

Visiting Student Directory

FINAL: 2026-27



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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WELCOME

Welcome!

I'm delighted to welcome you to our School as an international Visiting Student partaking in the Bachelor of Arts (BA.) in Religion programme. I hope you will find your studies in the School of School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies, exciting and enjoyable.

The BA Religion tackles the big questions facing humanity by seeking to understand the roles of religion, peace-making and theology in their historical settings as well as in contemporary life. We do this under the headings of two disciplines – Religious Studies and Peace Studies. Religious Studies stretches from studies of foundational texts, through theological thought, to the impact of religion on cultures and politics. Peace Studies encompasses understandings of the causes of wars through to critical engagement with how to build sustainable peace. Our approach to all our work is multidisciplinary, critical, and progressive. We encourage students to develop multiple modes of thinking – philosophical and historical and political and literary and anthropological, amongst others. At all times our School strives to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Join us! You'll be most welcome.

Gillian Wylie
Head of School



WHAT STUDENTS SAY



I really valued the interdisciplinary approach of the module I took, as it allowed me to expand on the approach I had been cultivating through Liberal Arts at my home university in Bristol, UK. The teaching allowed for a diverse set of ideas to be formed into a coherent final project. I really enjoyed that the approach of the module opened up religion to me. Learning from a real expert in such a lovely building and having discussions with such a manageable class size: this is what I hoped university would be like.

Tilda Hadley
University of Bristol, UK



The course was very well structured with multiple points of reflection. The assignments were intriguing and challenging, making for an enjoyable form of self-improvement. I particularly enjoyed the small class size which facilitated an easier means of student-lecturer interaction, as compared to other schools in Trinity College. I would say that this course has made me re-evaluate my own perspectives and long-term goals, making me a more self-aware and reflective person.

Nickdev Gill
Yale-NUS College, Singapore



Studying BA. Religion in the School, as an Open Module student was an incredibly positive experience. I found myself enjoying the way the lectures were delivered, with a maximum space for questions and discussion, providing students with open-minded environment to develop in. The inclusive and oftentimes holistic approach of the lecturers with regard to topics discussed made it easy to be excited for every lecture.

Jasmina Svarcrova
TCD History and Political Science



I had really inspiring lecturers, that were full of understanding and willing to break down "difficult parts". They were available for chat, email or any kind of help which made it all so much easier. I have to say I am so grateful that I took these modules as I've learned so much about relevant things and filled in many general knowledge gaps. It is not hard to learn when you have so passionate and giving lecturers.

Ingrid Garacki
TCD Sociology and Modern Language



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This document lists and describes the BA. Religion programme modules that may be taken by visiting and exchange students. Please retain it for future reference. The information provided in this handbook is accurate at the time of preparation. Any necessary revisions are notified to students via TCD e-mail or Blackboard announcements. Please note that in the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the general regulations published in the University Calendar and the information contained in programme or local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations in the Calendar will prevail.

Please note:

- **Junior Fresh (1st-year) modules will have a late start in Michaelmas Term (Semester 1), running from the week starting 21st September 2026.**
- **Admission to some of the BA Religion modules may depend on the applicant's academic background.** Students interested in taking **Senior Sophister (4th Year)** modules must:
 - Be in year 3 or 4 in their home institution **AND**
 - Send an email to the relevant [Module Coordinator](#) with a request to take the module, stating the Module Code and Module Coordinator, year of study, and previous experience with Religion modules (although not required, previous experience in religion modules is highly recommended). **Note:** if you cannot find the module coordinator's email on our website (link above), you should send your request to srundergrad@tcd.ie.

Course modules are taught for one term, two hours per week. Timetables will be available on the [Current Students webpage](#) before the academic year starts. The grades awarded for exercises/term essays are communicated to the student's home university by TCD Academic Registry.

Statement of Inclusivity

Trinity College, the University of Dublin aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, and values diversity. The College is committed to maintaining an environment of dignity and respect where all staff and students can develop to their full potential. The concept of equality is central to the College's ethos of academic and service excellence. The module strives to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

The School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies strives to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Pronouns

Our School affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name or pronoun than what is on the class roster, please let teaching staff know. Feel free to correct us on your gender pronoun if you feel comfortable doing so. You may also wish to consult [Trinity's Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy](#).

Module Descriptors and Assessments

The School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies reserves the right to alter module descriptors and/or assessments during the academic year.

School's Undergraduate Policies

For School's Policies please refer to the Undergraduate Programme BA. Religion Handbook, which will be made available before the start of the Academic Year on the [Current Students webpage](#).

Links to University regulations, policies, and procedures

[University Calendar](#)

[Academic Policies](#)

[Student Complaints Procedure](#)

[Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

Feedback and Evaluation

All modules will be evaluated by anonymous survey of students towards the end of each term.

JUNIOR FRESH (1ST YEAR)

Michaelmas Term (Semester 1)

Junior Fresh (1st-year) modules will have a late start in Michaelmas Term (Semester 1), running from the week starting 21st September 2026.

REU12101 Introducing the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible

Module Coordinators: Profs. David Shepherd and Benjamin Wold

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module aims to introduce students to the literary genres and theological contours of the Hebrew canon and its transmission, translation and interpretation.

Content

The variety of terms used to designate the 'Hebrew Bible' (e.g., Old Testament, Hebrew Scriptures, Tanak) indicate the richness of traditions related to these writings, the various ways that they are viewed, and also their life within different communities at different times. This module will orient students to the literary and theological contours of the Hebrew canon, introducing them to the rich variety of genres within. The lectures will focus on the formation and transmission of the text and how it grew out of the context of the ancient Near East. It will also invite the student to encounter the primary texts of various sections of this great 'library' including the Pentateuch, the historiographical literature, the prophets, the Psalms and the Wisdom literature. Students will also be introduced to the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and how their discovery contributes to our understanding of the text and 'canon' of the Hebrew Bible in the Second Temple Period.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
In-class test	In-class test	40
Exam	End-of-term Examination	60

REU12301 Introducing Theology: Key Questions

Module Coordinator: Dr Emmett O'Regan

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

The module will offer an introduction to theology by means of reading of selected texts, critique and discussion. Key questions will be addressed, such as the doctrine of God and creation, theodicy, human flourishing, the problem of violence, the inclusion of theology as a subject in the modern university.

