Become familiar with the key notions and theories of political Islamic thought, including the caliphate, jihad, and prophetology

Explore the connections between Greek and Islamic political thought, especially in the Platonic tradition

**Indicative Reading:**

al-Farabi. *Alfarabi, the Political Writings: Selected Aphorisms and Other Texts*, translated and

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of lecturer
TBA

HE404C The Sensory Sacred: Aesthetic and Material Approaches to Religion – Dept. and International Students Only, no BC

Semester: A
ECTS Credits: 10
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: Competence in biblical, theological and/or religious studies

Module Description:
The study of religion has often been confined to texts, beliefs and doctrines, or a singular experience of religion as something sui generis. However, religions are as much danced, imagined, painted and sung as read and theorised in a broad variety of ways, and beliefs are grounded in sensory experiences, body practices and emotional engagement as much as in reflecting and thinking. Recent approaches to the study of religion as a sensory practice rethink the relationship between body and mind, and between matter and form; they recognise all the senses as religious media – sight, sound, touch, smell; they investigate how religious traditions “tune the body”, stimulate the senses, use things and objects and implement convincing and repeatable experiences of “other worlds” or powers. We will ask to what extent the body and the senses are highly political media being restricted and engaged, symbolising and enacting what is religious, and what is secular, and cultivate experiences that are not mere expressions of beliefs, but rather create ways of perceiving and representing what is taken as real. We will address the practical consequences for studying religion as a sensory practice and apply the approaches in case studies and exercises.

Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
Identify, understand, distinguish and characterise typical concepts and approaches in the aesthetic and material study of religion.

Analyze the interaction between bodily practice, patterns of perceptions and religious ways of world-making in historical perspective

Critically discuss the relevance of aesthetic and material approaches in the study of religion, and why they have long been negated
Understand and apply specific methods of studying and representing the sensory aspects of religion as a lived cultural practice.

Theorise concepts such as body/embodiment, cognition, imagination, perception, emotion, and apply them in a mode of interdisciplinary thinking to cases and in exercises.

Reflect on the impact religious ways of world-making have on a larger culture.

Analyse the political aspects of cultivating the body and the senses in both religious and secular realms.

**Indicative Reading:**

**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Alexandra Grieser

**BCRE14/HE103C Introduction to the New Testament and Early Christianity: texts and contexts**

**Semester:** B
**ECTS Credits:** 5
**Duration:** 11 weeks
**Contact Hours:** 22
**Quota:** None
**Prerequisite subjects:** None

This course invites learners to engage with the earliest extant written records of believers in Jesus: the narratives and letters that make up the New Testament, employing a variety of approaches used in biblical scholarship today. Students will discover both the consistency and the fascinating diversity that evidently characterised early Christian belief, ritual and practice.

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

Identify the main approaches of investigation of New Testament literature (e.g. historical-critical, narratological, feminist) and the principal methodological difficulties related to the study of the New Testament and its origins.

Demonstrate adequate familiarity with the content of the writings which form the New Testament, their structure and the main historical and cultural factors which contributed to their development.

Read the New Testament in English translation with awareness of the complex process of its formation and with an appreciation of the diverse traditions which are represented in it. This includes a basic awareness of the history of its interpretation and exegetical traditions and an increased facility in presenting scholarly views about the New Testament to both specialists and non-specialists, writing well-structured essays and compiling well-reasoned bibliographies.

Appreciate the importance of the transmission of the text of the New Testament, its canon, its manuscripts (in particular those preserved in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin) and its critical editions for the understanding of early Christianity.

