

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS UJ

Courses in English

2019/2020

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winter semester					
No.	Course	Lecturer	Form	Hours	ECTS
1	Tantra – religious phenomena in the past and in the contemporary India	dr Robert Czyżykowski	seminar	30	5
2	Ancient Mediterranean Religions	dr hab. Ioanna Patera	lecture + classes	30+30	6
3	Greek ways to honour the gods: the festivals	dr hab. Ioanna Patera	lecture + classes	30+30	6
4	Animal symbolism in world religions	dr hab. Małgorzata Sacha	seminar	30	4
5	Homo spectator - religion and the visual	dr Urszula Idziak-Smoczyńska	lecture + classes	30	4

summer semester					
No.	Course	Lecturer	Format	Hours	ECTS
1	New Religious Phenomena in Centemporary World: Invented Religions	dr hab. Piotr Czarnecki	seminar	30	4
2	Acts of religion: Oath, Prayer, Parable in Contemporary Philosophy	dr Urszula Idziak-Smoczyńska	lecture	30	4
3	Psychoanalysis and religion	dr hab. Małgorzata Sacha	seminar	30	4
4	"Root of all evil?" - social consequences of religiosity	dr Aneta Czernatowicz-Kukuczka	seminar	30	4
5	Between Athens and Mecca. Premodern philosophy in the Eastern Mediterranean	dr Anna Izdebska	seminar	30	4
6	Islam in the West	dr Joanna Krotofil	seminar	30	4
7	Religion and the City	dr Natalia Zawiejska	seminar	30	4
8	Introduction to Medieval Jewish Thought	dr Łukasz Stypuła	seminar	30	4
9	Yoga in Theory and Practice	dr Matylda Ciołkosz	lecture/seminar	30	4

Tantra – religious phenomena in the past and in the contemporary India

Lecturer: dr Robert Czyżykowski

Term: winter

5 ECTS

30 hours

Form of credit: oral exam

Language: English

Programme: The course is an introduction to the study of the one of the most prominent but also misunderstood element of the Indian religions – Tantric traditions. The participants of the course will be acquainted with the topics covering the genesis, historical development, social institutions, initiation rituals and esoteric aspects of these tradition in various religious context. Special interest will enjoy the area of the various methods of religious practice used in Tantric traditions. A dominant part of the course is description of the most prominent Tantric traditions, namely Vaishnava, Śaiva and Śakta religions with some introduction to the Buddhist Tantric tradition. After completing the course students will be able to integrate and evaluate the knowledge about Tantric groups in India and in limited degree outside the India. Students will gain awareness of the proposed methodologies for studying such religious phenomena.

Method of evaluation: 1/ Oral exam 2/ Grading the preparation for classes – topic discussion and paper presentation

Ancient Mediterranean religions

Lecturer: dr hab. Ioanna Patera

Term: winter

6 ECTS

60 hours

lectures + classes

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: This course offers an overall picture of the main topics of religions of the ancient Mediterranean. Cosmogonies and theogonies will be presented and compared, illustrating the contacts between various cultures. Their main gods will be presented through their myths and cults. Human behaviour towards gods and other supernatural beings will illustrate general patterns and a number of variations.

Method of evaluation: Class Participation: 30% of a total grade Essay: 30% of a total grade. Oral examination: 40 % of a total grade.

Greek ways to honour the gods: the festival

Lecturer: dr hab. Ioanna Patera

Term: winter

6 ECTS

60 hours

lectures + classes

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: This course offers a detailed picture of the setting of Greek festivals. The various means to repeatedly honour the gods will be examined in order to differentiate what is meaningful in each case. These settings will be compared to the discourses about the origins of festivals, the myths regarding the honoured gods and the actual way of honouring them. Variations of patterns will be examined as ways to differentiate the meaningful and the specific aspect making each of the festivals recognizable and unique. We shall examine the great and smaller festivals, their settings and organization, the administration of the sanctuaries as well as the overall modern theories mostly regarding the nature of the honoured gods.