Content

The module examines key questions in the theological tradition. The students will be introduced to the richness of theology as a discipline, and the content will address the question of the nature of theology as an academic subject within the university.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay/Review	1,200 words	50
Essay/Review	1,200 words	50

REU12501 Ethics Matters: Global Questions, Ethical Responses

Module Coordinator: Dr Cathriona Russell

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module introduces ethics argumentation and schools of ethics through the lens of contemporary international debates in society and politics in ecology, technology, economics, and medicine.

The issues to be interrogated may vary from year to year but will be drawn from: planetary sustainability; biodiversity conservation; economics and development; transport, technology; demography and migration; and the biomedical sciences and ageing.

Students will be introduced to modes of ethics analysis and reflection, related aspects of the underlying philosophical and theological principles and values, and views of the human person in plural societies.

Content

The module will begin with a consideration of the nature of ethics argumentation and investigation, and the importance of bringing an ethics analysis to bear on a range of contemporary issues. Students will be introduced to schools of ethics in philosophy and theology (virtue autonomy, utility), the scope and limits of obligations (cosmopolitan and communitarian), professional ethics, and national and international agreements and conventions, with examples drawn from across the globe: dam building in India; migration, international food security; sustainable transport; biodiversity conservation and (smart) technologies; artificial intelligence and the future of work; and genetic 'enhancement' of future generations and 'advance directives' in dying.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
'Three slides' presentation	Prepare a short presentation on a key ethics debate	30
Essay	1,500 words	70

REU12701 Approaches to the Study of Religion

Module Coordinator: Dr Alexandra Grieser

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module familiarizes students with the variety of religious phenomena as they are embedded in their historical and cultural situation and with key concepts and debates of how to study them. Students will learn how to approach religion (and non-religion) through different perspectives; explore the relationships between the emergence of the Academic Study of Religion and the cultural history of Europe, colonialism, and globalisation; learn to apply approaches to empirical phenomena; acquire analytical skills and critical reading strategies when approaching religious and academic sources; develop a reflective and analytical approach to religion as culture.

Content

Religion as a cultural reality is interrelated with possibly all aspects of human life, such as the formation of social communities, kin and gender relations; identity building; politics; healing practices; art and literature, and what counts as knowledge in a society. Hence, studying the role of religions in their cultural context requires a broad range of approaches and methods. We can see the Study of Religion in a broader sense as a study of worldviews more generally, and how humans make sense of their environment and themselves.

After a critical introduction to the history of the Academic Study of Religion and its colonial, philosophical, and religious context the module gives an overview of the major approaches to the Study of Religion, both the “classical” approaches (sociology, anthropology, and psychology of religion) and more recently developed ones, such as the economy or the aesthetics of religion.

Examples taken from different religious traditions and from the students’ own field observations provide the basis for exploring the relationships between religion and culture and how they are studied as an important factor of how humans live in a complex world.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exercises	1,000 words	30
Essay, research-based	2,000-word case-based study that reflects on taught approaches	70

REU12731 Jewish Thought and Practice

Module Coordinator: Prof. Benjamin Wold

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

The aim of this module is to provide a critical overview of Judaism as a world religion, its cultures and practices. Students learn to evaluate the diversity of Judaism(s) in different periods and localities.

Content

This module introduces key social, cultural, and religious aspects of Jewish thought and practice from antiquity to our own time. The focus of this module is on Judaism as a major world religion that has shaped Western Civilization. Rabbinic textual traditions that underpin Jewish religious thought—especially the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrashim—are explored. Calendar, festivals (esp. Day of Atonement, New Year, Festival of Booths, Passover, Hanukkah), and rites of passage (e.g., birth, circumcision, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, marriage, divorce, death) are studied both within the classroom as well as, when appropriate, in visits to local Jewish synagogues and museums. Contemporary Jewish movements and the history of their traditions come into view along with their different beliefs and practices (e.g., kashrut, Sabbath, worship, prayer).

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Book Review	1,200 words	50
Essay	2,000 words	50

REU12772 Introduction to Hinduism and Buddhism

Module Coordinator: Dr Seema Chauhan

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This course aims to critically reflect on the history of debates that have led to the construction of “Hindu” and “Buddhist” identity in the present day.

Content

Why do some people consider animal sacrifice and ecstatic devotion as “Hinduism”, while others consider vegetarianism, non-violence, and meditation to be “Hinduism”? Why do some people regard Buddhism as a philosophy that rejects sexism and racism, while others see Buddhism as a religion that promotes inequality? This course introduces students to the history of Hinduism and Buddhism by reflecting on how and why “Hindu” and “Buddhist” identity has been constructed in various ways across time and place.

The course is split into two halves. The first half covers Hinduism and the second half, Buddhism. In both sections, students will read primary sources from narratives, philosophy, and poems in premodern South Asia to maps, biographies, and lawsuits against academics from contemporary East Asia and America. Through an examination of these sources, students will not only be able to articulate the historically embedded debates that have led to the construction of Hindu and Buddhist identity, but they will also demonstrate an awareness of the theoretical questions that arise from studying Asian religions in a Western academic context.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay 1: Buddhism	2,000 words	50
Essay 2: Hinduism	2,000 words	50

Hilary Term (Semester 2)

REU12112 Introducing the New Testament: Texts and Contexts

Module Coordinator: Dr Daniele Pevarello and Prof. Benjamin Wold

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module aims at introducing students to the canonical writings of the New Testament, their texts, their content, their origins, their transmission and the history of their interpretation.

Content

The writings included in the canon of the New Testament have been composed by different authors over a relatively long period of time. Translated in countless languages, the stories and ideas 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. In this module, students will learn about the most relevant scholarly approaches to the study of the New Testament and its background in Second Temple Judaism and in the Graeco-Roman world, 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 realities in the Graeco-Roman world, and be introduced to the history of interpretation of the New Testament in antiquity and in contemporary culture.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exam	End of term exam	50
AI Critical Assessment	1,500 words	50

REU12312 Introducing Theology: Key Texts and Methods

Module Coordinator: TBA

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module aims to introduce the student to the distinctive academic discipline of theology and to stimulate their interest in the academic wealth of this tradition. It introduces students to groundbreaking texts in the Christian tradition and teaches them to “read for” chronology, meanings, ideology, rhetoric, empire, capital, patriarchy, anthropology, and ecology.