**Indicative Reading:**


**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Daniele Pevarello

**BCRE16/HE101B Key themes in theology**

**Semester:** B
**ECTS Credits:** 5
**Duration:** 11 weeks
**Contact Hours:** 22
**Quota:** None
**Prerequisite subjects:** None

This module first presents key systematic themes in theology: the biblical sources of theological doctrines; the alleged link between monotheism and violence and responses from historical and systematic perspectives; models of salvation in antique, medieval, Reformation and modern theologies; theodicy and eschatology. Secondly it will introduce key modern contextual theologies: political, liberation and feminist theologies. Its third part will discuss the question of theology at the university since 1800.
Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

Trace some transitions from the biblical sources of the Christian understanding of God and salvation to subsequent frameworks of thinking in Antiquity, the high Middle Ages, the Reformation, the modern period

Assess the position that the truth claim of monotheism in its distinction from polytheism and cosmotheism leads to violence

Outline differences in the interpretation of the human person as being made in the image of God in the history of Christian thinking

Discuss argumentations regarding the position of Theology as a subject at a modern university

Demonstrate in academic writing the ability to reconstruct the argumentation of a text

Indicative Reading:

Articles from Beinert, Wolfgang/Schüssler Fiorenza, Francis, *Handbook of Catholic Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1995)
Purvis, Zachary, *Theology and the University in 19th Century Germany* (Oxford: OUP, 2016)

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of lecturer
Professor Maureen Junker-Kenny

BCRE04/HE107C The Qur’an and its history of reception

Semester: B
ECTS Credits: 5
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None

This is an introductory course on the Qur’ān, the sacred text of Islam, and on its reception both in the classical Islamic period and modernity. The course does not require prior
knowledge of the subject and will introduce students to some of the major Qur’ānic themes and to the ways in which this foundational work has been interpreted by generations of medieval and modern readers. Topics to be discussed include the social, religious, and historical circumstances surrounding the emergence of the Qur’ān; the structure, style, and literary techniques underlying the Qur’ānic text; the tradition of religious exegesis (tafsīr) that developed in Islam; and key Qur’ānic narratives and themes. Students will acquire a basic understanding of the place of this scripture in the Islamic tradition and of its role in Muslim worship and cult. The class will consist of both lectures and student discussion on key themes covered by the readings. We will also be reading various Qur’ānic verses in a comparative perspective with the other monotheistic traditions.

Learning Outcomes:

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

Be familiar with the historical, religious, linguistic and cultural contexts in which the Qur’ān emerged.

Have read a number of key sūras of the Qur’ān in English translation.

Be able to describe and discuss the structure and main themes of the Qur’ān.

Be familiar with tafsīr – the Islamic science of Qur’ānic exegesis.

Have an understanding of the role played by the Qur’ān in Islamic practice and belief in the classical and modern periods.

Have engaged with some of the critical issues in western academic scholarship of the Qur’ān.

Indicative Reading:


Name of Lecturer: TBA
Religion as a cultural phenomenon is interrelated with all aspects of human life. A broad range of approaches are applied within the academic study of religion. After a short overview of the disciplinary history of this subject, the course will provide an introductory understanding of ‘classical’ approaches such as the sociology, the anthropology and the psychology of religion, and of more recently emerging concepts such as the economy or the aesthetics of religion.

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.

Indicative Reading:


Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of Lecturer
Professor Alexandra Grieser
BCRE17/HE111R Religion in Public: Great Images (CA)

Semester: B
ECTS Credits: 5
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: None

Religion is too often seen as a matter of reading and interpreting holy books and doctrinal formulations. Religious expression, however, is also a function of the eyes, where seeing and being seen play a central role in the public expression of religious thoughts. “Great Images” are visual examples of the public understanding of religion from antiquity to contemporary society which will be studied at different levels (political, social, and cultural). Students will be offered the opportunity to reflect on examples of religious visual culture such as the depiction of crucifixion in early Christianity, the role of icons in Orthodox Christian devotion and worship, important landmarks of Islamic architecture, the role of artistic expression in the theological debate of European modernity, as well as its role in religious propaganda, conflict and contemporary interreligious dialogue.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Identify and assess the importance of materiality and visual culture for the understanding of the impact of religion in the public sphere.
- Recognise the main methods of investigation and the core methodological issues related to the study of religious visual culture in the public sphere, learning to approach the use of images in religious thought with a methodological awareness which goes beyond the divide between word and image and the centrality of verbalisation of belief.
- Identify religion and religions as an important factor in the production and fruition of visual culture in ancient as well as in contemporary society.
- Understand the centrality of the study of the religious gaze and of religious visual culture as a learning tool for further research in fields such as history, politics and sociology and for independent thinking on the study of religion and transfer the awareness of the discourse on religious images to the comprehension of the function of images in contemporary debates about public life, democracy and politics.

