BCRE26 - Great controversies in the histories of monotheism

Semester: B  
ECTS: 5  
Duration: 11 weeks  
Contact hours: 22 hours  
Quota: Maximum of 15  
Prerequisite subjects: None

Module Description
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. Medieval exchanges on the naming of God and on human freedom will be investigated before turning to the early modern ages with the controversy between Luther and Erasmus. Las Casas’ defense of the humanity of the natives of Latin America 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 that is ground-breaking for theology in modernity will conclude the study of the series of conflicts. A final panel discussion will evaluate the transformations of the monotheistic traditions in dialogue with their times and with each other 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 Reading:


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

**Name of Lecturer(s):**