



VU University Amsterdam - Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid - M Theology and Religious Studies (res) - 2015-2016

Programme

The programme of the research master's programme consist of:

- 8 General Required Modules (6 in the first year, 2 in the second year),
- 4 Section Modules of the chosen department (section) (2 in the first year, 2 in the second year),
- 3 modules of the student's own choice (Professional Stream Modules or Section Modules offered by other sections).

The General Required Modules allow students to train academic and professional skills (such as research skills, hermeneutical reflection, ethical judgment, critical reasoning, and operating on the dynamics between theory and practice). Section modules concentrate on the research topics of the faculty's 6 research sections: Dogmatics and Ecumenics, Church History, Biblical Studies, Praxis, Philosophy of Religion, or Islamic Theology. Professional Stream Modules offer the theoretical knowledge of the professional fields of management, media, spiritual care and education (the specialisations of the 1-year master).

[-Programme overview Theology & Religious Studies \(research\) 2014-2015](#)

[-Programme overview Theology & Religious Studies \(research\) 2015-2016](#)

If you started the programme before 2013-2014 you will have to follow [alternative courses](#) for any fear year's courses you may still have to do.

Course descriptions

Index

Master Theology and Religious Studies Research year 1	1
Section Modules	1
Professional Stream Modules (Free Choice)	2
General Required Courses year 1	2
Master Theology and Religious Studies Research year 2	3
Section Modules	3
Professional Stream Modules (Free Choice)	4
General Required Courses year 1	4
Course: Building Interreligious Relations 1 (Period 1)	5
Course: Building Interreligious Relations 2 (Period 2)	6
Course: Classics 1 (Period 4)	8
Course: Classics 2 (Period 5)	8
Course: Hermeneutics, Community Formation and the Ethics of Interpretation (Period 1)	9
Course: Internship (Period 4+5)	10
Course: Just Peace: Peace and Justice (Period 1)	10
Course: Leadership 1: Psychological and Community Aspects (Period 1)	12
Course: Leadership 2: Leadership in a Context of Challenge and Renewal (Period 2)	13
Course: Master Seminar (Ac. Year (September))	15
Course: Media 1: Religion in a media age (Period 1)	15
Course: Media 2: Religion and popular culture (Period 2)	16
Course: Research Design (Period 3)	18
Course: Research Skills (Period 3)	19
Course: Specialization Course Biblical Studies 1: Text and History (Period 1)	19
Course: Specialization Course Biblical Studies 2: A Little Lower than the Angels (Period 2)	21
Course: Specialization Course Church History 1: Patristic Readings of Paul and their Reception (Period 1)	23
Course: Specialization Course Church History 2: The Reformation: the beginning of a modern world? (Period 2)	24
Course: Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 1: Novelty in God? (Period 1)	25
Course: Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 2: Sunday morning the most segregated hour (Period 2)	26
Course: Specialization Course Islamic Theology 1 (Period 1)	28
Course: Specialization Course Islamic Theology 2 (Period 2)	28
Course: Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 1: Contemporary Philosophy of Culture and Religion (Period 1)	28
Course: Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 2: Post-Shoa Studies: Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue (Period 2)	30
Course: Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 3: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mindfulness (Period 2)	31
Course: Specialization Course Praxis 1 (Period 1)	32
Course: Specialization Course Praxis 3: Religion and Trauma (Period 2)	32
Course: Spiritual Care 1 (Period 1)	32
Course: Spiritual Care 2 (Period 2)	33
Course: Thesis 2 year Masters (Period 4+5+6)	33

Master Theology and Religious Studies Research year 1

Programme components:

- Section Modules
- Professional Stream Modules (Free Choice)
- General Required Courses year 1

Section Modules

Courses:

Name	Period	Credits	Code
Specialization Course Biblical Studies 1: Text and History	Period 1	6.0	G_SMBW131
Specialization Course Biblical Studies 2: A Little Lower than the Angels	Period 2	6.0	G_SMBW132
Specialization Course Church History 1: Patristic Readings of Paul and their Reception	Period 1	6.0	G_SMKG131
Specialization Course Church History 2: The Reformation: the beginning of a modern world?	Period 2	6.0	G_SMKG132
Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 1: Novelty in God?	Period 1	6.0	G_SMDO131
Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 2: Sunday morning the most segregated hour	Period 2	6.0	G_SMDO132
Specialization Course Islamic Theology 1	Period 1	6.0	G_SMCIT131
Specialization Course Islamic Theology 2	Period 2	6.0	G_SMCIT132
Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 1: Contemporary Philosophy of Culture and Religion	Period 1	6.0	G_SMGF131
Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 2: Post-Shoa Studies: Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue	Period 2	6.0	G_SMGF132

Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 3: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mindfulness	Period 2	6.0	G_SMGF133
Specialization Course Praxis 1	Period 1	6.0	G_SMPR131
Specialization Course Praxis 3: Religion and Trauma	Period 2	6.0	G_SMPR132

Professional Stream Modules (Free Choice)

Courses:

Name	Period	Credits	Code
Building Interreligious Relations 1	Period 1	6.0	G_BIR1
Building Interreligious Relations 2	Period 2	6.0	G_BIR2
Just Peace: Peace and Justice	Period 1	6.0	G_JUSTPEACE
Leadership 1: Psychological and Community Aspects	Period 1	6.0	G_LEAD1
Leadership 2: Leadership in a Context of Challenge and Renewal	Period 2	6.0	G_LEAD2
Media 1: Religion in a media age	Period 1	6.0	G_MED1
Media 2: Religion and popular culture	Period 2	6.0	G_MED2
Spiritual Care 1	Period 1	6.0	G_SPICA1
Spiritual Care 2	Period 2	6.0	G_SPICA2

General Required Courses year 1

Courses:

Name	Period	Credits	Code
Classics 1	Period 4	6.0	G_CLAS1
Classics 2	Period 5	6.0	G_CLAS2
Hermeneutics, Community Formation and the Ethics of Interpretation	Period 1	6.0	G_MAHERMN
Internship	Period 4+5	12.0	G_INTERN
Master Seminar	Ac. Year (September)	6.0	G_MASEM

Research Skills	Period 3	6.0	G_RESSK
-----------------	----------	-----	---------

Master Theology and Religious Studies Research year 2

Programme components:

- Section Modules
- Professional Stream Modules (Free Choice)
- General Required Courses year 1

Section Modules

Courses:

Name	Period	Credits	Code
Specialization Course Biblical Studies 1: Text and History	Period 1	6.0	G_SMBW131
Specialization Course Biblical Studies 2: A Little Lower than the Angels	Period 2	6.0	G_SMBW132
Specialization Course Church History 1: Patristic Readings of Paul and their Reception	Period 1	6.0	G_SMKG131
Specialization Course Church History 2: The Reformation: the beginning of a modern world?	Period 2	6.0	G_SMKG132
Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 1: Novelty in God?	Period 1	6.0	G_SMDO131
Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 2: Sunday morning the most segregated hour	Period 2	6.0	G_SMDO132
Specialization Course Islamic Theology 1	Period 1	6.0	G_SMCIT131
Specialization Course Islamic Theology 2	Period 2	6.0	G_SMCIT132
Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 1: Contemporary Philosophy of Culture and Religion	Period 1	6.0	G_SMGF131

Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 2: Post-Shoa Studies: Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue	Period 2	6.0	G_SMGF132
Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 3: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mindfulness	Period 2	6.0	G_SMGF133
Specialization Course Praxis 1	Period 1	6.0	G_SMPR131
Specialization Course Praxis 3: Religion and Trauma	Period 2	6.0	G_SMPR132

Professional Stream Modules (Free Choice)

Courses:

Name	Period	Credits	Code
Building Interreligious Relations 1	Period 1	6.0	G_BIR1
Building Interreligious Relations 2	Period 2	6.0	G_BIR2
Just Peace: Peace and Justice	Period 1	6.0	G_JUSTPEACE
Leadership 1: Psychological and Community Aspects	Period 1	6.0	G_LEAD1
Leadership 2: Leadership in a Context of Challenge and Renewal	Period 2	6.0	G_LEAD2
Media 1: Religion in a media age	Period 1	6.0	G_MED1
Media 2: Religion and popular culture	Period 2	6.0	G_MED2
Spiritual Care 1	Period 1	6.0	G_SPICA1
Spiritual Care 2	Period 2	6.0	G_SPICA2

General Required Courses year 1

Courses:

Name	Period	Credits	Code
Research Design	Period 3	6.0	G_RMARESD
Thesis 2 year Masters	Period 4+5+6	30.0	G_2MATHES

Building Interreligious Relations 1

Course code	G_BIR1 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. M. Moyaert
Examinator	prof. dr. M. Moyaert
Teaching staff	dr. G.D. Bertram-Troost, prof. dr. M. Moyaert
Teaching method(s)	Lecture
Level	400

Course objective

The student:

- has developed knowledge, understanding and competences in the field interreligious dialogue (incl. anthropological, philosophical, hermeneutical, political and ethical questions);
- can recognize, summarize and explain the dominant positions in the ongoing discussion about the (im-)possibility of interreligious dialogue;
- can integrate the insights from the course and use them to analyze and discuss articles written by authoritative thinkers;
- learns to make nuanced judgments about the complex matter of interreligious encounters;
- can integrate insights from this course and apply them to a case study;
- is aware of his/her own identity, fears, biases, and theological, philosophical, ethical and hermeneutical prejudices as s/he teaches about diversity issues. S/he has developed a capacity for metareflection on these issues and can reflect on all these elements as a proof of metareflection in the final paper.

Course content

Various processes of globalization have produced new patterns of religiosity that are far more complex and diversified than in the past. Migration streams, increased mobility, and changing means of communication have made the world smaller, as it were. Globalization has brought about a pluralization of the religious sphere, bringing other 'world' religions, such as Islam and different Asian traditions, to the West. At the beginning of the previous century, coming into contact with strange cultures, peoples, and religions remained a remote possibility for most people. Today we are confronted with otherness, whether we want it or not. Cultural and religious diversity are an integral part of life. The religious other is no longer an abstract figure but is seen in all her concreteness as neighbor, colleague, friend, spouse, etc. We mingle at school; work together as colleagues; we intermarry and raise our children in mixed families. This is not only true of the United States but, *pari passu*, is increasingly true for Europe (where Islam is the second largest religion, outpacing Judaism and Protestantism in Belgium and France) and even for Australia. This novel context raises numerous fundamental questions about how people belonging to these different traditions relate to one another; how do they meet? Can they understand one another? What to do with

possible conflicts? How can we understand the meaning of religious commitments? How does a context of pluralization affect the construction of religious identities?

It is clear that religious diversity is a fact. It is also a fact that religious diversity presents a challenge for society at large as well as for different working places (schools, hospitals, companies). In this course, we will delve deeply into the complexities related to the meeting between religions, so that students learn to get a better grasp of the deeper lying mechanisms that affect this meeting (for better or for worse). We will conclude this course with the examination of case studies, to which the insights of this course may be applied.

We will address fundamental questions touching upon:

1. How do we define religion; and how does the way we define religion affect the way we understand the meeting between religions?
2. How do we make sense of religious diversity. Why are there so many religions? How do they relate to one another?
3. What does it mean to be religiously committed in a time of detraditionalization, individualization and pluralization? How do identity and alterity relate to one another?
4. What is the relation between religion and conflict within the broader society? How can one deal with conflicting religious attachments?

Form of tuition

Interactive teaching environment with a variety of strategies: reading assignments, buzzing groups, posing questions and positions on Blackboard, log book, student presentations.

Alternating the focus is on theory or empirical studies/practice. Prior to some lectures students need to prepare a short assignment (see study agenda and announcements via Blackboard). Next to the short assignments, which stimulate a more active approach of the literature, there are also two bigger assignments which are part of the formal examination of the subject: 1. Writing a position paper, and 2. Writing a logbook.

Type of assessment

35% logbook

15% participation in class (preparation, discussion.)

50% paper

Student Responsibilities:

- Students come to class prepared to participate in the discussion;
- Students keep a logbook in which they consider the personal implications of the course;
- Students analyse and study the obligatory literature through specific study questions and assignments;
- Students contribute to the discussion.

Course reading

Articles posted on Blackboard.

Target group

For students who want to come to a better understanding of (philosophical, theological, hermeneutical and pedagogical) issues of religious diversity and interreligious dialogue.

Building Interreligious Relations 2

Course code	G_BIR2 ()
Period	Period 2

Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. A.L. Vroom
Examinator	dr. A.L. Vroom
Teaching staff	dr. A.L. Vroom
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar
Level	400

Course objective

1. Knowledge:

- the student knows of and can describe five local and five international grass roots projects in building relations between (strong/weak/hybrid) religious identities;
- the student knows of and can explain the basics of nonviolent communication;

2. Applied knowledge:

- the student can assess grass roots projects in building relations between (strong/weak/hybrid) religious identities and develop a concept of a new project;
- the student learns the basics of nonviolent communication and can use this in a self-organised interreligious dialogue;

3. Discernment and Academic Judgment:

- the student can describe, compare, and evaluate grass root projects building interreligious relations to create a new project her/himself;

4. Communication:

- the student can clearly report, written and in speech, her or his findings and projectplan;
- the student can communicate nonviolently;

5. Learning abilities:

- the student can use this knowledge and know-how in future workfield.

Course content

The course deals with contemporary local, foreign and international grass root projects connecting weak, strong and hybrid religious identities. Together, the students and the teacher will act as journalists/researchers drawing profiles for projects in Building Interreligious Relations and make an analyses of used methods, attitudes and effects. Together we will gather an overview of contemporary projects and seek possibilities to publish this - since literature of this is still almost absent.

Building on this students develop their own ideal project as well as a small one-time event they will actually develop and evaluate.

Form of tuition

Each student describes and assesses two local, one foreign and one international projects, describing and assessing these. Students differentiates between projects connecting weak, strong and hybrid religious identities. Findings are presented and discussed in class. Through a comparative analysis of these projects, the students develop a concept for their own local project, part of which they will actually organise and evaluate. During the course students learn the basic skills of nonviolent communication.

