Junior Freshmen:

Approaches to the Study of Religion (HE1111)

ECTS: 5

Contact hours: 22 Lecture Hours

Lecturer: Prof. Alexandra Grieser

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: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016
Eras and Classical Authors in the History of Christian Thinking (HE1016)

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 hours
Lecturer: Prof Cathriona Russell

Module Description: This module examines discourse about God in Eastern and Western European Christianity from the Patristic to the Modern eras. It examines key events and themes in theological history. These include: the role and achievements in Christology of the Ecumenical Councils in the Patristic period with a focus on Nicaea (325); the Great Schism East and West in relation to theologies of the Holy Spirit; the role 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 Counterreformation (Council of Trent); theology in the periods of Enlightenment and Romanticism (Schleiermacher); and in the modern and contemporary eras including the theological 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:

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016

The Qurʾān and its History of Reception (HE1107)
ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 hours
Lecturer: Prof Damien Janos

Module description: This is an introductory course on the Qurʾān, 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 Qurʾānic 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 Qurʾān; the structure, style, and
literary techniques underlying the Qur’anic text; the tradition of religious exegesis (tafsīr) that developed in Islam; and key Qur’anic 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’anic 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’an emerged.
- Have read a number of key sūras of the Qur’an in English translation.
- Be able to describe and discuss the structure and main themes of the Qur’an.
- Be familiar with tafsīr – the Islamic science of Qur’anic exegesis.
- Have an understanding of the role played by the Qur’an 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’an.

Indicative Reading:

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016.

Religion in Public: Great Speeches (HE1116)
ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture Hours, Two-Session-Slot (100 minutes)

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.
Over the last decades, the perception of religion has changed radically. Many expected that with modernisation religion would decline, or vanish overall, which has not been the case; public perceptions often focus on the negative potential of religions, as being at odds with democratic society and its basic freedoms, recognition and peaceful co-existence of diverse identities and traditions. The conception of what is “public” is also contested, and different understandings of the “public sphere” and of “public reason” need to be distinguished.

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 Ayatollah Khomeini, Saladin at the time of the Cruzades 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 multicultural 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:**

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016

Senior Freshmen and Junior Sophisters:

Paul and the Development of Early Christianity (HE2325)
ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Prof. Benjamin Wold

Module Description:

This course is concerned to introduce a figure who had a profound impact on the formation of early Christianity and also Rabbinic Judaism: Paul from Tarsus. The intellectual and religious development of Paul will be explored within the context of Palestinian Judaism with questions in mind about the Hellenistic world. While issues will be raised about the intellectual developments in Paul’s writings, an important aspect of this module is introducing methodologies, key themes, and current debates that have developed in this field of study in the last decades.

Learning Outcomes:

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

• Identify significant scholars who have had an impact on developing approaches to interpreting Paul
• Demonstrate an awareness of the complexities of locating Paul’s social context(s)
• Discuss the various religio-traditions that were present and exerted influence on Paul and his thought world
• Give a synopsis of what is known about Paul the man
• Provide a synopsis of how Paul’s activities influenced the development of Rabbinic Judaism as well as early Christianity

Indicative Reading:

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016
Pauline Letters in Context (HE2326)
ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Prof. Ben Wold

Module Description:
This module is concerned to explore selected Pauline epistles from a socio-historical and literary perspective. Epistles written by or attributed to Paul will be analysed with concern to critically evaluate theological motifs and developments alongside other early Jewish and Christian writings. Galatians, Romans, Philippians and 1 Corinthians are given sustained attention in this module.

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

- Engage historically with the controversies found in the letters to the Galatians and 1 Corinthians
- Analyse key theological motifs in the letter to the Romans and Philippians
- Assess Paul's intellectual contributions within broader Jewish contexts and its reception in Early Christian thought and practice.
- Articulate the literary form and function of ancient epistle writing
- Critically assess authorship of documents

Indicative Reading:

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016.