Content

The course will introduce the students to the concepts of textuality and method, studying classical definitions of theology from Gregory of Nyssa, Anselm and Aquinas through to, and concentrating on, more recent formulations of theology’s task from modern theologians such as Jurgen Moltmann, Elizabeth Johnson, and Willie James Jennings. The different methodological approaches to the study of religion will be introduced, and the different ways of conducting the task of theology will be too. In the course of the module, attention will be drawn to patterns of continuity or discontinuity, agreement and conflict in the texts studied. The purpose is to train students to integrate critical, conceptual and historical skills in the reading of theological texts.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay/Review	1,000 words	40
Essay	1,500 words	60

REU12522 Love and Justice: Intersections in Theology and Ethics

Module Coordinator: TBA

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module introduces students to the field of theological ethics as a branch of practical theology that explores how religious traditions interpret: moral principles, values in ethics and the good life.

The first half of the course will familiarise students with sources and authority for theological reflection in ethics (scripture, tradition, reason, and experience), as well as foundational concepts in normative ethics. Students will engage a range of perspectives through both primary texts and key secondary sources.

The second half of the module focuses on central themes in contemporary theological ethics, such as ecology, sexuality and gender identity, digital technologies, and economic justice. Students will be encouraged to think critically about how theological claims are formulated: in relation to interpretations of lived experience and theologies in the public realm.

Content

Theological ethics, as the focus of this module, is a genre of ethics that asks how diverse Christianities imagine everyday ethical principles and moral value. This module serves as an introduction to theological ethics—in the first half of the module—the sources often called upon by theologians in ethical discernment, and—in the second half—engaging some of the major themes and styles in contemporary theological ethics.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay		60
Presentation/Exercise		40

REU12712 Introduction to Philosophy

Module Coordinator: Dr Michael O’Gorman

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module will introduce some of the key ideas, thinkers, and eras of philosophy. It will outline some of the main themes in philosophical thinking and show how they develop over time. The module will help sharpen critical thinking, conceptual rigour, and understanding of philosophical problems.

Content

The module offers an overview of Western philosophy and analyses the questions treated in its main branches. Beginning with the Greeks as the founders of the Western philosophical tradition, key texts and ideas relating to Presocratic philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle will be studied with a particular emphasis on metaphysical questions about the nature of reality and of the soul. The medieval era will be studied primarily through the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, with particular emphasis on his use of an Aristotelian approach to metaphysical notions of substance and soul, as well as his arguments for the

existence of God. The study of modern philosophy will focus on Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Wittgenstein. In this part of the course, we will explore the views of these thinkers on questions like: What is knowledge, and is it possible? How is the mind related to the body? What is meant by virtue ethics? What is the relation between language and the world? Students will be taught how to critically engage with the various philosophical positions.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay 1 (TBC)	1,000 words max	50
Essay 2 (TBC)	1,000 words max	50

REU12724 Introducing Islam

Module Coordinator: Dr Zohar Hadromi-Allouche

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module aims to

- Provide an overview of Islamic history
- Present and discuss Islamic scriptures, doctrines and rituals
- Demonstrate the significance and development within Islam of concepts such as prophethood, revelation, jihad, theology, law and gender
- Develop an understanding of the contribution of Islamic civilization to human culture
- Examine various scholarly approaches to the study of Islam

Content

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world today. This module surveys its emergence, development, beliefs, and practices, the 7th century into modernity.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exercises	Continuous	50
Exam	Exam	50

REU12741 Religions in the Ancient Mediterranean

Module Coordinator: Dr Daniele Pevarello

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

The aim of this module is to investigate the religious beliefs and practices of the people who lived and prospered in the ancient Mediterranean world, with particular emphasis on ancient Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia, Carthage, Greece, and Rome.

Content

Employing literary sources as well as inscriptions, funerary art and ancient iconography, and other archaeological finds, this module investigates the religious beliefs and practice of the various peoples and civilisations of the ancient Mediterranean from ancient Egypt to Imperial Rome, focusing on the study of ancient rituals (e.g., burial customs, animal and human sacrifice) and on Mediterranean myths and mythologies (e.g., dying-and-rising deities in Egypt, Syria and ancient Greece). Students will reflect about the methodological challenges of studying ancient religions, focusing on the problem of interpreting fragmentary evidence, understanding ancient definitions of religion and magic, and distinguishing between private and public devotion in ancient societies. The course will help students to think about such questions as did people in antiquity believe in their myths? Why did the Egyptians mummify their dead? What is the significance of the ancient myths of Osiris, Gilgamesh, and Baal? Did the ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians practice human sacrifice?

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Review Article	1,000 words	40
Essay	2,000 words	60

SENIOR FRESH (2ND YEAR)

Michaelmas Term (Semester 1)

REU22322 Medieval Theology: Women, Learning, Universities

Module Coordinator: Dr Fáinche Ryan

Semester: Hilary – Semester 1

Learning Aims

To introduce the students to the distinctive modes of theological expression found in the western medieval period. A particular aim is to develop an appreciation in students for the contribution of women to theology in this era.

Content

The purpose of this module is to survey the political, cultural and religious context in which Catholic theology developed in the medieval period. An important aim will be to introduce the student to some representative figures in the theology of the period. This period was particularly fruitful in the formation of theology in the Catholic tradition. The course will study:

1. The theology of the Monastic and Cathedral schools
2. The emergence of the University
3. The significance of Aquinas' work
4. The role of women in the medieval period
5. The early Irish medieval church

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Summative assessment	Summary review of selected article (1,000 words)	40
Summative assessment	Exam	60

REU22502 Creaturely Ethics: Humans and Other Animals

Module Coordinator: Dr Jacob Erickson

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module aims to introduce and engage in contemporary scholarly reflection on critical animal studies, posthumanism, and ecotheology. It allows students to engage with theological perspectives on the definitions of “humanity,” “animality,” and “creatureliness.” Students will explore a number of theo-ethical topics in this area, from animal conservation to food.