Indicative Reading:


**Assessment:** CA and one 3,000 word essay

**Name of Lecturer(s)**
Co-taught. Enquiries to: Prof. Daniele Pevarello

**BCRE29/HE231C The End of the World: The Johannine Writings**

**Semester:** B  
**ECTS Credits:** 5  
**Duration:** 11 weeks  
**Contact Hours:** 22  
**Quota:** None  
**Prerequisite subjects:** None

The book of Revelation depicts a series of apocalyptic, end time judgments that lead to cosmic catastrophe followed by a new heaven and new earth. The author of the Apocalypse, John at Patmos, is not alone in believing that there is more than just this world—there is another world. As such, the book of Revelation is participating in a worldview in which reflection upon another world and otherworldly beings are dominant themes. Expectations of the end are not only thought about in terms of time (i.e. a linear progression from past, to present, to future), but also space (e.g. the world above and below; material vs. spiritual). To better understand the Apocalypse of John this class sets it among: (1) other early Christian writings and especially the Gospel of John; (2) ancient Jewish apocalyptic thought; and (3) the so-called early Christian “Gnostic” writings.

**Learning Outcomes:** On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
Assess end-times motifs found in the book of Revelation alongside those found in other ancient apocalypses.

Compare and contrast, at an intermediate level, the character of the gospel of John with that of John’s Apocalypse.

Dialogue on what possible motivating factors, whether political and/or religious, that may have influenced the end time orientation of the Johannine writings.

Assess the polarities found in early Christian “Gnostic” writings and those found in the gospel of John.

Evaluate patterns of thought in ancient apocalypticism that are also found in contemporary millennialism.

**Indicative Reading:**

**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Benjamin Wold

**BCRE24/HE236C Hermeneutics: the Bible, classical texts, modern disputes, the environment**

**Semester:** B  
**ECTS Credits:** 5  
**Duration:** 11 weeks  
**Contact Hours:** 22  
**Quota:** None  
**Prerequisite subjects:** None

This course will trace the history of interpretation of texts, investigating the nature of language and meaning, of action, interpretation and subjectivity. It will reflect on the theological and philosophical presuppositions that influenced Biblical interpretation in the history of those texts’ reception. It will explore the hermeneutical approaches and evaluations of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur and case studies in hermeneutics in biblical studies, historiography, translation, ecology, ethics and intercultural encounter.

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

- Differentiate the theological and philosophical presuppositions that have influenced Biblical interpretation and text interpretation, particularly since the Enlightenment.
- Identify classical authors in hermeneutics.
- Demonstrate their understanding by outlining the limits and scope of different approaches to interpretation.
- Apply these insights to the interpretation of any text in the contemporary context and validate their insights in a case study.
- Present their insight in a precise and illustrative paper.

**Indicative Reading:**

**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Cathriona Russell

**BCRE21/HE233D Contemporary Ethical Issues**

**Semester:** B  
**ECTS Credits:** 5  
**Duration:** 11 weeks  
**Contact Hours:** 22  
**Quota:** None  
**Prerequisite subjects:** None

The course analyses contemporary biomedical debates in their underlying philosophical and theological principles, values, and views of the human being. The course examines the different Irish, European and international argumentations and legislations that these debates have produced. Issues at the beginning and at the end of human life, the possible conflict between parents’ and children’s perspectives, and the visions of society and humanity implied in positions on advance care directives, on the new reproductive technologies, genetics, healing, enhancement, and cloning will be discussed. Films and excerpts from (what used to be?) science fiction will provide additional avenues to the topics.