A Survey of Islamic Theology, Philosophy, and Mysticism (Sufism) from its Origins to the Modern period (HE 2343)
ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture Hours
Lecturer(s): Prof. Damien Janos

Module Description:
This module is a survey of some of the most important schools and movements in Islamic intellectual history, from the beginning of Islam to our own time. It covers the development of Islamic theology (kalâm), in both the Sunnite and Shi’ite contexts, the emergence of a distinct philosophical tradition in Arabic inscribed in the continuity of Greek philosophy (mostly Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism), and Islamic mysticism or Sufism. We will discuss some of the main figures who shaped these traditions in the medieval and modern periods
and read some of the seminal texts they produced. The course will introduce students to key concepts and terms, as well as to some enduring themes and issues focusing on God, prophecy, human knowledge, and society, which Muslim theologians, philosophers and mystics all sought to address in their own way. Many of these issues still resonate throughout the Islamic world today, and so we will also look at the response of modern Muslim intellectuals to these questions.

**Indicative reading:**

**Learning outcomes:**
On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- demonstrate a solid understanding of the historical development of the main schools of Islamic theology, philosophy, and mysticism and identify the key scholars who shaped these disciplines up to the modern period
- be familiar with some of the main concepts and technical terms that characterize these disciplines
- engage critically with some representative texts from these traditions
- approach contemporary Islamic debates through an enriched historical and conceptual perspective

**Methods of Assessment:** two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016

**Philosophical and Theological Approaches to God (HE2327)**

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Prof. Maureen Junker-Kenny

**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:** two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016

**Christianity and Society (HE2331)**

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Prof. Maureen Junker-Kenny

**Module Description:**

The course investigates the interaction of philosophical and theological approaches in social ethics by analyzing current concepts and theories of justice (Rawls, Habermas and Ricoeur) and their philosophical and theological critiques. The aim is to be able to distinguish different understandings of justice, the common good, human rights, and recognition that have arisen in modernity and are now debated in a multicultural global society.

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

- Locate the theme *Christianity and Society* within the movements of modern philosophical and theological thought.
• Analyse the presuppositions of each approach regarding the relationships between individual,
  community, society, and cultures, between theory and praxis, (practical) reason and faith.
• Outline some transformations within the heritage of Western thinking arising from the
  interaction of philosophical and theological ethics.
• Identify the main alternatives in the philosophical debate on justice and argue for their own
  view on the role of religion in local and global society.

Indicative bibliography:

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016.

Classical Thinkers on Religion (HE2346)
ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Dr Alexandra Grieser

Module Description:
This course will explore "classic" attempts to develop theories of religion, mainly from a religious
studies’ perspective. Reflecting on religion has been an important element of the intellectual history
of European modernity. Thinking about religion also meant to think about societies and power,
about culture and what makes a human being human. We will reconstruct the transformations of
the concepts of religion within the early study of religion and identify the historical, philosophical
and social contexts. While most of the course is dedicated to these classical positions, we will keep
track of how the theories responded to the problems of their time, and how they have shaped our
understanding of religion until today.

Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
• Identify presuppositions and core tenets of key thinkers in modernity on religion.
• Understand and distinguish typical concepts and approaches in theories on religion.
• Identify the relevance and consequences of theorizing in the study of religion.
• Discuss the changing relationship between religion and society in different eras.
• Distinguish between scholarly, religious, atheist, philosophical and common sense perspectives, and understand them as a response to the problems of their time.
• Present and discuss critiques of the approaches, highlighting methodological strengths and weaknesses.

Indicative Reading:


Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, December 16, 2016.

Senior Sophisters:

Theological Ethics and Ecology (HE4040)

ECTS: 10

Contact hours: 22 hours

Lecturer: Prof. Cathriona Russell

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).