Content

Ethics is written and studied by animals, you and me. Recent questions in ecological ethics swirl around “the question of the human” and “the question of the animal.” Theological and ethical concepts that define human beings as unique, with souls created imago dei, in the image of God with dominion over the planet are critiqued as being morally complicit with species decline, animal suffering, and habitat loss. On a planet undergoing the sixth great wave of animal extinction, this critique is no small matter. We’ll ask how we understand the human in relation to other nonhuman creatures that occupy the planet. We’ll think about animal ethics, the blurry lines between wild and domestic, human and nonhuman, living and extinct, veganism and vegetarianism, human and posthuman. We’ll ask how these conversations cause us to rethink theological understandings of “creatureliness” and “creation” and “kinship.” And we’ll ask how definitions of what it means to be “human” are already entangled in our theo-ethical and ecological concerns.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Documentary Essay	1,000 words	50
Topical Essay	1,500 words	50

REU23104 Quran: Scripture, History, Literature

Module Coordinator: Prof. Zohar Hadromi-Allouche

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module aims to introduce students to the Quran: its structure, style, and main themes and context; as well as its reception history, biblical subtext, and scholarly approaches to studying the Quran.

Content

Quran — the Islamic scripture — contains, according to Muslim tradition, the literal word of God, which was revealed to the prophet Muhammad through the mediation of angel Gabriel.

This module explores the structure and main characteristics of the Qur'an; discusses its principal themes; reception history; and close relationship with the Bible.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exercises	Continuous	50
Exam	Exam	50

REU23122 From Invasion to Exile: The Ancient Histories of Israel and Judah

Module Coordinator: Prof. David Shepherd

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module aims to facilitate students' deeper acquaintance and critical engagement with narratives from Joshua through 2 Kings.

Content

This module offers an opportunity for critical engagement with some of the most famous texts of the Hebrew Bible including those concerned with the Israelite conquest, the stories of the Judges, the rise and fall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the careers of royal figures such as David, Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah. Reflection on the historiographical value of these traditions will be facilitated by situating them within the context of the material culture and historiographical traditions of the Ancient Near East, while particular emphasis will be paid to the interface of power and violence within the traditions.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Critical reflections x 8	Short reflections on readings	40
Exam	End of term examination	60

REU23301 Philosophical and Theological Approaches to God

Module Coordinator: Dr Andrew Pierce

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module critically reviews a range of approaches to the question of God's existence and nature, drawing both on the history of Christian theological reflection and on philosophy in the Western traditions

Content

This module explores a number of key philosophical and theological landmarks in the debates about God in Christianity and western philosophy: does God exist? Is natural theology possible? What is meant by the notion of revelation? Is 'religious language' different to other language games?

Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay	1,500 words	50
Essay	1,500 words	50

REU23501 Ethics in Sport and in Media

Module Coordinator: Dr John Scally

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

The aims are to:

1. Engage the study of ethics in sport as fields of academic enquiry in a cross-curricular way with a variety of methodological approaches.
2. Recognise and critically examine the varieties of ethical traditions, and appreciate the internal diversity within those traditions, in their historical and contemporary manifestations.
3. Understand and engage the various methods required for assessment of the media including historical, philosophical, social and cultural analyses

Content

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 concluding element deals with some of the most pressing ethical issues in the media today, among them 'Fake news'.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Student Presentation / Reflection	Student Presentation / Reflection	30
Essay	2,000 words	70

Hilary Term (Semester 2)

REU22111 The Historical Jesus and the Gospels

Module Coordinator: Prof. Benjamin Wold

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module aims to provide a critical overview of research on the historical Jesus and, within this context, the role and significance of the gospel traditions for this topic.

Content

Jesus of Nazareth is one of the most influential figures in Western history, his name and teachings deeply woven into the fabric of global culture. While his morality has shaped countless societies, and his significance in Christian thought is immense, what can we really know about the historical figure who lived in first-century Palestine? This module takes an evidence-based, historical approach to uncovering the life of Jesus. We focus on the sources that offer us glimpses of his existence, from the gospels of the New Testament to “lost” gospels and external references.

Jesus has been portrayed in many ways: as a Cynic philosopher, social reformer, healer, apocalyptic prophet, and revolutionary. But which of these portrayals reflects the historical Jesus, and why are there so many competing images of him? We will investigate the so-called “Quests” for the historical Jesus, analyzing the methods and debates that have shaped our understanding of him. Students will learn how to critically examine ancient texts, both canonical and non-canonical, and engage with key historical questions that have puzzled scholars for centuries.

Alongside the gospels, we explore other ancient writings, from the Gospel of Thomas to the Dead Sea Scrolls, in order to situate Jesus within the broader religious and cultural world of his time. Whether you are interested in early Christian texts, historical methods, or the impact of Jesus on later religious traditions, this module offers a historical investigation into the most enduring figure of the Western tradition.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay	2,000-word essay on selected topic	50
Exam	End of term examination	50

REU22331 Christology: Jesus in History, Politics, and Love

Module Coordinator: Prof. Siobhán Garrigan

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module aims to investigate the historical origins of the idea of “Christ” in the worship of the first Christian communities and the subsequent developments in the theological understanding of his person and his work of redemption across all eras and geographies, with particular attention to liberation theology.

Content

Drawing on primary sources, critical scholarship, ritual studies, and visual art, the course will devise a historical and theological framework in which to assess theoretical presuppositions and consequences of different interpretations of the person and work of Christ through the ages.

The significance of Christology will be tested by analysing the doctrinal formulations of early, medieval, and modern Christianity and by discussing feminist, anti-racist, post-colonial, eco-activist, and queer interpretations of the figure of Christ. The relationship of various Christologies to current ethical issues, such as ecology, human rights, extreme poverty, disability inclusion, and anti-capitalism will be explored.

The class is capped at 15 students; it will conduct up to half of its contact hours in the National Gallery of Ireland.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exercise (open Books Assignment)	1,000-word Christological reflection on a piece of art	25
Essay	1,500-word essay	75

REU22513 Digital Innovation to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals

Module Coordinators: Prof. Linda Hogan, Dr Tim Savage, Dr PJ Wall

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module aims to allow students to explore and analyse the core issues and specific challenges related to how innovation can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through engaging with authentic cases from the Global South and Europe.

Content

This module will introduce students to the key issues and current academic debates of relevance in a variety of fields, and also equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and manage these challenges in an appropriate and effective manner.

The module will pay particular attention to the ethical issues involved with innovation for the SDGs, and critically examine the role played by social, political, cultural and human factors when designing, introducing and using technologies. This module therefore contributes to the broader programme outcomes related to ethics, reasoning, and moral inquiry.

The module links most strongly with the SDGs which can be addressed by new, disruptive and innovative approaches and technologies. This module has a particular focus on the SDGs which can be addressed by smaller, community-level and citizen-led technology-based initiatives. Examples of this include designing innovative ways of leveraging the ubiquity of mobile phones in the Global South for healthcare and education, and the design, evaluation, and implementation of innovative techniques which are designed to be ethically, socially and culturally appropriate for their particular context.