**Learning Outcomes:**

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

Distinguish social, individual, and professional ethical perspectives on concrete issues in biomedical ethics

Relate the content of the principles invoked, such as ‘dignity,’ ‘autonomy’, ‘embodiment’, and ‘privacy’, to different schools of moral thought

Distinguish an empirical from a transcendental understanding of human dignity and its consequences for concrete ethical issues

Trace differences in European debate and legislations to two traditions of thinking about autonomy

Know about basic documents regarding medical research on human subjects: World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (1964), and its subsequent updates, and the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Council of Europe 1997).
Explain the positions taken on the question of human enhancement by authors from the Rawls School and by J. Habermas.

Recognize links between argumentations in Christian Ethics on God as creator and humans as co-creators to systematic theological positions on the doctrine of God.

Develop a critically reflected position of their own in relation to the concrete ethical issues under debate.

Argue for their position on which language to use in public discourse on biomedical ethics.

Know how to handle academic bibliographies and textbooks, and how to structure an academic essay, demonstrating the ability to reconstruct an argumentation.

**Indicative Reading:**


**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of Lecturer:**

Prof Maureen Junker-Kenny

**BCRE31/HE3202C Comparative Religious Ethics in Christianity, Islam and Buddhism**

**Semester:** B

**ECTS Credits:** 5

**Duration:** 11 weeks

**Contact Hours:** 22

**Quota:** None

**Prerequisite subjects:** None

Comparative religious ethics has long been an area of academic interest, one which has acquired greater significance over recent decades. In the contemporary context of global interdependence the comparative study of religious ethics is of great importance since it provides opportunities for
mutual understanding and cross-cultural engagement. Using a variety of theoretical, historical, hermeneutical and narrative approaches, comparative religious ethics facilitates an examination of the moral beliefs, values, practices and institutions of the various religious traditions; an interrogation of their apparent similarities and differences and an appreciation of the evolution of, and diversity within, some of world’s most influential moral traditions. This module provides an introduction to the comparative study of religious ethics, with an emphasis on the religions of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. The module will begin with a discussion of the methods and purpose of the comparative study of religious ethics, highlighting the different conceptual and methodological approaches and discussing their relative limitations and strengths. The module will then examine the traditions of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity focusing in each case on i) their conceptualization of the moral life, ii) understandings of the self, iii) of the individual in social and political life and iv) their attitudes to violence. The module will conclude with a case study on Engaging Sacred Values: Peace making in the Holy Land.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:
recognise the main methodological and conceptual approaches in comparative religious ethics;
assess the limitations and strengths of the various approaches to comparative religious ethics;
understand how different ethical traditions conceptualise the moral life, the self, and the individual in social and political life;
compare, and assess the different conceptualisations of the moral life, self and individual in social and political life across a range of traditions;
analyse and compare the different approaches to violence across a range of religious traditions;

Indicative Bibliography

Names of lecturers
Co-taught. Enquiries to Prof. L. Hogan.
BCRE34/HE235C Current Expressions & Movements in Christianity, Hinduism & Islam

Semester: B  
ECTS Credits: 5  
Duration: 11 weeks  
Contact Hours: 22  
Quota: None  
Prerequisite subjects: None

This module compares developments within these three religions in the context of modernity, such as revivals, political expressions, and fundamentalism.

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

Learn to approach religion from a theoretical perspective that is other than theological and exclusively Eurocentric.

Develop an understanding of the discipline of the study of religion from contemporary manifestations of religious traditions.

Develop an awareness and understanding of the diverse manifestations of the religious imaginary across the spectrum of particular historical religions in the modern world.

Learn to use key concepts in the study of religious revival and renewal movements.

Assess the concept of inter-religious dialogue on the basis of examples and comparisons.