Method of evaluation: The module is credited on the basis of the following requirements: 1/ Class Participation: 30% of a total grade, 2/ Essay: 30% of a total grade, 3/ Oral examination: 40 % of a total grade

Animal symbolism in world religions

Lecturer: dr hab. Małgorzata Sacha

Term: winter

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: The aim of this course is to provide a broad insight into the symbolism of animals and, especially, into the phenomenon of therianthropy and theriomorphism in the chosen world religions. First, students will be introduced to key issues of the Human-Animal Studies (HAS). Then, some anthropological and psychological aspects of the human-animal interactions will be discussed. The course focuses on the issue of animal symbolism in both prehistory and ancient cultures and religions of the Near East, Europe, Asia and America. The most prominent mythical and animal figures, like the animal guardian, trickster, psychopomp etc. will be discussed in the light of the contemporary methodological discourse on the comparative religion and iconology.

Method of evaluation: To get credits students are obliged to complete the assigned tasks (readings, active participation, essay) and pass an oral final exam. Up to two absences to be admitted to the final exam; to approve the exam it is necessary to score over 50%. **Class participation** (discussion, Q&A): 30% of a total grade). **Essay:** 25% of a total grade. **Oral examination:** 50 % of a total grade.

Homo Spectator – religion and the visual

Lecturer: dr Urszula Idziak-Smoczyńska

Term: winter

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

forms of credit: credit on the assessment

language: English

Programme: The course will be devoted to the analysis of religion and the visual from several perspectives under which aesthetics and theology meet each other – 1) enchantment and disenchantment of art in the realm of postsecularism, 2) the confessing function of art, 3) metamorphosis and catharsis - the ritual in art, 4) the idolatric and iconic function of art, 5) vision and blindness - from faith to art, 6) transgression as origin of both religion and art.

Aisthesis was focused on how we perceive. Sense perception links the inner world to the outer world, it links my world with the world of others. Moreover, following Ricoeur, we can say that perception gives rise to symbols, and symbols give rise to thought” (Chidester). Religion follows the same pattern. Of course religion in terms of numinotic or mystical experience is basically nonmaterialistic but the variety of sensual experience ends up in the variety of religious worlds (James). Religious experience in its attempt to find an adequate language to express the ineffable approaches art, and art approaches religion looking for its origin. The Platonic cavern echoes Lascaux where man has left a trace of his hand for his descendants. This trace is not the imitation of an imitation (Plato) but rather the trace of an absence – it signals that the art as well as language, are based on distance. That meaning means porosity of being. “Without separation there is no image” (Mondzain). Through a focus on language as an independent system of differentiation (de Saussure, Jakobson) or a language game (Wittgenstein) the postsecular age rediscovers the sacrum of the letter -grammar as theology (Nietzsche, Wittgenstein). The visual –through paintings, video art, movies and art performances echoes this sensibility towards language embodied in the work of art.

Method of evaluation: discussions during classes and consultations of the video project

New religious phenomena in contemporary world: Invented Religions

Lecturer: dr hab. Piotr Czarnecki

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

forms of credit: credit on the assessment

language: English

Programme: The aim of a course is a deep, academic analysis of the new, controversial religious phenomena – the Invented Religions, with its main branches: Joke Religions, Parody Religions, Fiction-Based Religions and Socially Involved Invented Religions.

The analysis of source materials, and scholars' treatises shall give the answers to the fundamental questions of the origins, the specificity and inspirations of such groups. Another important issue will be the analysis of the relations between Invented Religions and other contemporary phenomena, such as New Religious Movements, New Age or pop-culture, that will enable to distinguish characteristic features of Invented religions, to define them and also to give answer to the question: whether such phenomena, that claim to be religions, can be considered religious by the scholars. The answer to the question whether Invented Religions can be called religions, according to the academic definitions is crucial also from the legal point of view, because it determines the attitude of the law towards such phenomena. During the course, students will discuss source materials and academic texts concerning invented religions, listen to the lectures and watch the multi-media presentations. They will also have the opportunity to present the effects of their own research on a chosen group (or groups) belonging to the current of Invented Religions in the final essay and in the presentations prepared for the classes.