The module content includes relevant, authentic, situated cases from the Global South and Europe that have been developed specifically for the module. These multimedia-enhanced cases focus on projects from Ireland, India, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Case Presentations	Students will, as a group, present their conclusions from the cases being studied (3) throughout the module.	30
Case Study Constructions	Completion of an authentic case suitable for case-based learning, which highlights the issues discussed during the module (group).	70

REU22703 Religion through Bollywood

Module Coordinator: Prof. Seema Chauhan

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This course explores how religion is conceptualized as a discourse in post-Independence India (1947- present day) through the history of Hindi cinema (“Bollywood”).

Content

This course takes Bollywood—with its glitzy dance-numbers, three-hour dramas, and dream-sequences—as a site for studying the representation of religion after India gained independence from British imperialism in 1947. Each week, we will watch examine one top-grossing Hindi film (w/eng subtitles) and examine how that film acts as a site in which religious discourses are constructed in relation to its immediate historical context. In particular, we will explore the rise and representation of religious nationalism, secularism, pluralism, Hindu epics, and Muslim-Hindu relations through Hindi films.

Each week is structured with one lecture and one seminar. The lecture will survey the political history of India as well as the history of Bollywood as they emerged in tandem with one-another in post-independence India. During the seminar, we will discuss the film first on its own terms and then in its historical context. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to triangulate the study of religion with the study of contemporary Indian history and film studies.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
8 Journal entries	8 x 300 words per journal entry. Each journal entry is worth 12.5% of the overall grade.	100

REU22712 Researching Religion: New Religious Movements

Module Coordinator: Dr Alexandra Grieser

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

The module introduces New Religious Movements as a contested yet vital element of global religious history. It aims at reflecting on how to study non-mainstream religion and provides students with knowledge about classical and contemporary debates on theorising religion. The focus lies on NRMs as part of a critical history of modernity and supports students in learning how to creatively interlink historical knowledge, theoretical thinking, and concrete empirical research methods.

Content

This module combines two goals: it introduces students to the field of New Religious Movements developing from the 19th to the 21st century; and helps students to develop research skills for studying religion in all its appearances. Often labelled as ‘cults’ and ‘sects’, cases such as Scientology, modern Islamic groups, romantic Occultism or spiritual environmentalism bring up more general questions about how to study religion: How do religions evolve? Why did they emerge as a response to modernity, colonialism, and globalisation? Are these groups more ‘dangerous’ than traditional religions? What is the role of terms such as ‘doomsday cult’ in public discourse and cultural politics?

By studying different aspects of these movements, students will become familiar with classical and contemporary approaches and will be able to analyse relations between religion and violence, gender, body politics, or the “invention of traditions”. They will choose a research case (either historical or contemporary) and will learn to apply different research methods and concepts. For students who find empirical work interesting, this module builds up skills that will help to develop a research question and choose a method as is required in the final dissertation. Be prepared to discuss also controversial themes and phenomena with an analytical attitude.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exercises	1,000 words; draft idea of case study (peer reviewed); discussion of acquired knowledge	30
Essay	2,500 words; case study that develops an approach to a chosen NRM	70

REU23302 Cosmology, Religion and Science

Module Coordinator: Dr Cathriona Russell

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

Cosmology traces developments in the mythological and natural-scientific study of the universe in its complex history. This module presents these developments as they have been interpreted from biblical, theological and philosophical perspectives, and the conditions under which these have been understood to conflict or converge with cosmologies and related anthropologies, from the natural sciences, particularly since the 16th century.

Content

It explores how specific cosmologies emerged and in turn impacted on theology, science and culture, in astronomy, thermodynamics, emerging universe models, evolutionary theory and the return to narrative in the natural sciences. It includes implications for anthropology: the human person as created in the image of God (imago Dei); as embodied and free, contingent, and subject to frailty and failure ('sin'); as 'steward' of a habitable creation; and as inhabitant of the earthly cosmopolis.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Review	1,000 words	30
Essay on self-chosen topic in consultation with lecturer	2,000 words	70

JUNIOR SOPHISTER (3RD YEAR)

Michaelmas Term (Semester 1)

REU33124 Christian Origins and Paul

Module Coordinator: Prof. Benjamin Wold

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

The aim of this module is to evaluate the apostle Paul and his letters within and beyond the so-called “New Perspective,” which is concerned with Paul’s letters in their Palestinian Jewish context.

Content

Few figures have shaped the Western tradition as deeply, or as controversially, as Paul of Tarsus. His letters, written between 50 and 68 CE, are the earliest surviving Christian writings and provide a vivid window into the first generation of the Jesus movement. In this module, we examine Paul not as a theologian for later centuries but as a historical actor: a Jewish intellectual, Roman citizen, and community organizer navigating the social, religious, and political landscapes of the eastern Mediterranean.

Was Paul a follower of Jesus or the founder of Christianity? What do his letters reveal about the challenges of building new communities, the tensions between cultural traditions, and the hopes and conflicts of early believers? We explore these questions using a range of historical tools, situating Paul’s writings in their ancient context and resisting retrospective theological interpretation.

Students will engage critically with Paul’s major letters, paying attention to genre, rhetoric, and cultural background. The module focuses on Paul’s interactions with urban communities, his navigation of identity and authority, and the controversies that made him a polarizing figure in his own time.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay	1 x 2,000-word essay on selected topic	50
Exam	End of term 3-hour examination	50

REU33134 The Afterlife of Moses: Interpreting the Exodus in the Arts over the Centuries

Module Coordinator: Prof. David Shepherd

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

1. Introduce students to the reception of Moses/the Exodus in a wide variety of artistic media.
2. Equip students to evaluate and write about the various factors shaping the refraction of Moses/the Exodus in these media.