Type of assessment

Written report and presentation on two local, one foreign and one international grass root project: 1/3 of grade.

Project plan for a new project in building interreligious relations, drawing on a comparison of self-researched projects as well as four projects researched by others: 1/3 of grade.

Final report including recommendations and connecting to relevant theory: 1/3 of grade.

Course reading

Marshall Rosenberg, Nonviolent Communication (any edition or language is ok).

Other literature: to be announced through blackboard.

Remarks

Participation in the nonviolent communication practicals is mandatory.

Presentation of your work in three classes is mandatory.

Near the end of the course, students organize, hold and evaluate a activity in building interreligious relations that engages six participants or more from different religious backgrounds.

Classics 1

Course code	G_CLAS1 ()
Period	Period 4
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. P.M. Wisse
Examinator	dr. A.W. Zwiep
Teaching staff	dr. P.B.A. Smit, prof. dr. M. Moyaert, prof. dr. M.G.K. van Veen, dr. P.M. Wisse
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar
Level	500

Classics 2

Course code	G_CLAS2 ()
Period	Period 5
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. P.M. Wisse
Examinator	dr. P.M. Wisse
Teaching staff	dr. M. Klaver
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

The student is able to:

- reproduce the main insights of the author as presented in this classic work;

- do literature research into the historical context and place in the history of ideas of this classic;
- give a scholarly analysis and discussion of the form and rhetorical flow of the text;
- describe and present the main argumentative steps in a specific part of this classic, and evaluate their coherence with other aspects of the work;
- discern anomalies and ambiguities in the text and bring them to bear on the argumentative power of it;
- apply insights from this classic to other texts from the same author;
- reflect on ways of approaching this text from the perspective of one's own specific methodology within theology and/or religious studies;
- analyze contemporary religious phenomena from the perspective of reading this classic work so as to stimulate discussion in a community of readers;
- confront ideas proposed by the author of the classic with one's own views;
- collect research results from a subgroup, organize the material in a logical fashion, pick out the key issues and present those to the reading community and a broader audience;
- reflect critically on and develop their skills in reading classics in a scholarly and independent way.

Course content

In this course, research master students and divinity students read an absolute top classic from the field of theology and/or religious studies. Staff members are cordially invited to join in order to create a community of readers. The course will include two types of sessions. During plenary sessions (the second session of the week), the whole group will practice close reading of a rather small but representative piece of text. This meeting is particularly open to staff members. During this meeting, flow of argumentation, ambiguities and evaluation will take center stage, introduced by a few short presentations from students or staff members. During the first session of the week, a larger part of the work is discussed, with a primary emphasis on the historical context and specific methodological approaches to the text. In most of these sessions, small groups will carry out their own research on a specific part or theme the books under discussion during that week. Each subgroup will present the results of their work during the first session. At the end of the course, students will present the results of the course during a public event to which all faculty staff and students will be invited.

Form of tuition

Seminar, including group sessions, presentations, plenary close reading.

Hermeneutics, Community Formation and the Ethics of Interpretation

Course code	G_MAHERMN ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. A.W. Zwiep
Examinator	prof. dr. M. Moyaert

Teaching staff	dr. A.W. Zwiep, prof. dr. M. Moyaert
Teaching method(s)	Lecture
Level	400

Internship

Course code	G_INTERN ()
Period	Period 4+5
Credits	12.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. J.H. Roeland
Examinator	dr. J.H. Roeland
Level	500

Course objective

The student:

- writes a coherent description of the professional field of the chosen specialization corresponding to current academic and professional standards;
- functions as a junior professional in growing responsibility and uses professional ethic standards;
- analyses complex practical professional problems using theoretical knowledge;
- compares several solutions for professional questions and designs new possibilities for acting;
- reflects at and describes his or her own developmental trajectory
- evaluates independently and with others one's professional behavior and improves it when and where necessary .

Course content

The internship is an important link between the theoretical academic education and the aimed profession. In the internship the student can learn how to apply theoretical knowledge in a professional field. With supervision of a senior professional the student learns how to function in a profession, how to act independently and responsibly, practices the required professional skills and get known to the rules of an organization of institution. The student gains work experience and contacts.

The internship requires careful preparations and appointments. See for further requirements and help: Guide and Instructions Internship at the website of the faculty.

Type of assessment

Grading is based on: (1) internship report by the student; (2) a written review by the mentor; and (3) an assessment form.

Just Peace: Peace and Justice

Course code	G_JUSTPEACE ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0

Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. F. Enns
Examinator	prof. dr. F. Enns
Teaching staff	prof. dr. F. Enns
Teaching method(s)	Lecture
Level	400

Course objective

The student can name the different dimensions and the theological, ethical, and spiritual foundations of Peace and Justice from a broad ecumenical and inter-religious perspective. The role of Peace and Justice within the different religious traditions will be tested as well as the (historical and political) obstacles and challenges to Ethics. Through this knowledge the student will be able to contribute to the ongoing discussion in the field of Peace & Justice Studies by taking part in the discussions in class.

The student analyses a variety of ethical and theological questions arising from today's political and societal challenges to conflict resolution – in manifold dimensions. Non-violent approaches to civil conflict management, “good practices”, as well as new trends in peace-building will be explored by the students.

The student will transfer this knowledge to new or unknown circumstances of different contexts in order to test the potential of different models. The student will integrate the knowledge and cope with the political, societal, and ethical complexities of each given context by comparing case studies.

The student formulates judgments on the basis of the given information, by taking part in the discussions during class as well as in writing smaller essays or reading reports on very specific topics and texts, taking into account the societal and ethical responsibilities involved. The student communicates conclusions growing out of the knowledge, motives and arguments in a clear manner to the other participants of the class as well as writing a small article for the public on a specific topic of the field.

The student analyses the ethical “dilemmas” and develops the ability to argue for and against different ethical approaches and their respective implications by writing a paper at the end of the course.

The student will be able to perform independently and autonomously follow up studies.

Course content

The ongoing ecumenical and interreligious debate on “Just Peace” will be presented and discussed. This includes a theological understanding and different approaches to peace as well as different models of justice (retributive vs. restorative and transitional justice).

From this different “testing fields” will be approached: The “Responsibility to Protect”, “Just Policing”, conflict transformation and reconciliation models as well as interreligious peace-building efforts.

Form of tuition

Lectures (including guest-lectures), presentations, discussions.

Type of assessment

Final paper.

Course reading

David Whitten Smith, Elizabeth Geraldine Burr, Understanding World Religions. A Road Map for Justice and Peace, London: Rowman & Littlefield 2015

Harold Coward, Gordon S. Smith (eds.), Religion and Peacebuilding. New York: State University of New York Press 2004.

Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Interfaith Just Peacemaking. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012.

Erica Chenoweth, Maria J, Stephan, Why Civil Resistance Works. New York: Columbia University Press 2011.

John Paul Lederach, Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press 1997.

John Paul Lederach, The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace, Oxford (et.al.): University Press 2005.

