# **Department of Theology & Religion**

# **Module Descriptions 2024/25**

# **Level I (i.e. 2nd Yr.) Modules**

Please be aware that all modules are subject to availability.

For many of these modules, some experience of studying Theology may be required, and you should remember this when choosing your modules. If there is another module that you need to have studied before taking this, it will be stated in the module description.

Please note that at the time this document has been prepared (February 2024) the following information is provisional, and there may be minor changes between now and the beginning of 2024/25 academic year.

**Please note: Forms of assessment are currently undergoing review for 2024/25, and as a result the assessment information listed within this handbook may be subject to change.**

# **SEMESTER 1 MODULES**

## **LI Religion in the Public Sphere**

Module Code: 34020

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 1

Prerequisites: None

**Module Description**

This module consolidates learning gained in the first year and continues to bring their concerns, insights and methods into dialogue by focussing on issues and regions of concern in the contemporary world. A main aim of the module is to ensure that students can offer analysis and advice in public arenas on religious, political and philosophical issues in an informed and robust manner and can explain the value and skills of their degree studies to prospective employers.

The module will enable students to analyse issues and policies concerning religion arising in the public square.

The module proceeds by equipping students with background and analytic tools developing and understanding and ability to use principles and approaches to understanding religion and social and intellectual context via looking at issues and varying contexts in the history of religious and social relations. Students will then be able to apply these principles and approaches to the analysis of current issues in a variety of contexts around the contemporary world.

Assessment

* Essay (1500 words) 40% of mark
* Policy Brief (2500 words) 60% of mark

(Both to be submitted in semester 1)

## **LI Boundaries of Truth in Christian Theology: Development and Context of Christian Doctrines**

Module Code: 35139

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 1

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This second year module introduces students to the development and content of central Christian doctrines, with particular focus, but not limited to, Christology, Soteriology and Ecclesiology. It highlights key events and ideas that have impacted the development of Christian thought, such as church councils, heresies and schisms

Assessment

EITHER

Write a theological introduction to and an interpretive commentary on an icon (or an alternative piece of Christian art), explicating its inherent theological vision of Christ, and/or the church and/or the world. (4000 words) (100%)

OR

Write a theological introduction to and an interpretive commentary on a text from the module’s assigned readings. (4000 words) (100%)

OR

Write an essay on a theological issue discussed in the module. (4000 words) (100%)

## **LI Dharmic Religions and Traditions**

Module Code: 36086

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 1

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

Dharmic traditions such as – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism – cannot be confined under the Western construct of “religion” and this module will encourage students to look beyond Western perspectives. This module will introduce students to one or more Indic dharmic traditions, exploring the concept of dharma through that tradition. Students will study key concepts, ideas and practices such as attitudes towards the afterlife, reincarnation, liberation, and concepts such as compassion, selfless service, environment to understand notions of duty, doing good deeds, religious practice, and achieving fulfilment. By addressing the ‘central and fundamental’ beliefs of a tradition students will learn the distinctive features of how dharma has been understood and developed in that tradition. There will also be opportunity to consider some and connect the common features and differences by a comparative focus with on Indic encounters and engagement with key Dharmic concepts, through another tradition, such as Indic Sufism. It will also encourage students to see how these religions and their communities have influenced, engaged with, and adapted through encounters with, and by living in, the ‘West’.

Assessment

2 x 2000 word essays (50% each).

## **LI Representations of the Divine**

Module Code: 38203

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 1

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This module examines how people mentally represent God, or the “Divine,” as well as the personal and social outcomes of these representations. Topics will include questions of “why do people believe in God?”, looking at cognitive universals across religions and cultures. They will also include questions of “how do people believe in God?”, which will examine factors such as the importance of social context, individual differences in how people describe God, features of people’s relationships with God, the complexity of how people think about God, and cross-religious differences or similarities. Students will examine and reflect on the extent to which representations of God or the Divine have implications for people, on both individual (e.g., how people cope with negative life events) and social (e.g., how people relate to other people) levels.

**Assessments**

1 x 1500 word preparatory assignment for creative project (50%)

1 x 1500 word explanatory commentary of creative project (50%)

## **LI Evil in the Human Condition**

Module Code: 40039

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 1

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

The module will address issues and questions in relation to the topic of evil that occur at the ‘borderlands’ between Philosophy and Theology/Religion. The module will focus on: a) the human predicament as described in a number of selected religious and philosophical traditions; and b) the meaning and goal of human life, again, as understood in a number of selected religious or philosophical traditions, in relation to the theme of evil as explored in those traditions.

**Assessment**

1 x 4000 word essay (100%).

# **SEMESTER 2 MODULES**

## **Auschwitz in History and Memory**

Module Code: 28668

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This interdisciplinary Holocaust studies module explores Auschwitz in history and memory.

Topics covered relating to KL Auschwitz include the evolution and multi-functionality of the site; the experience of non-Jews; gendered experiences; the nature of survival and resistance in KL Auschwitz; the Auschwitz Sonderkommando; perpetrators and perpetrator texts.

Study of Auschwitz in memory will focus on the ‘afterlife’ of the site, both as a physical location/memorial and as a symbol: visual representations of Auschwitz; memorialization of the site; the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; Auschwitz as a site of mass/dark/Holocaust tourism, and a site of pilgrimage and (contested) sacred space.

Assessment

1 x 3000 word essay (50%)

1 x 24-hour take home exam (50%)

## **Religion and the Arts**

Module Code: 34948

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This module will assess the importance and significance of art (and ‘the arts’ more broadly framed) in its many different forms as a tool for communication, interpretation and critique of religious and theological ideas and ideologies. It will focus on, for example, a range of artefacts, including works of fine art, stained glass, sculpture, literature, film and music, and upon buildings and architectural features, offering and introduction to the development of religious art and seeking to read a range of works from religious and secular perspectives. Students will learn how to read and appreciate such artefacts as theological resources as well as cultural ones, and reflect upon issues such as what it is that makes art religious and how cultural outputs and artefacts can have spiritual impact.

Assessment

1 x 2500 word portfolio (60%)

1 x 1500 word review (40%)

## **LI Gender, Sexualities and Religion**

Module Code: 40040

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This module explores the complicated and often heated relationship between LGBTQ movements, feminist movements and religion/spirituality. It investigates how social and political constructions of gender and sexuality are challenged, both by those who attempt to reform religious traditions from within and those who break away to invent new forms of spirituality. The focus will typically be on particular texts from particular religious traditions from the last fifty years. Topics include power, authority, experience, community, minorities. The module is usually divided into three textual blocs, enabling comparisons between perspectives across religious traditions, regions, and languages.

**Assessment:**

2 x 2,000 words essay (50% each)

## **LI Critical Issues in Theology, Religion and Education**

Module Code: 37672

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This module introduces students to key, critical issues in British Religious Education and orients them to the current climate and significant debates defining the subject area. Students will gain insight into educational theory and practice alongside engagement with disciplinary research in Theology and Religion and its applicability in the classroom. The module allows students to examine closely areas of current curriculum focus with guided insight into the challenges and potential impact of exploring these in classroom settings. Throughout the module, students will gain an appreciation of teaching and learning in religion that is closely integrated with educational perspectives, asking what is meant by the ‘religious’ aspect of Religious Education in contemporary, multifaith society.

**Assessment:**

1 x Essay of 2,500 words (50%)

1 x Lesson plan with annotated bibliography (2,000-word equivalent) (50%)