

School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology

Department of Religions and Theology

Religion, Media and the Public Sphere

Module Code: BCRE05

Semester/term taught: Hilary Term

ECTS: 5

Contact hours: Two lectures of one-hour duration per week for one term

Lecturer(s): Prof. Alexandra Grieser (griesera@tcd.ie)

Maximum intake of BC students: 20

Module Description

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 the internet – scripture and dance, money and microphones are means of mediating religion as well. We will explore: what *is* a medium, how are religions depicted *in* the media, how do religions *act on* and *react to* new media, and how can religions be understood *as* mediation while often claiming to provide "im-mediate" and direct access to divine spheres? 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.

BROAD CURRICULUM – COURSE REQUIREMENT 2015/16

Students are required to submit one essay (2,500 words) on the last day of Michaelmas Term. Submission date is Friday 18th December 2015, 12 noon, in hard copy to the Dept. Office, R. 5010, Arts Building. Students are not required to sit an examination.

Students are welcome to contact the Department of Religions & Theology (jwelch@tcd.ie) if they have any further queries.