

BCRE26 Great Controversies in the Histories of Monotheism

Semester: A

ECTS Credits: 5

Duration: 11 weeks

Contact Hours: 22

Quota: None

Prerequisite subjects: None

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:

Spaeth, B.S. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Esler, Philip F. (ed.), *The Early Christian World. Vol. I* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

Neuwirth, Angelika, Sinai, Nicolai and Marx, Michael (eds.). *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Adamson, P. and R. Taylor, (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Kenny, Anthony, *A New History of Western Philosophy. In Four Parts* (Oxford: OUP, 2010)

E. Borgman/M. L. Bingemer/A. Torres Queiruga (eds), *Monotheism – Divinity and Unity Reconsidered*, Concilium 46 (2009) (London: SCM, 2009)

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Names of lecturers

Profs. D. Pevarello, C. Russell, M. Junker-Kenny, Dr. W. Young