Method of evaluation: essay

Acts of Religion: Oath, Prayer, Parable in Contemporary Philosophy

Lecturer: dr Urszula Idziak-Smoczyńska

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

monographic lecture

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: The course will be devoted to the analysis of selected religious categories present in contemporary philosophical discourse. The choice of the parable, the oath and the prayer offers a wide perspective on the philosophical dialogue with religion in the XXth/XXIst centuries, spreading from individualistic approach (prayer) to political theory (oath). Although this choice is primarily dictated by a linguistic revolution in the realm of continental philosophy drawing on meaning only through linguistic figures. The oath, the prayer and the parable will thus be taken under consideration as a grammar of religious experience, in accordance with Nietzsche's statement that we won't get rid of God being still faithful to grammar".

1) The narrative of the end of metaphysics, 2) Zoon legon echon, 3) The cartesian fable as method, 4) The history of „mana” as floating signifier, 5) Against communication, 6)The parable as new philosophical paradigm, 7)The parable of the prodigal son between Jews and Christians, 8) Ludwig Wittgenstein as a philosopher of the parable, 9) The body as subject of confession? 10) Performative certainty, 11) A prayer for the impossible, 12) Walter Benjamin and the language of justice, 13) The archeology of the oath, 14) The confessing subject, 15) The calling subject

Method of evaluation: active participation

Psychoanalysis and religion

Lecturer: dr hab. Małgorzata Sacha

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: The aim of the course is to provide a broad insight into psychoanalytic theorizing and research on religion. Relevant perspectives from the history of the psychoanalytic thought as well as methodological discussion, will be part of the course. Readings and discussions will be situated within the area of the cross-disciplinary studies.

Method of evaluation: To get credits students are obliged to complete the assigned tasks (readings, active participation, essay) and pass an oral final exam. Up to two absences to be admitted to the final exam; to approve the exam it is necessary to score over 50%. **Class participation** (discussion, Q&A): 30% of a total grade). **Essay:** 25% of a total grade. **Oral examination:** 50 % of a total grade.

„Root of all evil?” – social consequences of religiosity

Lecturer: dr Aneta Czernatowicz-Kukuczka

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: The vast majority of people around the world identify themselves as religious and/or spiritual. Constantly, religion influences not only psychological functioning of an individual, but also exerts strong impact on various social and political phenomena. Given the current socio-political tensions around the world, it seems crucial to understand what is the role of religion in shaping intergroup relations. Indeed, in psychology we can find number of studies on the consequences of religiosity, e.g. for political views, violence, but for also for prosocial behaviours and altruism. The course will introduce students to the social consequences of religion from psychological perspective. The real-world applicability of the results will be also discussed.

Method of evaluation: To get credits students are obliged to complete the assigned tasks (readings and questions prior to each class, active participation: 20%), prepare research proposal (40%) and pass a written final exam (40%). Up to two absences to be admitted to the final exam; to approve the exam it is necessary to score over 50%.

Between Athens and Mecca. Premodern philosophy in the Eastern Mediterranean

Lecturer: dr Anna Izdebska

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: The course will introduce students to changes and developments in the practice of philosophy from Archaic Greece (8th-6th c. BC) to Classical Islam (9th-13th c. AD), paying special attention to the transitional period linking the two “cultural worlds”, Greece and Islam, that is Late Antiquity (3rd-8th c. AD). By paying equal attention to both cultures, Ancient Greek and Medieval Islamic, it will make it possible to the students to understand the ways in which philosophy changed within each of these cultures and – most importantly – in the process of transitioning between the two, which occurred in Late Antiquity. In this way, the students will be able to appreciate the uniqueness of the medieval Graeco-Arabic translation movement and its significance in global history. Moreover, for those students with little knowledge of the Ancient Greek or Classical Islamic philosophy, the course will also serve as a brief (“crash-course”) introduction into each of these philosophical cultures. The lectures will focus on general phenomena as well as specific philosophical traditions, in particular Pythagoreanism, which will make it possible to explain the nuances of the philosophical transformations that took place within and in between the Greek and Arabic philosophical cultures.