Content

The student will be introduced to the afterlives of Exodus and the Moses traditions within and beyond the biblical tradition. Critical scrutiny of the reception and interpretation of selected texts and works of art (of various forms) from antiquity to the present, in a diversity of religious traditions will help to illuminate how and why biblical traditions have been and continue to be reflected and refracted in various ways in the literary arts (e.g. poetry), visual arts (e.g. painting, stained glass), performing arts (e.g. theatre, opera) and cinematic arts (e.g. film). Attention will be paid to aesthetic trends, specific artistic influences, religious and ecclesial contexts and socio-economic factors as we grapple with the complex phenomenon of the reception of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in these works.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Critical reflections x 10	Short reflections on readings	50
Exam	End of term examination	50

REU33301 Power and Politics: Liberation, Contextual, and Post-Colonial Theologies

Module Coordinator: Prof. Siobhán Garrigan

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

The aim of this module is that students would exit with a complex understanding of issues of power in relation to theology. Through its course, students should gain a thorough understanding of theology's role in political movements in general and the conceptualisation of gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, protest and wealth in particular.

Content

The Shoa/Holocaust meant that Theology could not carry on as it did before. Theology had to respond to this atrocity, to the “death of God” it brought, and to the demands of post-war churchgoers that theology offer a vision capable of preventing Christian collusion in such horrors in the future. This module will look at the ways that Modernity's very tenets were revised in this theological effort in tandem with emergent theories of power, post-structuralism in particular. Then, it will examine Theology's part in the emancipative political movements of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Formative assessment	Verbal feedback on weekly student reflections posted to Blackboard	-
Summative assessment	Midterm Essay 1,500 words	25
Summative assessment	Final Essay 2,000 words	75

REU33722 Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere

Module Coordinator: Dr Alexandra Grieser

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module introduces ways of studying and discussing the relationship between religion, media and the public sphere, the presence of religion in the media, and religion as an essentially mediated phenomenon. Students will be familiarized with studying religion through their media performances. Engaging in critical media research, students will develop research skills in studying the role of religion in the public sphere. These skills include critical media competence and the reflected usage of media when (re)presenting knowledge.

Content

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 when creating influential symbols and intense and extraordinary experiences. They do so by means of architecture and music, images and narratives, through clothes, body practices or the TV and the internet.

The module focuses on how the relationship between religion and media can be studied and how this helps to better understand how world views develop and change. This includes theoretical reflection on the "public sphere" as an element of modern democracies and the question whether we live in a "post-secular" world.

Rethinking the concept of "media" will reach beyond social media and the mass media. Scripture and dance, money and microphones are means of mediation as well and an anthropology of media defines humans through their mediated relationship with reality. We will ask, what is a medium, how are religions depicted in the media, how do religions respond to new media, and how can religion be understood as mediation while often claiming to provide "immediate" experiences? Students will learn about the latest debates and analytical concepts and acquire study skills in the input phase, develop a case study

over the course of the semester, and share their work-in-progress during a workshop phase to build up their final case study during term.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Draft of Case Study	Guided outline of research idea 500-800 words (Pass/Fail)	20
Research Phase	Research Phase – Work in progress presentation and response (short PPT and team discussion)	20
Research Essay	Research Essay – Final version of Case Study 2,500-3,000 words	60

REU33732 Hindu Mythology

Module Coordinator: Dr Seema Chauhan

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This course aims to introduce students to the history of Hindu Mythology from 1000BCE to 1000 CE through Sanskrit sources in English translation.

Content

Welcome to the world of Hindu Mythology where everything is turned up-side down. Demons are virtuous. Gods are powerless. Everyone shape-shifts. And women dictate the trajectory of the universe. How and why do ancient Hindus describe the world we inhabit in this way?

This course surveys the history of Sanskrit Hindu Mythology from its inception in the Vedic period (1000 BCE) to its height in Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas (1000 CE). Students will explore how premodern Hindu writers used such myths to navigate key religious themes: the problem of evil; power and sovereignty; gender and sexuality; love and war; and body politics.

This module is assessed through creative writing. You will be asked to re-write any Hindu myth from our course by applying and updating concepts and methods used by Hindu storytellers.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Worksheets	7 worksheets worth 10% each.	70
Draft proposal of your myth	Submit your proposal for your myth and provide peer feedback. Marked pass/fail.	2 x 5%
Final submission of creative writing	1,200 words	20

Hilary Term (Semester 2)

REU33132 Words to the Wise: Israelite and Jewish Wisdom Literature

Module Coordinator: Prof. David Shepherd

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module aims to facilitate students' deeper acquaintance and critical engagement with the richness of the Wisdom tradition found in the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish traditions.

Content

This module represents an opportunity to explore the richness of the Wisdom Literature found in the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish traditions. Following an introduction to the Wisdom tradition, the module will offer a close and critical reading of the books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes and how wisdom themes have influenced other parts of the Hebrew canon. There will also be a focus on the divergent strands which emerge within this corpus and the historical context in which these works were produced. Seminar discussions will explore key themes such as divine justice, attitudes to wealth and work and the representation of women. The module will also consider the coherence of each individual book, the nature of the relationship between Hebrew wisdom and other sapiential traditions and will examine to what extent the Wisdom tradition diverges from other perspectives within the Hebrew Bible.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Critical reflections x 10	Short reflections on readings	50
Exam		50

REU33322 Reformation and Enlightenment

Module Coordinator: Dr Andrew Pierce

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

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

- Identify key themes of theological and philosophical dispute concerning theological anthropology and the wider project of 'reform' from the turn of the High Middle Ages to Nominalism in their relevance for the Reformation and for Modernity.
- Present accurately and creatively key interpretative conflicts within and between the Western Christian traditions and their key representatives.
- Map the historiographical legacies of the Reformation and Enlightenment debates for Christian theologies.

Content

This module explores the new theological paradigms associated with the European Christian Reformations of the sixteenth century and the Enlightenment, setting them in the context of the nominalist challenge to the grand synthesis of faith and reason associated with the scholastic achievements of the thirteenth century. Debates over the justification of the sinful human person, and the wide-ranging consequences of theological anthropology frame the ecclesiological, social, and political consequences of the Reformations, to which the ethical concerns of the Enlightenment's concern with autonomous human reason were a response. The module concludes with an analysis of theological efforts to reformulate the tasks of theology in a post-Enlightenment context.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay Plan	Essay Plan (500 words)	Nil
Essay	3,500	100

REU33332 God and Human Freedom

Module Coordinator: TBA

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

The aims of this module are: 1. To introduce students to the long tradition of theological reflection on being human in Christian sources.

