

Rebellion, Reform and Revolt in the Sixteenth Century: the Career of Martin Luther

Modern History (DNU), School of History and Cultures

College of Arts and Law

Details

Code 22804

Level of study Third/Final year

Credit value 20

Semester 1&2

Module description

The career of the German Protestant reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) was one of utmost significance to many aspects of European history, including theology, politics, society, art, music, mass communication, and even the development of an early form of German nationalism. Such an important and sometimes controversial figure is well worth close study in his own right; the vicissitudes of the career of Luther also offer, however, a structure that allows for further insights into the complex political, religious, social and cultural context in which the reformer lived. The module is therefore ostensibly structured around Luther's life and career, moving from the development of his views on justification and the church of his day to the means by which his message was spread and the ways in which it was received. The second semester will focus on aspects of Luther's leadership of the church that came to bear his name, including examination of his views of religious radicalism, education, women, Jews and Muslims. Along the way, however, much larger themes will also be explored, including the nature of late medieval/early modern religion; Renaissance humanist thought and culture; early-modern European power politics (especially in relation to Rome); power and patronage in the Holy Roman Empire of the sixteenth century; the nature of mass communication in the sixteenth century (with particular reference to use of the new medium of printing); warfare and rebellion in the sixteenth century; and early-modern society and culture in its rural and urban contexts, including the position of women and the ethnic and religious 'other'.