**Methods of Assessment:** Annual Examination.

2. The Sensory Sacred: Aesthetic and Material Approaches to Religion (HE4044)

ECTS: 10

Contact hours: 22 hours

Lecturer: Prof. Alexandra Grieser

**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.
· Analyse 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:
Material religion: the journal of objects, art and belief, Berg publisher [electronic resource TCD library]
Module Description:
The writings included in the New Testament have been composed by different authors over a relatively long time. Translated in countless languages, the stories and concepts found in the New Testament have played a major role in shaping socio-political, ethical and religious discourses across the centuries and in different cultures and have been a constant source of inspiration in art, music and literature. This module aims at introducing students to the writings of the New Testament, their content, their origins, their transmission and the history of their interpretation. Students will learn about the most relevant scholarly approaches to the study of the New Testament and examine the variety of literary genres and the diversity of sources and traditions which contributed to the development of early Christianity and to the formation of new religious and cultural identities in the Graeco-Roman world.

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:


**Methods of Assessment:** two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, April 7, 2017.

**Religions in the Ancient Mediterranean (HE1112)**

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture Hours
Lecturer: Prof. Daniele Pevarello

**Module Description:**
What were the religious beliefs of the people we common call ‘pagans’? Did the Greeks and the Romans really believe in their gods and myths? Did the Phoenicians really practise human sacrifice? This module investigates the religious beliefs of the people who lived and prospered in the ancient world with particular emphasis on Egypt, Syria-Palestine, Greece and Rome. We shall look at literary sources and archaeological evidence such as works of art, ancient temples and inscriptions in order to understand the cults, religious institutions and the cultural context of the ancient Mediterranean religions. In particular, the module will focus Mediterranean mythologies, theory and practice of sacrifice and prayer in ancient religion and the role of priesthood in ancient societies.

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

Demonstrate the ability to identify the main methodological issues and problems inherent in the study ancient religions. Students should be able to show competence in handling primary sources and in identifying the principal issues and trends of the historiographical debate on ancient religions.

Demonstrate knowledge of the main mythological and religious ideas of the ancient world, showing an informed understanding of the relationship between religious beliefs, the structures of ancient Mediterranean societies and the main historical and cultural events which contributed to their development. Students should be able to demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of the variety of sources (literary, documentary and archaeological) available for the study of ancient religions.

Read ancient religious texts in English translation with competence and awareness of their religious and practical implications and premises. Students should have improved their skills in the interpretation and presentation of the evidence beyond the simplifications found sometimes in modern views of ancient pagan religions. 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.

Demonstrate a solid understanding of the importance of the knowledge of ancient religions for further study and independent thinking on the theory of religion.

**Indicative Reading:**

**Methods of Assessment:** two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, April 7, 2017.

**Religion in Public: Great Images (HE1117)**

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<td>Lecturer(s):</td>
<td>Prof. Damien Janos, Prof. Daniele Pevarello, Prof. Cathriona Russell, Dr Gesa Thiessen</td>
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**Module Description:**

In the study of the religious ‘discourse’, great importance is often ascribed to the centrality of words and verbal expressions. Religion is too often seen as a matter of reading and interpreting religious texts and holy books and verbal acquisition of doctrinal and dogmatic 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. The purpose of this module is to offer a fresh approach to materiality and visual culture in the religious discourse, promoting an understanding of the acts of seeing and being seen as religious and social acts. Looking at examples of “Great Images” which have played a central role in the public understanding of religion from antiquity to contemporary society, this module investigates the power of the religious gaze, beyond the classic divide between word and images. Specific emphasis will be given to the different levels (political, social, and cultural) at which the religious gaze has influenced human society. 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 the visual in religious devotion and worship (e.g. the function of icons in the Orthodox Christian tradition), the study of the centrality of the visual element in the study of important landmarks of Islamic architecture, the role of artistic expression in the theological debate of European modernity (e.g. depictions of the story of the Annunciation in Western art), as well as the visual expression of religious faith in contemporary interreligious discourse and the use of sacred images in religious propaganda and in the portrayal of religious dialogue and conflict.