Method of evaluation: E-learning: weekly tasks on the PEGAZ platform (simple quiz; brief (2-3 sentences) answers to open questions; brief (up to 100-200 words, only once or twice during the whole course) written statements on topics provided by the lecturer. Final test: online test (single choice) or a 1000-word essay on a selected topic (at the request of a student).

Islam and the West

Lecturer: dr Joanna Krotofil

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

Form of credit: exam

language: English

Programme: The module draws on empirical studies and theories developed within sociology and social anthropology to illuminate current position of Islam and Muslims in Europe. Subjects discussed in this module include ethnicity, identity, globalisation, multiculturalism, gender, Islamophobia and conversion to Islam. Diverse European contexts will be considered for comparative purposes. The discussion will focus on the construction of Muslim identity in the context of multiculturalism, immigration and the place of religion in public life. Western conversions to Islam and Islamophobia will be discussed as two examples of „Western encounters with Islam“. Focusing on these examples students will discuss the processes shaping representation of Muslims and Islam in the media, politics and public life. Through critical reflections on conversion narratives students will also consider the question whether converts possess full agency over their religious transformation or whether they operate under the constraints of social determinism or the influence of broader processes of religious change.

Method of evaluation: essay, activity of the student

Religion and the City

Lecturer: dr Natalia Zawiejska

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: This course gives an insight in to the different dimensions of the presence and dynamics of religion in the city scape. The main framework of the course is the spatial turn in the humanities that allows to analyze the space as the social process. As contemporary religion is prevailingly an urban phenomenon, understanding the agency and presence of religion in the urban environment becomes crucial for recognizing ontological status of religion in the contemporary world. During the course several approaches to spatiality and research methods connected to the spatial analysis are exposed and employed in the analysis of the dynamics of religion in the city. The course gives an overview of the main topics important for the contemporary debate on the place of religion in the urban public sphere. It dwells on variety of examples as European, Asian and African. However the course focuses on the local, East European and Polish specifics by encouraging students to work on several small research projects on Cracow's religioscape. By this the course formula oscillates between seminar and research workshop.

Method of evaluation: Exam – project presentation, class assignments – homework, projects presentations, active class participation.

Introduction to Medieval Jewish thought

Lecturer: dr Łukasz Stypuła

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

seminar

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: In response to the development of systematic theology by Christians and Muslims, medieval Jewish thinkers also produced a body of thought which presents Jewish beliefs by means of philosophical methods and ideas. They are grappled with many issues, and approached common questions in different ways. The variety of medieval Jewish Thought will draw from the writings of the rabbinic thinkers such as Sa'adia Ga'on, Bahya ibn Pakuda, Judah Halevi, Maimonides, Nachmanides, Menachem ha-Meiri and the Zoharic circle. Each unit (II-IX) will create an opportunity to enter into the world and conceptual thought of a specific thinker, and ultimately afford broad picture that offers a thematic view. The course aims to provide participants with an understanding of the various trends and world-views of the above thinkers, and to recognize the two major schools of influence that they comprise: the Rationalist Aristotelian and the Mystical Neo-Platonist.

Method of evaluation: activity of the student during the classes, essay

Yoga in Theory and practice

Lecturer: dr Matylda Ciołkosz

Term: summer

4 ECTS

30 hours

lecture/seminar

Form of credit: exam

Language: English

Programme: The aim of the course is to get the participants acquainted with the polysemy of the term *yoga* and to instill in them a thorough understanding of the historical transformation of the concept of yoga and its applications.

Method of evaluation: Active participation in the discussion of pre-assigned readings. Final oral exam.