



# 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](#).

# Seeing is Believing: Film and Religion and the Construction of Sacredness Beyond the Limits of Representation and Articulation.

Course Code	G_BATRSAL090
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	200
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. S. Sremac
Examiner	dr. J.H. Roeland
Teaching Staff	dr. S. Sremac, dr. J.H. Roeland
Teaching method(s)	Seminar

## Course Objective

Upon completion of the course, students can:

- denote the visual and imaginative instruments for revealing, producing and transmitting sacred and divine realities and experiences in and through religion and film.
- describe and apply a 'film as religion' approach to film, with a specific focus on the dimensions of myth, ritual, morality, transcendence and sacredness.
- can explain how filmmakers apply visual tools to deal with 'the real' and 'the unspeakable' and the limits of articulation and representation.
- reflect on how film viewing generate deep existential experiences and critically deconstruct the efficacy of film experience in relation to the visual choices made by filmmakers.

## Course Content

This course explores the limits of truth-telling and representation. Semantic and text-based approaches have a limited capacity to express the lived experience of people. This is perhaps most obvious when it comes to individual or collective trauma; to the void of reality that is beyond expression (the 'real' in Lacanian thinking); and to the experienced presence of sacred and divine realities - three experiences that are often referred to as the 'unspeakable', as something beyond articulation. In comparison to purely verbal representations of such experiences, film offers a rich repertoire of audiovisual tools that offers many opportunities of representing realities that are difficult to express in language. In this course, such filmic representations are explored by analyzing the cinematographic and narrative elements of film. In addition, the course discusses the limits of filmic representation as well, for film has its limits too when it comes to traumatic and sacred experiences: they can be not only unspeakable, but also 'unimaginable'. However, film can at the very least probe the boundaries of what can be expressed; filmic methods and techniques can be mobilized to show what it means not to be able to imagine, not to be able to speak. In the third place, this course not only explores the representation of the 'unspeakable'; it also applies a film as religion approach that enables students to understand the 'religious work' of film: how film may mediate (reveal, produce and transmit) sacred and divine realities and experiences. Students learn to unravel the representation and mediation of the unspeakable by carefully analyzing the cinematographic and narrative elements of film.

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

Lectures, film analysis classes.

## Method of Assessment

Individual assignments (20%). The course is concluded with team assignment (80%), namely a cinematographic and narrative analysis of a film chosen by the team members.