Indicative Reading:  
Narayan, Badri, Fascinating Hindutva: Saffron Politics and Dalit Mobilisation (Delhi and London: SAGE, 2009)  
**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Patrick Claffey

**BCRE05/HE234C Religion, Media & the Public Sphere**

**Semester:** B  
**ECTS Credits:** 5  
**Duration:** 11 weeks  
**Contact Hours:** 22  
**Quota:** None  
**Prerequisite subjects:** None

Religion is prominent in public debates, in the media, and in the cultural imaginary of people’s daily life, no matter whether they see themselves as believers or not. In turn, religions also “make use” of media and mediation, creating symbolic representations and special experiences, be it through architecture and music, images and narratives, or through clothes and body practices. The course will focus on how the relationship between religion and media can be studied and how this can help to better understand the role of religion in the public sphere. Our understanding of media will reach beyond TV and internet – scripture and dance, money and microphones are means of mediating religion as well. We will ask, what is a medium, how are religions depicted in the media, how do religions act on and react to new media, and how can religion be understood as mediation while often claiming to provide “immediate” experiences? Besides signing up for an “expert group” on one of the weekly readings, you will engage in studying and presenting a self-chosen case.

**Learning Outcomes:**

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

- Distinguish and reproduce approaches to the study of religion and media
- Conceptualise key terms (medium/mediation, religion, public sphere)
- Describe the interaction between religion and media in historical perspective
- Understand the role of mass media in the contemporary religious field
- Distinguish the diverse media performances in religion as a lived cultural practice
- Reflect how religious media usage impacts on larger culture
- Present a self-chosen historical or contemporary example of religion in the public sphere; formulate a research question; outline an approach to study the case.
Indicative Reading:

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay.

Name of lecturer
Professor Alexandra Grieser

HE4047C Friendship in the New Testament and Early Christianity – School and International Students Only, no BC

Semester: B
ECTS Credits: 10
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: Competence in biblical, theological and/or religious studies

Module Description:
Does the New Testament envisage Christian love as a form of friendship? Did Jesus have any friends? Why did the early Christian believers prefer to call themselves as brothers and sisters rather than friends? Can early Christian devotion be described as a form of ‘friendship with God’? Interpersonal relationships such as friendship and patronage played a central role in Graeco-Roman societies. This module investigates the development of friendship and other human relationships (e.g. patronage and mentorship) in the Graeco-Roman world and their impact on the characterisation of human relationships in the New Testament and in early Christianity. Views on friendship in the New Testament (e.g. the Gospel of John) and early Christian authors (e.g. Augustine) will be studied within their broader contexts in ancient Greek and Roman societies. The module will emphasised how the understanding of friendship in the New Testament and early Christianity reflects a gradual change observable also in the ancient world from classical philosophical definitions of friendship (e.g. Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus) to the reformulation of human relationships in Roman imperial societies (e.g. Valerius Maximus, Lucian).

Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
Identify the main methods of investigation and the core methodological issues and problems in the understanding of friendship in the ancient world. Students should be able to demonstrate familiarity with relevant primary sources (literary, documentary and archaeological) and to assess the principal questions and trends of the scholarly debate on friendship and patronage in early Christianity.

Demonstrate knowledge of the human relationships which contributed to shape Graeco-Roman societies and of their impact on the New Testament and the development of early Christian thought and practice, showing an informed understanding of the structures of ancient societies and main historical and cultural factors which contributed to their development.

Read ancient religious texts in English translation with competence and awareness of their religious and practical implications and premises. Students will have improved their ability to interpret and assess the evidence beyond the assumption that friendship in the ancient world functioned as friendship does in contemporary societies. This includes an increased facility in expounding scholarly views on social structures of the ancient world to both specialists and non-specialists, to write well-structured essays and to use and compile well-reasoned bibliographies.

**Indicative Reading:**

**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay.

**Name of lecturer**
Professor Daniele Pevarello

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**HE4048C  Religions, gender and human rights – International Students Only**

**Semester:** B
**ECTS Credits:** 10
**Duration:** 11 weeks
**Contact Hours:** 22
**Quota:** None
**Prerequisite subjects:** Competence in biblical, theological and/or religious studies