**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:**

**Methods of Assessment:** two essays of 1500 words, deadline Fri, April 7, 2017.

“Religious” or “Secular”? Christian Ethics in Pluralist Democracies (HE1118)
ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture Hours
Lecturer: Prof. Maureen Junker-Kenny

**Module Description:**
The boundary between “religious” and “secular” is at the centre of numerous assessments and contemporary debates: on whether, and in what sense, society can now be called “post-secular”, while the state should be neutral with regard to worldviews; whether the counterpart to “secular” should be classified as “faith-based”; or whether Johannes Brahms’s German Requiem, composed with personally selected biblical texts, should be seen as “secular” in distinction from the Latin text which counts as “religious”. Different conceptions of this fluctuating boundary will be analysed in order to situate Christian Ethics in contemporary culture and in debates on the public sphere.

The second part of the module with trace in key examples how Christian Ethics has interacted with the traditions and thought forms it encountered from Early Christianity onwards. The four sources of Theological Ethics, their cultural backgrounds and premises will be analysed: 1) Scripture, 2) its reception in the practice of Christian communities and in the traditions of theological thinking, 3) a philosophical, general concept of the ‘normatively human’, and 4) the human sciences. The third part will explore concrete ethical issues as examples for their distinct perspectives. It will illustrate how Theological Ethics interacts with other disciplines, such as biblical studies and hermeneutics, systematic theology, philosophy, and the individual human sciences.

**Learning Outcomes:** On successful completion of this course, students will be able to
distinguish different uses of the terms “religious” and “secular” and the contemporary theories they derive from
illustrate the contributions of the four sources of Christian Ethics to the analysis of ethical questions
trace the transformations of some biblical motifs in the processes of translation and reception into subsequent eras and cultures
relate theological ethics to philosophical and theological anthropologies
discuss contemporary positions on religion in modernity and on the role of religious convictions in the public sphere.

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essay, deadline Fri, April 7, 2017.

Senior Freshmen and Junior Sophisters:

Theological Cosmology and Anthropology (HE2328)

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s) Prof. Cathriona Russell

Module Description:

Cosmology traces developments in the mythological and natural-scientific study of the universe in its complex history. This module will investigate these developments as they have been interpreted and received from biblical, theological and philosophical perspectives. Natural-scientific descriptions of the world have implications for how theology conceives of God’s action in creation (pantheism, deism, panentheism). This course will examine the complex history of the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo in the Abrahamic faiths. The second part of the module will focus on theological anthropologies under several themes: the human person as created in the image of God (imago Dei), as steward of creation, as embodied and free, contingent and subject to frailty and failure (sin). Throughout it explores how specific cosmologies and anthropologies, theological and philosophical, can influence politics and ethics, using case studies from the natural, social and environmental sciences.

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

• Trace the complex history of the relationship between natural-scientific understandings of the cosmos and theological understandings of creation
• Analyse the conflicts and convergences between science and theology in the modern period
• Outline and debate what these imply for an understanding of God, creation and the human person

Indicative reading:

Berry, R.J. Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives–Past and Present (Edinburgh ;T&T Clark, 2006). Ussher 261.8 P63
Clayton, P. and Peacocke (eds) In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being (Michigan; Eerdmans, 2004).
Module description:
Classical Islamic Religious Thought emerged as a result of complex interactions with the Ancient Greek, Christian, Jewish, and Iranian traditions in a period when the Levant and Mesopotamia were constituted by highly cosmopolitan societies. These interactions were sometimes polemical and based on controversy, but they also resulted in intensive collaboration and cultural cross-pollination. This module will explore the religious and philosophical exchanges between these various groups during the classical Islamic period (roughly from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries C.E.) by focusing on key theological issues, such as conceptions of God's nature and His attributes, inter-religious discussions of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and the place of logic and Aristotelian philosophy in the theological method. We will also study the translation movement from Greek and Syriac to Arabic and the development of Qur’anic exegesis (tafsīr) and theology (kalām), which decisively shaped Islamic thought during this period and determined the nature of the religious dialogue between Muslims, Christians, Jews, and alleged heretics and pagans. Finally, in addition to these issues, we will also examine the establishment of the medieval Islamic university (madrasa) and the role it played in the religious and intellectual life of its time.