Leadership 1: Psychological and Community Aspects

Course code	G_LEAD1 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. S. Stoppels
Examinator	dr. S. Stoppels
Teaching staff	prof. dr. J.W. van Saane, dr. S. Stoppels
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	400

Course objective

The student:

- has knowledge of the models about leadership from contemporary psychology;
- has knowledge of processes of change and renewal in existing religious communities;
- is able to analyze empirically acquired data and 'ego-documents' of leaders on the basis of the presented scientific models;
- is able to reflect on his or her own leadership profile and to process in this profile his or her development items for further professional and academic growth.

Course content

The central issue of this module is the interrelation between psychological mechanisms and leadership on the one hand and community aspects and leadership at the other hand. The focus is on the coherence between the person of the leader or pastor, group aspects and religious factors.

The research disciplines in this module are psychology of religion and practical theology. With the use of contemporary models about leadership and community building from psychology and practical theology critical reflections on case materials will be constructed.

Type of assessment

All assignments (several papers) must be graded sufficient.

Course reading

- Day, David V. & John Antonakis, John (eds.). The nature of leadership. Los Angeles/London: Sage, 2012.
- Herrington, Jim, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr. Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000.
- Hobgood, William Chris. Welcoming resistance. Herndon: Alban Institute, 2001.
- Hofstede, Geert, and Gert Jan Hofstede. Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005 [also available in Dutch].
- Kotter, John. Leading Change. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.
- Saane, Joke van. Geloofwaardig leiderschap. Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2012.
- Stoppels, Sake. Voor de verandering. Werken aan vernieuwing van gemeente en parochie. Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2009.
- Yukl, Gary A. Leadership in Organizations. New York: Pearson, 2010.

Remarks

- Literature should be read before classes as indicated;
- Assignments should be fulfilled before classes as indicated;

Leadership 2: Leadership in a Context of Challenge and Renewal

Course code	G_LEAD2 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. S. Paas
Examinator	dr. E.C.T. de Jongh
Teaching staff	dr. E.C.T. de Jongh
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	400

Course objective

The student:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrates insight in communal identity as 'moral space' in a paper assignment on organizational identity and sustainability.
- can describe the gap between economic and instrumental rationality on the one hand and substantial rationality on the other by referring to organisational practices.
- demonstrates adequate and up to date knowledge of Christian missionary entrepreneurship in modern, secular societies;

Applying knowledge and understanding

- conducts a hermeneutical reading of horizons of intentionality (analyse and weigh value systems).

- formulates a 'road map' for religious leadership as conclusion of the paper assignment on the community's identity and sustainability.

Making judgments

- is able to identify values involved in social situations, both within and outside the community, and weighing these values as part of the decision to act
- is able to discern which spiritual practices are appropriate in the 'road map' for religious leadership.

Communication:

- is able to make the analysis of the community's moral space to bear on practices of the community.

Learning skills:

- can reflect on their own possibilities in terms of religious entrepreneurship with a view to the capacities and competencies that have been discussed during the course
- is able to find a learning community relevant to his own tradition for expanding his/her hermeneutic horizon.

Course content

Modern culture is characterized by rapid change, such as secularization, individualization, consumerism, and the communication revolution. All these developments cause great challenges and dilemmas for leadership in religious communities. In this course we will concentrate especially on religious communities that are looking for new ways to impact their environments. This search for new missionary opportunities happens both as a grassroot movement, usually through inspired individuals and groups, and as top-down movements, usually through the initiatives of ecclesial bureaucracies. In this developing field, a religious 'free market' develops, competing with new types of religious leadership both inside and outside religious institutional structures.

In this course the focus lies on religious (Christian) entrepreneurship, especially in missionary settings in a contemporary Western environment. This type of leadership is approached from a variety of perspectives and questions, such as:

- What are the motivations, theologies, and spiritualities that drive these entrepreneurs?
- How does this type of leadership respond to the needs of society?
- Which qualities and competencies characterize this type of leadership?
- Which dilemmas (moral and otherwise) arise as a consequence of this type of leadership in the complex field of institutional interests (e.g., the survival of denominations), management principles, vision-casting vs. personal development, organizational identity, etc.?
- How can religious entrepreneurship serve the sustainability of new community formation?

Form of tuition

Reading assignments will be critically discussed, explicated and commented upon. Students prepare themselves in small groups for a presentation and a debate of some capita selecta.

Type of assessment

Each week an assignment will be given for the following course meeting (clinic) which allows students to work methodically towards the final paper assignment.

A paper will be written on the topic of 'leadership, transformation of

values and moral space within an organisational setting'. Students are expected to write a 'roadmap' for transformation, based on field analysis (app. 5.000 words).

Course reading

- James Hunter, *The Servant* (New York: Crown Business, 2012) 146p
- Johan Verstraeten, *Taal en stilte. Naar een leiderschap voorbij de angst* (Averbode: Altiora, 2014) 72 p
- Erik de Jongh, *Responding to the Situation. A Study of Spirituality in Organisations* (Leidschendam: Quist Publishing, 2011). Diss. VU. Ook online beschikbaar. 17p
- Reader (wordt beschikbaar gesteld via Blackboard)
 - Gerrit Noort e.a., *Als een kerk opnieuw begint: Handboek voor missionaire gemeenschapsvorming*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum 2008, 27 p. (hfst. 20)
 - Robert Doornenbal, *Crossroads* (online te vinden), Eburon: Delft 2012, 56 p. (hfst. 7-8)
 - Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition*, San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass 2010, 70 p.

Remarks

- Literature should be read before classes as indicated;
- Assignments should be fulfilled before classes as indicated;

Master Seminar

Course code	G_MASEM ()
Period	Ac. Year (September)
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman
Examinator	dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman
Teaching staff	dr. S. Stoppels, dr. E.C.T. de Jongh, dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman, dr. P.B.A. Smit, dr. P.M. Wisse, prof. dr. F. Enns, dr. G.D. Bertram-Troost, prof. dr. A.F.M. van der Braak, dr. M. Klaver
Teaching method(s)	Meeting
Level	400

Media 1: Religion in a media age

Course code	G_MED1 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. M. Klaver
Examinator	dr. M. Klaver
Teaching staff	dr. J.H. Roeland, prof. dr. W.T. van Peursen, dr. M. Klaver
Teaching method(s)	Seminar

Level	400
--------------	-----

Media 2: Religion and popular culture

Course code	G_MED2 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. J.H. Roeland
Examinator	dr. J.H. Roeland
Teaching staff	prof. dr. C. van der Kooi, dr. J.H. Roeland
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	400

Course objective

The student:

- develops an understanding of the popularization of contemporary religion and the religious nature of contemporary popular culture;
- describes and critically evaluates the current state of the art in social-scientific research on the relationship between religion and popular culture, including the main theoretical approaches and debates;
- defines and distinguishes the main concepts being used in these theoretical debates;
- can apply theory on manifestations of religion in popular culture and popular culture in religion;
- differentiates between empirical (sociological, anthropological) and concerned (ethical, theological) approaches of religion and popular culture, and is able to formulate concerned problem definitions;
- can connect one's personal (ir)religious perspectives, principles and sources to popular cultural texts and practices, and develop and discuss arguments for an ethical or theological concerned position in a multireligious context;
- initiates research independently, resulting in an empirically-based, concerned research proposal including a problem definition, research question, theoretical and conceptual framework, and methodology;
- communicates clearly and precisely in order to reach both academics and a broad interested public.