Content

This module studies what it means to be human from the perspective of theology. The study begins within the horizon of Jewish experience as articulated especially in the early chapters of the book of Genesis. The themes of the human reality as the Imago Dei, of sanctification, of deification, as well as the theme of deep-seated human alienation, are studied. In the Western tradition grace became a key concept in the articulation of the interplay of divine and human in history. The module studies its deployment through the centuries. Running through the module is the question, the debate, as to whether there are resources in theological anthropology for an understanding of human nature which have been lost in modern culture.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exercise	Response to a Circulated Text – 1,000 words	40
Essay	Extended Argument – 1,500 words	60

REU33522 Environmental and Technology Ethics

Module Coordinator: Dr Cathriona Russell

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This module explores key concepts and debates in environmental and technology ethics: the commitments and values operative in models of sustainable development (theories of justice, capability and agency); questions of human populations (demographics, food production and security; sustainable transport; values at work in approaches to biodiversity conservation (wild, agricultural, urban); and conflicts and convergences in aiming for smart and sustainable cities.

Content

This module explores key concepts and debates in environmental and technology ethics: productionism and the ‘tragedy of the commons’; instrumental versus intrinsic value; demographics and consumption; food security and related aspects of animal agriculture; justice and sustainable development; environmental citizenship and the possibilities for a habitable planet. It will examine key ethics responses rooted in hermeneutics, in philosophical and religious traditions (examples from Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Daoism), in imagination (utopian fiction and fictions) and characterise the role of the ethicist in ‘expert’ cultures and in policy development in Ireland, the EU and internationally.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Formative	Poster	40
Formative	Essay/Policy 2,000 words self-chosen topic in consultation with lecturer.	60

REU33713 Life of Muhammad: Sources, Methods and Debates

Module Coordinator: Dr Zohar Hadromi-Allouche

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

In this module students will engage and familiarise themselves, with,

1. Main themes in the life of the Prophet Muhammad
2. Available Islamic sources for the study of Muhammad's life
3. The construction of Muhammad's image in Islam.
4. Scholarly approaches to the life of Muhammad.
5. Islamic and scholarly debates concerning the life of Muhammad

Content

Muhammad is one of the most influential characters in history. This module discusses his diverse portrayals, from the ones found in the earliest available Islamic sources, to these days. It examines his biography in the early Islamic sources, as well as its diverse interpretations how in later Islamic writings, and modern scholarship.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay plan	Essay question, argument, methodology, structure, work plan, annotated bibliography (300 words)	20
Presentation	Class presentation	20
Essay	1x 3,000-word essay	60

SENIOR SOPHISTER (4TH YEAR)

Note to Visiting/ Exchange Students

*To take any of the Senior Sophister modules, you **must** be in year 3 or 4 in your home institution. Previous experience in religion modules is highly recommended.*

Please send your request to the relevant [Module Coordinator](#), including the Module Code you intend to study, your year of study, and your previous experience with Religion modules.

Michaelmas Term (Semester 1)

REU44043 Advanced Topics in Systematic Theology

Module Coordinator: Dr Fáinche Ryan

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module has two core aims: 1. that students might realise the importance and the complexity of truth-telling for human society; 2. that students might demonstrate critical reading and thinking skills.

Content

This module, rooted in an understanding of truth-telling as a virtue closely aligned to the virtue of justice (Thomas Aquinas), will explore the complexity of truth-telling interacting with locutors such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Elizabeth Anscombe, Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt. It will consider what it means to say 'God is truth', to describe Jesus Christ as the truth, and to speak of the Eucharist as the 'food of truth' and the implications of these theological statement. Fundamentally we shall consider whether Christian faith has insights to bring to the political arena, insights that might be helpful to all.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay		100
Interview/Discussion of the essay		

REU44511 Contemporary Asceticisms: Bodily Discipline and Meaning-Making in the Modern Age

Module Coordinator: Dr Alyson Staunton

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module aims to ground students in the theological understanding of the body and the ascetic traditions through which it was disciplined, from patristic and medieval Christianity to the secularising turn of modernity. It further aims to equip them with contemporary asceticism as an analytical framework, and to test its application across five contemporary domains in which the body remains a site of meaning-making and moral formation.

Content

The body in the Christian tradition – drawing on its classical and Judaic heritage – was considered as both entity to be disciplined and sacred as being configured *imago Dei*. This complex notion of the body was traditionally negotiated through the practice of asceticism: *askēsis* as training and discipline of the body toward an end beyond itself. That settlement is unsettled by secularisation, which is often assumed to mark the decline of religion and ethical authority in the West. What remains under-theorised is how ethical formation continues in societies where religious belief has lost authority without being replaced by a single, coherent secular moral framework.

Rather than understanding asceticism as a uniquely Christian practice, this module approaches it as a recurring mode of ethical formation in which bodily discipline is used to pursue meaning, identity, transcendence or moral transformation. It asks whether contemporary Western culture has abandoned asceticism—or merely relocated it into practices such as wellness culture, restrictive eating practices, gender transition, transhumanist optimisation and forms of climate activism. These are examined not simply as social phenomena but as symbolic attempts to impose structure, identity and meaning upon the body in a polarised and rapidly changing world.

The five case studies reflect overlapping arenas in which the body remains central to contemporary ethical and cultural debates. Each case study draws on primary theological, scientific and cultural texts to explore how practices of embodied meaning-making evolve under different historical and social pressures. For example, might embodied climate protest be understood as a secular form of prophecy or martyrdom? Anorexia nervosa as a postmodern echo of medieval mysticism? Or transhumanism as a yearning for transcendence reinterpreted through secular individualism?

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay	2,000–3,000 words	70
Presentation and Discussion		30

REU44752 – Between the Quran and Bible: Biblical Characters in Islamic Contexts

Module Coordinator: Dr Zohar Hadromi-Allouche

Semester: Michaelmas – Semester 1

Learning Aims

This module aims to

- Provide an overview of the relationship between the Quran and the Bible
- Provide an overview of biblical characters in the Quran and early Islamic literature
- Present and discuss the development and reconstruction of such characters over time and genres from the Bible to the emergence of Islam
- Demonstrate how such reconstructions represent, and shape, inter-religious and internal religious polemics
- Examine how such characters and their Islamic reconstruction contribute to our understanding of the emergence of Islam

Content

Mary, Jesus, Eve, Joseph, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba are but a few of the many biblical characters whom the Quran discusses. In this module we will —

- Learn about shared characters between the Quran and Bible, and their diverse roles in each tradition.
- Follow the development of specific characters over time and genre, in the broader context of religion, history, and culture.
- Examine the dynamics of portraying, constructing, and re-constructing such characters, from the Bible to the Quran and early Islamic era.