Indicative readings:

Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- identify some of the main theological issues that marked the dialogue between Islam and the other religions it came in contact with
-demonstrate a solid grasp of the various religious groups that shaped the development of Islamic religious thought during this period
-understand the place of logic and philosophy in the development of Islamic religious thought
-gain historical insight into religious polemics in Islam, especially between Muslims and Christians
-compare different Islamic perspectives on other religions (Qur’ānic, theological, philosophical, polemical)

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri. April 7, 2017.

Contemporary Ethical Issues (HE2332)

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Prof Maureen Junker-Kenny

Module Description:
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:
J. Picoult, My Sister’s Keeper (London: Hoffer, 2005)

Methods of Assessment: two 1500 word essays, deadline Fri, April 7, 2017.

World Christianities: Africa and Asia (HE2336)

ECTS: 5
Contact hours: 22 Lecture hours
Lecturer(s): Dr Patrick Claffey

Module Description:

This module will give students an insight into Christianity away from its European centres on the peripheries in Africa and Asia. It will look at traditional ‘indigenous’ Christianities dating back to the third century: Coptic Christianity in North Africa and the Syrian Orthodox, Syro-Malabar, the Syro-Malankara and other rites in India. There will be an examination of both the 16th and 19th century missionary movements and finally a look at more recent developments in Africa Initiated Christianity and the wider Pentecostal development on both continents. The course will look at some of the theological and pastoral issues emerging: healing, deliverance and faith gospel, the place of Christ in salvation, subaltern theologies, and the importance of inter-religious dialogue.

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

• Identify several different strands in world Christianity in Africa and Asia
• Appreciate the differences in theology and in praxis
• Understand the social significance of Christianity in these parts of the world
• Have a knowledge of the significant theological debates in these areas
• Be aware of the challenges this poses for world Christianity

Recommended Reading:

Methods of Assessment: two essays of 1500 words, deadline Fri. April 7, 2017.

Senior Sophisters:

Ethics and Politics (HE 4907)

ECTS: 10
Contact hours: 22 hours
Lecturer: Dr John Scally

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:

Methods of Assessment: Annual Examination.

Justice and mercy as attributes of God (HE4046)
ECTS: 10
Contact hours: 22 hours
Module Description
This module will explore the relationship between God’s justice and God’s mercy in the Bible, in the history of Christian thinking and in current debate. The theological positions of Irenaeus, Augustine, Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus will be examined in their contexts, before the approaches of Martin Luther, John Calvin and Friedrich Schleiermacher are compared and the significance of their differences in the year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation discussed. The questions of providence, of God’s action in history and of an apokatastasis panton (restoration of all things in an ultimate reconciliation) will be debated. The religious dimension of the human act of forgiving as it appears in the philosophical analyses of P. Ricoeur and J. Derrida will be treated in conclusion.

While the main format is seminar-style with student presentations on key authors, three classes will offer the opportunity to discuss perspectives from biblical studies, theology in the Middle Ages, and Islamic religious thought with colleagues in the Department and School.

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

- Identify key texts from the Hebrew Bible and from the New Testament on God’s justice and mercy
- 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
- Identify theological positions taken in modernity on providence, on God’s action in history and on the concept of apokatastasis panton
- Compare two argumentations on the ethical and the religious dimensions of forgiveness
- Demonstrate the capability for analysis and reconstruction of an argumentation in a class presentation.

Indicative Bibliography
Beinert, Wolfgang/Schüssler Fiorenza, Francis (eds), Articles from Handbook of Catholic Theology (New York: Crossroad, 1995)
Davies, Oliver, A Theology of Compassion (London: SCM Press, 2001)