



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](#).

Spirituality Today

Course Code	G_BATRSAL046
Credits	6
Period	P3
Course Level	200
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. J. Reinke
Examiner	dr. J. Reinke
Teaching Staff	drs. J. van de Velden MA, dr. J. Reinke
Teaching method(s)	Seminar, Lecture

Course Objective

The student will

- Gain an understanding of contemporary spirituality from a transnational perspective, exploring how spiritual beliefs and practices transcend national boundaries and interact with diverse cultural contexts.
- Understand the historical processes involved in the globalization of Asian religious ideas and practices, including the transmission and adaptation of Buddhist and Hindu religious traditions in global contexts.
- Analyze how dynamics relating to gender and sexual identity intersect with spirituality, examining how these aspects influence and shape individuals' religious experiences and expressions.
- Acquire knowledge of theories related to multiple modernities, multiple modern religiosities, and multiple secularities, exploring diverse interpretations and manifestations of modernity and secularism in different cultural and religious contexts.

Course Content

In this course, we delve into the transformative shifts in the global religious landscape that have taken place over the past decades. We examine the proliferation of practices and ideas from Asian religious traditions on a worldwide scale. The exploration encompasses the transnational dynamics shaping the histories of Buddhism and Yoga-derived ideas and practices in various geographical contexts. The relationship between gender and sexual identity and spirituality is examined through the lens of gangs in Los Angeles and the experiences of queer/Saso people in Ghana. Considering the historical development of Yoga in the United States and the globalization of Buddhist mindfulness, we will critically relate them to current debates. Furthermore, we investigate the reception and adaptation of Asia-derived Euro-American religious ideas in contemporary Asia. Finally, we explore the intersection of spiritual environmentalism and Hollywood representations of indigeneity. Current issues, including questions of cultural appropriation in the spread of Asian religiosities, are addressed, fostering critical thinking and reflection on the complex interplay of global spirituality.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

While each session will include a brief lecture, the core of this course revolves around group discussions on the assigned readings. Students are expected to thoroughly read and prepare all assigned readings, as well as watch any assigned documentaries and shows. For each class session, students must submit a 1-page summary of the readings and formulate two discussion questions. These summaries and questions must be uploaded to Canvas by midnight the evening before the class.

This is an intensive, condensed course taking place over a three-week period. In order to pass the class, students can only miss one day of class due to the accelerated nature of the schedule.

Method of Assessment

Class assignments (summaries of the readings and questions) (20%) and final in-person exam (80%).