- Explore the diverse functions of such characters in each religious context
- Discuss what such characters and their (re)construction tell us about the emergence of Islam and its religious milieu.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Essay plan (350 words)	Essay question, argument, methodology, structure, work plan	10
Essay bibliography — annotated (500 words)	Full bibliographic details of 5 sources for the essay, describing their content & relevance for the essay question	20
Presentation	1x Class presentation	20
Essay	1x 3,500-word essay	50

Hilary Term (Semester 2)

REU44722 The Dead Sea Scrolls

Module Coordinator: Prof. Benjamin Wold

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

The aim of this module to assess critically the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the study of the Hebrew Bible, early Judaism, and early Christianity

Content

Discovered by Bedouin shepherds in the Judean desert beginning in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls rank among the most extraordinary finds of the modern era. They preserve a vast archive of ancient Jewish texts offering an unparalleled glimpse into the diversity of thought and practice in the Second Temple period. These manuscripts have reshaped our understanding of early Judaism and the world from which Christianity emerged.

This module introduces students to the contents, controversies, and contexts of the Scrolls. We explore the archaeology of Qumran, the scribal practices evident in over 900 manuscripts, and the complex question of who lived near the caves. We also delve into

modern issues: the ethics of manuscript acquisition, the problem of forgeries in museum collections, and how digital imaging and AI-driven tools are transforming Scrolls research today.

Students will engage directly with key compositions (e.g., the Community Rule, the Hodayot, and the War Scroll) while developing critical skills in manuscript analysis, genre identification, and historical contextualization. By the end of the semester, students will be equipped to situate the Scrolls within broader debates about ancient identity, authority, and the interpretation of sacred texts.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Exam	End of term 3-hour exam	50
Essay	1 x 3,000-word essay	50

REU44732 Religion and Multiple Modernities

Module Coordinator: Dr Alexandra Grieser

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

The aim of this module is to analyze and discuss the relationship between religion and modernity and how we can best understand the role of religion today. It traces the radical critique of concepts such as secularization and modernization as outcomes of a colonial, Eurocentric history, and introduces alternative possibilities. These debates will be tested by studying empirical cases, demonstrating that religion and modernity interact in many, often unexpected ways around the world.

Content

The relationship between Religion and Modernity has been a contested field of debate, and given the fast pace of changes in all areas of cultural life, it is even questioned how we should identify the era in which we live, and what role religion plays in it: is it modernity, late, post, or meta-modernity? And should we still use this model at all, realizing the Eurocentric ideas that are connected with it? And what does this mean for how we write a History of Religion in Modernity? Over a long time, Western scholarship expected religion to decline or even vanish in the course of modernization and that global developments would follow the “Western model”. However, from the 1970s on it became clear that secularization rather meant pluralization, and that pluralization not necessarily means a loss or decline of religion, but a change of form and function: diverse modernities became

visible, including authoritarian forces that work against pluralism as an element of a “world society”. Taking S. Eisenstadt’s concept of “Multiple Modernities as a vantage point, we will explore areas of social transformation, and how to discover religion as a vital part of these dynamic changes.

Phenomena such as the rising Pentecostalism in the Americas and Africa, controversies around religious symbols in the public sphere, new links between religion and political populism, “new spirituality” as well as “new atheism” and religiously embedded terrorism made clear that no simple explanation would help to understand the complexity of the changing roles of religion in recent history. Seeking to develop models of explanation, scholars offered a variety of concepts and ideas, some comparing our time with the ancient period of the so-called Axial Age, when the major religions of today began to develop.

We will take a closer look at these concepts and the arguments they put forward. They will lead us to studying “religion as relations”, addressing cases from diverse fields and cultural areas:

- how religion interacts with social transformations, as a political power and a means of protest
- how religious feminism can be conservative and innovative at the same time
- how science and art interact with religion
- how the religious and the secular are at the centre of how we see the modern
- how religion diffuses into popular culture and the media
- how death and dying in modern societies creates religious and secular responses
- how Occultism and Esotericism interact with modernity
- how thinkers of modernity made religion a core theme
- how religion shifted from dogma and belief to feeling and embodied experience

Cases may vary and can be adapted to students’ interests.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Formative and summative assignment	4x short Reaction Sheet: provide a starting point for discussion of an assigned text (500 words)	40
Transfer of Knowledge	Student conference paper or introductory lecture, self-chosen focus; short ppt for class discussion and written text of 2,500-3,000 words	60

REU44742 – Ancient Indian Religions

Module Coordinator: Dr Seema Chauhan

Semester: Hilary – Semester 2

Learning Aims

This course introduces students to the earliest available records for Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism from 1000 BCE-300 CE. In particular, students will question the concept of “origin” both within the context of Early India as well as within the history of the study of religion.

Content

From the 1800’s up until the present day, academics have spilled much ink trying to find the so-called origin of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. But what is at stake in trying to identify the “origin” of such traditions? Can we talk about “origins”? Can we even talk about “Hinduism” “Buddhism” and “Jainism” as distinct religious identities? In order to answer these questions, this course surveys the history of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism in South Asia through the earliest available textual and material evidence from 7000 BCE to 200 CE.

Each week, we will read sources that (supposedly!) articulate the “origin” of key religious terms, debates, and identities in Ancient India. In doing so, we will reflect on the content, method, and theory for the study of Ancient Indian religions. In terms of content, this course interrogates the claim that “Hinduism”, “Buddhism” and “Jainism” arose independently of one-another. We will, instead, explore when and how South Asian communities began to distinguish themselves through dialogical interaction with one-another before the common era. In terms of method, this course challenges the idea that we can recover the history of Ancient Indian religions through a single religion or medium. We will read across the boundaries of religious identities, as well as across the boundary between textual and archaeological evidence to recover the dynamic past of India. Finally, in

terms of the history of the study of religion, we will reflect on the impact that the search for “origins” in India has had in the academy writ large.

Module Assessment

Assessment Component	Assessment Description	% of total
Discussion Posts	200-300-word response to a prompt. 7 discussion posts in total, worth 10% each	70
Oral Exam	20 mins in-person examination with notes permitted.	30

CONTACT US

If you have any questions about the modules, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Undergraduate Administrator, [School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies](#)

Trinity College Dublin – East Campus

srundergrad@tcd.ie | [See where we are on the Trinity campus map](#)