Course content

Popular culture is frequently perceived to be artificial, superficial and secular. However, research suggests that popular culture may function as a repertoire from which people draw in their search for (religious) meaning and a cultural site where religious practices are played out and deep religious feelings can be experienced. Movies, games, dance events, pop music, music festivals, media events, virtual worlds and other forms of popular culture seem to be not only entertaining, but may also be important in people's search for (religious) meaning.

At the same time, traditional and post-traditional religions increasingly embrace popular culture, a process often described as the popularization of religion. Relipop, for instance, is a popular phenomenon, both among evangelical and Muslim youngsters. Another

example is evangelical worship, a blending of 'secular' poprock music and Christian worship texts. Religious people use popular media and new media technologies (including social network sites as Facebook and Twitter) to establish new religious communities. There is a growth in religious meetings that follow the format of a festival or event.

Finally, a commercial 'reliemarket' has been developed in recent years, offering an enormously amount of religious consumer products: books, clothes, music, movies, lifestyle gadgets, etc. The distinction between religion and popular culture thus becomes increasingly problematic. This process evokes a number of questions, which will be addressed in this course, namely: which religious dimensions can be distinguished in popular culture? And conversely: to what extend do religious practices, identities, communication styles and communities transform under the influence of popular culture? These mainly sociological questions tap into a wider theoretical debate on religious changes in late-modern society. In this will be discussed extensively during this course, three approaches can be distinguished: the secularization approach, the (re-)socialization approach, and the commodification approach. These approaches are discussed in class on the basis of personal knowledge and experience, knowledge attained in bachelor education, and empirical (primarily sociological) case studies.

In addition to a sociological approach to the topic of this course, a concerned approach, defined by a critical stance towards popular culture on the basis of ethical or theological normativity, is discussed as well. While in sociological research ethical and theological normativity is supposed to be bracketed, a concerned approach involves an ethical and/or theological evaluation. Hence, the student is offered a set of tools to define, analyse and evaluate the 'truthfulness, meaningfulness, goodness, justice, and beauty of popular cultural texts and practices' (Lynch 2005, ix).

Form of tuition

A combination of small-scale interactive lectures and seminar-style meetings. The lectures will provide a solid theoretical basis and a methodology for doing concerned ethical-theological research. In seminar-style meetings students are involved in two different exercises. In the first place, students will interpret complex social, cultural and religious phenomena on the basis of theoretical knowledge, and discuss theoretical insights on the basis of empirical case-studies. Students are expected to participate actively, by selecting and presenting empirical studies (scientific articles, books, or papers), evaluating their scientific quality, and relating them to the theoretical debates under study. In discussing these studies, students differentiate between the several distinctive elements of the scientific construction of theoretical knowledge (in particular problem definition, research question and methodology).

In the second place, students analyze and evaluate popular cultural texts and practices from an ethical and/or theological perspective. Students participate actively by reflecting on their (ir)religious perspectives, principles and sources, developing arguments for an ethical or theological concerned position, and contributing to scholarly and public concerns about popular culture.

Type of assessment

A final paper (75%) on a relevant subject, which includes a concerned problem definition, research question, theoretical and conceptual framework, and a rudimentary methodology, written in an accessible language.

Weekly assignments (25%).

Course reading

Gordon Lynch, 2005. Understanding Theology and Popular Culture. Malden (MA), etc.: Blackwell.

A selections of articles and book chapters.

Research Design

Course code	G_RMARESD ()
Period	Period 3
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. P.M. Wisse
Examinator	dr. P.M. Wisse
Teaching staff	dr. P.M. Wisse
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	600

Course objective

The student is able to:

- find appropriate methodological literature for designing their research proposal;
- find appropriate literature related to the field of their research proposal;
- narrow down the scope of their research project to a manageable and sharp research question;
- split the research question up into smaller manageable and sharp subquestions;
- analyse theoretical problems related to their research proposal;
- justify the scope and content of their research question in terms of the state of the art in their field;
- communicate the background, research question and setup of their research project in a research proposal in English and according to the standard of the Dutch Research Foundation (NWO);
- present the proposal and the research question to scholars and interested students within and outside their field of expertise;
- reflect critically and constructively on the research proposals of their fellow students in class;
- identify lacunas in their academic expertise and develop ways in which these can be fulfilled.

Course content

This research design module is the last module of the first semester of the research master's second year but starts already during the first period. The module offers a context in which the students prepare for the dissertation and master thesis by developing an academic research proposal. Together with the supervisor of the thesis and fellow students, students develop and refine the research proposal.

Form of tuition

During this first half of the second year, students will have a meeting every two weeks, led by a mentor. These seminars aim, in the first place, to coach students during the process of designing their own research project. Students will present their proposals in class and will give feedback on each others' proposals through Google Drive.

Type of assessment

At the end of the semester, students hand in the final form of the proposal as a proof of having passed the requirements for this course. Along the way, they hand in a process report at the end of every period (1 and 2) in which they reflect on the process of proposal writing and the way in which they have overcome challenges that they met on the way. Due to the fact that students need to contribute to each other's proposal, class attendance is obligatory.

Research Skills

Course code	G_RESSK ()
Period	Period 3
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte
Examinator	dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman
Teaching staff	prof. dr. H.C. Stoffels, prof. dr. M.G.K. van Veen, dr. A.L. Vroom, dr. V.A. van Bijlert, prof. dr. A.A. den Hollander, dr. L. Minnema, prof. dr. H. Amirav, dr. E.V. Tolstoj, prof. dr. L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman
Teaching method(s)	Lecture
Level	500

Specialization Course Biblical Studies 1: Text and History

Course code	G_SMBW131 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. P.B.A. Smit
Examinator	prof. dr. W.T. van Peursen
Teaching staff	dr. P.B.A. Smit, prof. dr. W.T. van Peursen
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

The student:

- is acquainted with the debate about the so-called minimalistic approaches to the Bible and the possibility or impossibility of linguistic dating of Biblical texts in OT scholarship and with the

debate about the historical Jesus in NT scholarship.

- has insight in the way the debate evolves and in the theological implications of the relationship between 'text' and 'history'.
- can identify the choices and hermeneutical decisions underlying the various explanations for the complexity of the Biblical sources, and compare them in a critical (oral or written) discussion.
- is able to evaluate independently secondary literature and to take a position in scholarly debates and to account for his or her choice in an oral presentation (in the format of a conference paper) and written paper (in the format of a book review for a scholarly journal).

Course content

The Bible contains many stories presented as history. It is a debated issue, however, whether and how we can get from the text, the material that we have, to the history behind the text, that we do not have in our hands, but can only reconstruct. Short-cut questions whether King David existed or not and whether the Gospels reflect a trustworthy accounts of the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth give the impression that this is just a matter of finding archeological evidence or extra-biblical written sources that allegedly support or challenge the reliability of the biblical stories. However, a deeper epistemological and hermeneutical question is involved, namely: how can we move from the text to the history behind the text? And if we try to move 'behind' the text to its historical background, what do we expect to find? And what is the impact about the questions pertaining to 'text' and history' reading the Bible as Scriptures? These questions will be addressed in this Master course. The following themes will be addressed:

- The debate around the so-called minimalists and about the linguistic dating of biblical texts.
- The debate about the historical Jesus.
- Hermeneutical questions related to speaking about history 'in' or 'behind' the text.
- Theological implications of the relationship between 'text' and 'history'.

