



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

Biblical Perspectives on Peace and Justice

Course Code	G_BATRSAL081
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. C.R.B. Karrer
Examiner	prof. dr. F. Enns
Teaching Staff	dr. C.R.B. Karrer
Teaching method(s)	Lecture

Course Objective

After finishing this course, the student

- has professional knowledge in the field of key Biblical texts about Peace and Justice, and is able to analyze them and to interpret them independently;
- is able to do literature research in the field of historical background and literary context of these Biblical texts, and is able to apply the results for a deeper understanding of the Biblical texts;
- has professional knowledge in the field of Biblical texts that contain warfare and violence and is able to analyze them from theological and ethical perspectives;
- is able to articulate the Biblical/theological concepts of peace and justice in his/her own words. He/she is able to explain their relevance for ethics (and theology) in the world today, also to members of non christian religions and to secular people;
- is able to deal in a constructive and responsible manner with questions about war and violence in the Bible, and is able to articulate his/her own position on this subject and to lead a dialogue with representatives of other positions;
- is able to relate the concepts of justice and peace to relevant themes and conflicts in present-day society, and is is able to reflect on her/his own position and to relate it to other religious and secular positions.

Course Content

Students will analyze texts which allow for elaboration on the meaning of 'peace' and 'justice' in biblical texts: examples include the Sermon on the Mount; key verses from the Gospel of Luke; visions of peace and critiques of social injustice in prophetic books; and key texts from the Psalms and the Torah. Several questions will be considered in relation to these texts. How are the concepts of peace and justice interconnected within the Bible? What is the relationship between divine and human justice?

Students will also study texts on the so-called 'Holy War'; narratives about the cycle of violence in human lives; verses that portray God acting violent; and prayers for God's revenge on enemies. Their function in context will be discussed, and important questions will come to the fore. The violent content notwithstanding, which texts provide a constructive and justice-supporting message? How should Biblical texts which do not support peace be dealt with?

Finally, students will discuss questions of application, for example:

Which

modern ethical and theological concepts of peace and justice answer to a Biblical perspective on peace and justice?

Additional information | Teaching Methods

Lectures and seminars

Method of Assessment

Paper that analyzes a Biblical text about justice and peace or warfare and violence, according to the skills in course aims (course object)

Literature

- Willard M. Swartley, *The Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics*, Eerdmans 2006
 - Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, University Press Cambridge 1995
 - Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Jesus and the subversion of violence*, London 2011
 - Walter Wink, *The Powers that Be*, New York 1998
- Additional literature will be announced at the beginning of the course.

Additional Information

The module is part of the minor Peace Theology and Anabaptist-Mennonite traditions. See also below.

Recommended background knowledge

The modules on Biblical Studies (Old and New Testament) during the first and second year of the bachelor Theology (by FRT VU or a similar education in biblical studies) are presupposed.

If a student wants to participate in the module without this foreknowledge, he/she has to contact the teacher. After an appointment and conversation she will decide whether the student is able to follow the module.