**Module Description**
The relationship between religion and human rights is controversial and contested. On the one hand is the claim that human rights require a religious grounding, and have their antecedents in religious traditions, while on the other hand is the view that human rights provide a necessary antidote to the prejudices and inequalities that are characteristic of religion. This module aims to explore the complex connections between religion and human rights, both in terms of the evolution of the contemporary human rights regime, and in relation to the specific disputed issue of gender. The module will begin with a consideration of contemporary understandings of human rights, of the role of religion in the evolution of the language, values and norms of human rights; and of contemporary debates about orientalism, colonialism and post-colonialism in the articulation and implementation of human rights. The second section considers debates about the nature and politics of gender, the role that different religions play in the construction and maintenance of gender norms, and the manner in which different religions deal with the issue of women’s rights. Key contemporary debates will be considered in depth including debates about conceptualisations of gender equality, embodiment,
complementarity, and heteronormativity; about LGBTQ rights and religion; sexuality, reproduction, and the role of family; and gender and religious practices. The module will conclude with a consideration of freedom of religion and the limits of accommodation, with a focus on how states should deal with religiously-motivated values and conduct that offend democratic values.

**Learning Outcomes**

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Evaluate the main debates on the relationship between religion and human rights;
- Assess the role of religion in the development of the contemporary human rights regime;
- Critically evaluate key debates about the role of religion in the construction of gender norms;
- Interrogate the role of religion in a range of contemporary debates including about embodiment, complementarity, LGBTQ rights, reproductive rights and family law;
- Understand and assess contemporary debates about freedom of religion and the limits of accommodation, in relation to gender and human rights;

**Indicative Bibliography**


Hare, I & Weinstein, J., *Extreme Speech and Democracy*, Oxford University Press, 2009


**Assessment:** One 3,000 word essay.

**Name of lecturer**

Professor Linda Hogan
HE405C Theological Ethics and Ecology – School and International Students Only, no BC

Semester: B
ECTS Credits: 10
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: Competence in biblical, theological and/or religious studies

Module Description:
This module will introduce students to the key positions—anthropocentrism, eco-centrism and theocentrism—in environmental theology. It will explore; the problem of productionism; the question of population, food and freedom; the concept of sustainable development; stewardship ethics; the principle of subsidiarity; and the tangentially related question of animal welfare and rights. These will be ethically evaluated from philosophical and theological perspectives and through the exploration of scriptural themes in relation to environmental concerns. Students will explore the philosophical and ethical assumptions at work in policy formation on biodiversity, on climate change and climate justice and on the ethical questions presented by food biotechnology and synthetic biology as well as intellectual property rights. They will be expected to develop their analytical and presentation skills through participation in class discussions, the delivery of a student seminar and in a final year examination.

Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
Present and interpret the use of key themes and concepts in environmental ethics such as sustainable development, stewardship and climate justice

Articulate and evaluate the core areas of concern in environmental ethics from theological, biblical and philosophical perspectives in such areas as food security, burden-sharing in a changing climate, and biodiversity and resource conservation.

Critically analyse and evaluate the argumentation and environmental effectiveness of public policy in Ireland, the EU and globally.

Articulate their analysis and interrogate these evaluations in class and in a formal individual seminar presentation.

Indicative Reading:
Berry, R.J., Environmental Stewardship; Critical Perspectives—past and present (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2006).

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay.

Name of lecturer
Professor Cathriona Russell
HE490B Ethics and Politics – Dept. and International Students Only, no BC

Semester: B
ECTS Credits: 10
Duration: 11 weeks
Contact Hours: 22
Quota: None
Prerequisite subjects: Competence in biblical, theological and/or religious studies

Module Description:
This course is aimed to empower students to reflect on the many ethical issues, which arise in the world of politics in the broadest sense. The course is intended to develop awareness of the multiplicity of issues that arise from the interface between ethics and politics and to reflect on how they might be resolved and what theories have been developed to respond to these issues throughout history from Aristotle through to Mary Robinson as well as reflect on specific issues like: Is there a just war? What are the ethical implications of globalisation?

Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of this course, student will be able to:
Summarise the work of the leading theologians – through the presentation of material in lectures and reading material.

Evaluate how theology is shaped by a particular socio-political context.

Assess the links between the present and the past and appraise the influence of the modern period today.

Identify crucial theological questions in the political sphere.

Situate the topic under study in a wider theological framework.

Communicate effectively.

Indicative Reading:

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay.

Name of lecturer
Dr. John Scally