Form of tuition

Introductory and practical sessions and a final paper. In the first session the theme of the relationship between text and history will be introduced and a survey will be given about the current debate about historical minimalism in Old Testament scholarship. The students' presentation will consist of a discussion and evaluation of publications that reflect various positions in this debate. It will involve a written paper submitted to Blackboard and an oral presentation during one of the meetings. The bibliography given in this course description will serve as a starting point. The presentations will be followed by group discussions. In the presentations and discussions the participants will be challenged to take their own position in the scholarly debate and to account for this position.

Type of assessment

Oral examination based on course portfolio and book review.

Course reading

Day, John (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel* (London 2004).

Kofoed, Jens Bruun, *Text and History* (Winona Lake 2005).

Lemche, Niels Peter: *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Louisville 1998).

Long, V. Philips, *The Art of Biblical History* (Grand Rapids, 1994).

Porter, Stanley E., and Tom Holmén (eds.), Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus I-IV (Leiden 2011)

Rogerson, John & Philip Davies: The Old Testament World (Louisville 20052).

Theissen, Gerd and Annette Merz, The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1998)

Young, Ian, et al. Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts (London 2008)

Entry requirements

Students are required to have completed the basic training in biblical exegesis (including training in Greek and Hebrew) as it is part of the BA Theology offered by VU University Amsterdam, or an equivalent training.

Remarks

Because of the practical lessons in this course, a student is not allowed to be absent more than twice.

Specialization Course Biblical Studies 2: A Little Lower than the Angels

Course code	G_SMBW132 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. J. Dubbink
Examinator	prof. dr. J. Dubbink
Teaching staff	prof. dr. J. Dubbink
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

The goals of this class are the following:

- The student knows the main themes concerning “biblical anthropology” to such a level that s/he is able to begin contributing to the field itself in written and oral form (debate, academic papers, reviews).
- The student is able to relate insights gained from the exegesis of pertinent biblical texts to overarching theological and philosophical debates in ancient and contemporary societies.
- The student is able to evaluate the use of biblical texts in contemporary theological and philosophical debates and to formulate this evaluation responsibly.
- The student is able to formulate his/her own research, as it is developed in the context of the course, both for an academic and for a general readership.
- The student can develop follow-up research related to the topic of the course independently.

Course content

The contents of this course include the following topics:

- Human origins in creation accounts.
- Human beings in eschatological texts.
- Human beings in their relationship to other (groups of) humans.
- Human beings in their relationship to the divine.
- Human beings in their gendered existence.

- Human beings and their reflection on themselves.

Each topic will be discussed by analysing representative biblical texts and by relating this analysis to pertinent theological and/or philosophical questions, particularly to those pertaining to the students' own backgrounds and to current debates in society.

Form of tuition

The course consists of 12 hours of lectures, taught by both lecturers and 12 hours of tutorial meetings, taught by the lecturers separately. The lectures and tutorials employ a variety of presentation techniques, as well as plenary discussions, student presentations, and the joint close reading of texts.

Type of assessment

The evaluation of this course takes place on the basis of

- A) A classroom presentation on one of the topics of the course
- B) A term paper (5000 words) on a topic agreed upon with the professors; the paper includes perspectives for further research.
- C) In addition to this, more advanced students (research MA, all second- and third-year MA students) will author a publishable review of a recent publication on biblical anthropology (500 words).

Course reading

The basic bibliography of this course includes:

New Testament:

M.Labahn/O. Lehtipuu, *Anthropology in the New Testament and its Ancient Context* (Louvain: Peeters, 2010).

Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

Johannes Beutler (ed.) *Der neue Mensch in Christus. Hellenistische Anthropologie und Ethik im Neuen Testament QD 190* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001).

Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man! Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008).

Eckart Reinmuth, *Anthropologie im Neuen Testament UTB 2768* (Tübingen: Francke, 2008).

Udo Schnelle, *Neutestamentliche Anthropologie. Jesus – Paulus – Johannes* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991).

Ulrike Mittmann-Richert/Friedrich Avemarie/Gerben S. Oegema (ed.), *Der Mensch vor Gott* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003).

Stefan Alkier, *Die Realität der Auferweckung in, nach und mit den Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Francke, 2009).

Old Testament:

H.W. Wolff, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments*, München 1973

J.W. Rogerson, *Anthropology and the Old Testament*. Oxford 1978.

Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung : ein Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Anthropologie am Beispiel von Psalm 8, Genesis 1 und verwandten Texten / Neukirchen-Vluyn 2004.*

Andreas Wagner, *Die Menschengestaltigkeit Gottes. Das Bild Gottes auf dem Hintergrund alttestamentlicher und altorientalischer Bildkonzepte*, Gütersloh 2007.

Andreas Wagner, *Anthropologische Aufbrüche. Alttestamentliche Menschenkonzepte und anthropologische Positionen und Methoden (FRLANT)*, Tübingen 2007.

Christian Frevel/ Wischmeyer, *Oda, Menschsein. Perspektiven des Alten und Neuen Testaments (NEB, Themen 11)*, Würzburg 2003.

Entry requirements

Students are required to have completed the basic training in biblical exegesis (including training in Greek and Hebrew) as it is part of the BA Theology offered by VU University Amsterdam, or an equivalent training.

Specialization Course Church History 1: Patristic Readings of Paul and their Reception

Course code	G_SMKG131 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. H. Amirav
Examinator	prof. dr. H. Amirav
Teaching staff	dr. A. Goudriaan
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

The student

- will gain knowledge about the history of the interpretation of Paul's epistles on the basis of primary sources of primary sources (in translation, with occasional reference to the texts in the original languages);
- will develop heuristic skills for independent study of patristic literature;
- will have insight into the theoretical aspects of reception;
- will develop skills to appreciate ancient techniques applied in the interpretation of the Biblical texts, recognizing the interests at play in the use of the Pauline writings in different historical circumstances, and is able to evaluate those;
- and is able to apply and to communicate this in an independent analysis.

Course content

The subject of this course is the reception of the epistles attributed to Paul. Since several decades not only the historical context of the origin of texts receives attention, but also the history of their interpretation. On the basis of (translations of) primary sources (e.g. Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Augustine) the interpretation of Paul in different historical situations will be studied, as well as the historical effect of Paul's writings. The first eight class meetings are concerned with the Patristic period. The four remaining classes will focus on the reception of Paul in medieval, pre-modern Europe, and the Reformation.

Form of tuition

Combination of lectures and seminar classes; required readings prior to class; writing of a final paper.

Type of assessment

Final paper of 3500 words (incl. bibliography and footnotes; to be submitted in English by students of the Research Master programme). The paper of Research Masters students will be evaluated more critically on the basis of the following criteria: complexity of the research question, critical reading of the sources, analysis of the evidence, familiarity with the secondary literature as well as handling it critically.

