

BCRE08 Religion in Public – Great Speeches

Semester: A

ECTS Credits: 5

Duration: 11 weeks

Contact Hours: 22

Quota: None

Prerequisite subjects: None

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. 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 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 multi-cultural 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:

Burchardt, M., and Wohlrab-Sahr, M. (eds.),

“Multiple Secularities: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age”, Special Issue of *International Sociology* 28 (2013).

Butler, J., Habermas, J., Taylor, C., West, C., *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)

Habermas, J., *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Th. Burger (Cambridge/Mass.: MIT Press, 1989)

Houck, D.W., and D.E. Dixon (eds), *Rhetoric, Religion, and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954- 1965* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).

Johnson, P., Habermas: *Rescuing the Public Sphere* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Lincoln, B., *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Meyer, Birgit; Moors, Annelies, (ed.), *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

Montefiore, S.S. (ed.), *Speeches that Changed the World* (London: Quercus, 2015).

Rhys, H.W., and S.M. Alexander, “Religious Rhetoric in American Populism: Civil Religion as Movement Ideology”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1994), 1-15.

Sockness, B.W., and Gräb, W. (eds), *Schleiermacher, the Study of Religion, and the Future of Theology. A Transatlantic Dialogue* (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2010).

Warner, M., *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002). Wilson, E. K., *After Secularism: Rethinking Religion in Global Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

Assessment: CA and one 3,000 word essay

Lecturers: Profs. A. Grieser, C. Russell, M. Junker-Kenny, Dr. W. Young