Course reading

A selection of secondary literature will be made available via Blackboard.

General recommendation: The (New) Cambridge History of the Bible; H.-G. Gadamer, Truth and Method, London 2004, chapter 4: Elements of a Theory of Hermeneutical Experience.

Entry requirements

Relevant BA degree.

Specialization Course Church History 2: The Reformation: the beginning of a modern world?

Course code	G_SMKG132 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. M.G.K. van Veen
Examinator	prof. dr. M.G.K. van Veen
Teaching staff	prof. dr. M.G.K. van Veen
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

1. After having followed his course the student has an overview over the historiographical debate on the link between the Reformation and the start of modernity; the student is able to summarize the main arguments pro and contra this link.
2. Based on the literature and based on archival work the student has gained insight in the different ways the Reformation has been described and in the ways Reformation-history has been used to defend one's own views.
3. The student is able to analyse how a 16th or 17th century author creates a specific image of the Reformation.
4. The student is able to analyse in which context a specific 16th or 17th century author wrote his history on the Reformation.
5. The student has acquired the skills to use archive-materials and to select and find the sources needed to answer a research question.

Course content

Max Weber (1864-1920) was the first to establish a link between the Reformation and the beginning of a modern era. According to Max Weber and his followers the Reformation marked the start of a modern world; its emphasis on the participation of lay people laid the foundations of democracy; the distaste for catholic idolatry preluded on a more rationalistic worldview; and the stress on the calling in everyday life laid, according to Weber, the foundations for modern capitalism. This theory has been the object of a heated debate among historians.

During this course we will study and analyse how authors throughout the ages described the Reformation. How did these authors create an image of the reformation, and how do they describe the influence of the Reformation on the way societies were organized.

Form of tuition

Seminar

Type of assessment

Paper.

Course reading

C. Scott Dixon, *Contesting the Reformation*, 2012.

Entry requirements

Relevant BA degree.

Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 1: Novelty in God?

Course code	G_SMDO131 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. C. van der Kooi
Examinator	prof. dr. C. van der Kooi
Teaching staff	prof. dr. C. van der Kooi, dr. P.M. Wisse
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

The student:

1. analyses the question of novelty as to God, our history and the meaning or prayer in recent systematic theology, particularly in the topics christology, pneumatology and the doctrine of God;
2. distinguishes and integrates the mutual relations regarding novelty between the topics;
3. shows awareness of the criticism on immutability and change;
4. investigates the theme particularly with one or two authors;
5. reproduces and presents the results of the analysis in oral and written presentations;
6. shows proficiency in perceiving and evaluating the effects for spirituality and cultural outlook by giving examples of such effects;
7. develops ability to make her/his own evaluation;
8. describes the results in a paper.

Course content

In recent decades the debate on the relation between God and history has taken center stage in systematic theology. When in the Bible God sometimes is pictured as regretting his plans or changing the policy to achieve his goal, modern theology started to assess this differently from traditional Christian doctrine. In what way can mutability be thought as belonging to God? In this course we will study some main voices in this debate. Attention will be paid to Augustine, William a Brakel, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Robert Jenson.

Form of tuition

Reading, analysis, discussion of important texts. Presentation of results.

Type of assessment

Sufficiently active participation in the course and concluding paper of up to 2000 words. Students write a paper on a research oriented topic or a paper related to their professional master specialisation.

Course reading

Literature will be made available on blackboard

Entry requirements

Introductory bachelor course in Christian dogmatics.

Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 2: Sunday morning the most segregated hour

Course code	G_SMDO132 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. E.A.J.G. van der Borght
Examinator	prof. dr. E.A.J.G. van der Borght
Teaching staff	prof. dr. E.A.J.G. van der Borght
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

1. The student illustrates the potential and the limitations for faith communities to contribute to societal reconciliation with the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.
2. The student explains the central role of the concept of reconciliation in the theological and social self identification in sources of the Christian tradition.
3. The student summarizes how recent anthropological, social and cultural research have changed our understanding of the way socio-cultural belongings shape are identities.
4. The student compares and evaluates various ecumenical, theological documents on the way they have dealt with the gap between the ecclesiological confession of the one, catholic church and the ecclesial practice of churches separated according to socio-cultural lines.

5. The student identifies, describes and presents elements of the theological and/or social self description of the Christian faith community that require constructive thinking in order to meet actual challenges in specific contexts of pressure on social cohesion and/or armed conflicts defined by religious and socio-cultural identities through a class presentation and a paper.

Course content

This module focuses on the way reconciliation is understood and embodied in faith communities.. In the Christian tradition, baptism symbolizes a new identity in Christ beyond 'being Jew or Greek', and the notions of 'one' and 'catholic' in the Creed express this reconciliation. At the same time, 'Sunday morning is the most segregated hour'. It indicates that believers gather not only according to confessional lines but often more primarily according to national or ethnic lines. The observed gap between confessed communal identities and lived socially divided realities is the starting point for a number of theological and social investigations. We will explore vulnerabilities and potentials of faith communities in contexts of religiously and socio-culturally motivated armed conflicts and in contexts where religious diversity is perceived as a threat so social cohesion.

The module consists of six parts. We will start with a case study on reconciliation as it was performed during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa and the role played by faith communities under apartheid. We will continue with an examination of how the identity of the Christian community has been theologically and socially defined through the concept of reconciliation in the sources of the Christian tradition (New Testament, patristics and creeds). We will then learn from recent anthropological, sociological and cultural studies how cultures shape whom we are. We will continue with a thorough analysis of ecumenical texts in order to discover how 20th century theology has tried to deal with this gap. We will then identify elements of the theology of the Christian faith community that require new, constructive contributions in order to better equip faith communities to respond more adequately in contexts of armed conflicts and pressure on social cohesion in society. Finally students will present collaborative projects of theological and/or social case studies on the contributions by faith communities to reconciliation.

Form of tuition

Reading assignments will be critically discussed, explicated and commented upon during seminars. Students present part of their research during the last seminar.

Type of assessment

20 % for assignments in preparation for the classes, 20 % for the collaborative presentations of case studies and 60 % for the final individual paper. One year master students will focus their paper on the reconciliatory potential of faith communities in contexts of conflict; two years master student will focus on the theological aspects of the self identification of faith communities in dialogue with the sources of the tradition; three year master students will the describe the observed gap between confessional elements of their tradition and the lived reality in the context of social and missiological challenges.

Course reading

- E.A.J.G. Van der Borght, 'Reconciliation in the Public Domain: the South African Case', *International Journal of Public Theology* 9 (2015), to be published..

- Faith and Order, Nature and Mission of the Church, 2005.
- Faith and Order, Participating in God's Mission of Reconciliation. A Resource for Churches in Situations in Conflict.
- M. Shore, Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2009.
- D. Llywelyn, Toward a Catholic Theology of Nationality, 2010.
- W.J. Jennings, The Christian Imagination, 2010.

Entry requirements

General entry requirements as for the Master of Theology and Religious Studies Program, VU University Amsterdam.

Remarks

Students prepare each of the lectures by reading assignments posted on blackboard.

Specialization Course Islamic Theology 1

Course code	G_SMCIT131 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. P.A. van Doorn-Harder
Examinator	prof. dr. P.A. van Doorn-Harder
Teaching staff	prof. dr. P.A. van Doorn-Harder
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Specialization Course Islamic Theology 2

Course code	G_SMCIT132 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. F.C.W. Doufikar-Aerts
Examinator	prof. dr. F.C.W. Doufikar-Aerts
Teaching staff	prof. dr. F.C.W. Doufikar-Aerts
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 1: Contemporary Philosophy of Culture and Religion

Course code	G_SMGF131 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0

Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. W.L. van der Merwe
Examinator	prof. dr. W.L. van der Merwe
Teaching staff	prof. dr. W.L. van der Merwe
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

Purpose and end qualifications:

The purpose of this module is to explore and understand the major contributions to the so called “theological turn” within contemporary (mainly Continental) philosophy of culture and religion and more specifically to appropriate and evaluate various contemporary critiques of onto-theological conceptions of God and post-metaphysical reinterpretations of the Christian faith.

At the end the student should be able to explain in his/her own words and with reference to a number of philosophers the philosophical and cultural complexities of “God-talk”, the various meanings of the “death of God” within (Continental) philosophy and be able to compare critically a number of present-day responses to both.

1. The student is able to explain in his/her own words 1. what the logico-semantical problem of “God-talk” entails, 2. what is meant with “onto-theology” and 3. how the notion of the “death of God” is related to it philosophically and culturally, and 4. what the “theological turn” in contemporary philosophy of culture and religion entails.
2. The student is able to explain the various developments leading up to critiques of “onto-theology” and critically compare various “post-metaphysical” responses to it by a number of present-day, mainly Continental-philosophical authors.
3. The student is able to apply his/her understanding of various contributions to the “theological turn” (as explored in a number of selected texts by philosophers and scholars) to the reinterpretation of core notions of the Christian faith in theology, (post)secular culture and with regard to possible existential significance.
4. The student is able to argue in a philosophically informed and nuanced way why some authors or theories seem more convincing than other ones with regard to the critique of “onto-theology” and with regard to creative reinterpretations of the Christian faith and conceptions of God.
5. The student is able to formulate his/her understanding of the reasons for and significance of the “theological turn” in contemporary philosophy of culture and religion in a clear and systematic way to fellow students and to an audience with limited philosophical and theological fore-knowledge of the issues at stake.
6. The student is able to analyze, contextualize and interpret the historical, philosophical and cultural preconditions of the current “theological turn”, to reflect on them in a critical and creative way and to determine, in an initial way, his/her own philosophical and

existential stance with regard to these developments.

Course content

This module focuses on the “theological turn” within contemporary philosophy of culture and religion by analyzing and evaluating various critiques of onto-theological conceptions of God, by exploring the various meanings of the “death of God” and the complexities of “God-talk” within Continental philosophy and by considering some current post-metaphysical reinterpretations of the Christian faith in response to these developments.

Form of tuition

Weekly seminar sessions take the form of introductions to specific topics by the lecturer, followed by class discussions and/or the “close reading” of texts and/or presentations by students. Each meeting has a specific focus on the basis of a selection of literature that need to read thoroughly beforehand. To guide students through the reading material a few elementary questions (pertaining to each session) are provided in the course program. Students are expected to answer these questions in writing and to hand these exercises in a day in advance of the meeting. The course is concluded and the students’ acquired knowledge, understanding and skills are assessed with a written assignment (tentamen) and presentation to the class at the end of the course.

Type of assessment

Written assignment and presentation.

Course reading

For the literature, see Course Manual and Blackboard.

Remarks

Preparatory exercises and attendance of seminar sessions are mandatory, because it forms integral part of the attainment of the goals/outcomes of the course.

Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 2: Post-Shoa Studies: Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue

Course code	G_SMGF132 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. M. Moyaert
Examinator	prof. dr. M. Moyaert
Teaching staff	dr. J.H. de Wit
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

1. Students learn and are able to explain the basic facts of the history of Jewish-Christian relations and its connection with the Holocaust.
2. Students learn to critically evaluate both Jewish and Christian

responses to the Shoah

3. Students learn and are able to understand, specify and evaluate the challenges and perspectives that dominate the dialogue between Jews and Christians today.

4. Students learn and are able to develop a post-shoah reading of biblical texts and critically evaluate forms of Christian-Jewish inter-rituality (e.g. Christians celebrating Jewish seder meals)

Course content

- We critically study the history of Jewish-Christian Relations and explore the relation between 2000 years of (Christian) anti-Judaism and (Nazi) anti-semitism.

- We try to understand how the atrocities of the shoah were possible

- We analyze both Jewish and Christians responses to the drama of the Shoah

- We examine some of the big religious (theological) questions that are at the core of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

- We explore the steps taken after the shoah to move in the direction of forgiveness and reconciliation

- We undertake a rereading of problematic Biblical narratives after the Shoah and learn to evaluate forms of Christian-Jewish inter-rituality

Type of assessment

Written examination (40%)

Paper assignment (4000 words) (40%)

*The paper is critical examination of the different Jewish and Christian responses to the Holocaust (Maybaum, Fackenheim....) or of one of the official documents promulgated after the Shoah by Christian communities or Jewish voices.

*Research master students develop a re-reading of a Biblical text of terror, trace its history in Jewish-Christian relations and develop a counternarrative after the Shoah that sets out to move beyond anti-Jewish symbolic (and real) violence

Reading of 1 novel + Review (20%)

Course reading

Will be put on Blackboard and announced by lecturer.

Recommended background knowledge

Introduction Christianity/Judaism

Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Study of Religions 3: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mindfulness

Course code	G_SMGF133 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. A.F.M. van der Braak
Examinator	dr. H.W.A. Blezer
Teaching staff	dr. H.W.A. Blezer
Teaching method(s)	Lecture
Level	500

Specialization Course Praxis 1

Course code	G_SMPR131 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. H.C. Stoffels
Examinator	prof. dr. H.C. Stoffels
Teaching staff	prof. dr. R.R. Ganzevoort
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Remarks

Full class participation is expected.

Specialization Course Praxis 3: Religion and Trauma

Course code	G_SMPR132 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. R.R. Ganzevoort
Examinator	prof. dr. R.R. Ganzevoort
Teaching staff	dr. S. Stoppels
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	500

Spiritual Care 1

Course code	G_SPICA1 ()
Period	Period 1
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	prof. dr. R.R. Ganzevoort
Examinator	prof. dr. R.R. Ganzevoort
Teaching staff	prof. dr. R.R. Ganzevoort
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	400

Type of assessment

De beoordeling vindt als volgt plaats:

- Participatie;

- Opdrachten (inclusief paper);
- Schriftelijk tentamen (take home).

Spiritual Care 2

Course code	G_SPICA2 ()
Period	Period 2
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. E.C.T. de Jongh
Examinator	dr. E.C.T. de Jongh
Teaching staff	dr. E.C.T. de Jongh
Teaching method(s)	Seminar
Level	400

Thesis 2 year Masters

Course code	G_2MATHES ()
Period	Period 4+5+6
Credits	30.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
Coordinator	dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman
Examinator	dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman
Level	600