



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](#).

Practical Theology

Course Code	G_BATRSPC210
Credits	6
Period	P5
Course Level	200
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. P. Veerman
Examiner	dr. P. Veerman
Teaching Staff	dr. P. Veerman
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar

Course Objective

After finishing this course, the student:

- Gain knowledge about practical theological approaches
- Can analyze the relationship between practical theology and social sciences.
- Articulate critical and analytical thinking for practical theological reflections grounded in lived experience.
- Can evaluate the practical theological/religious complexity of different societal/ecclesial challenges and is able to reflect theological on those complexities.
- Is able to communicate in a practical theological adequate way on the specific field of interest.
- Can reflect on the views of key figures in ancient and early modern philosophy on ethics and formation, can distinguish them from one another and relate them to the revival of virtue ethics in the twentieth century;
- Is able to relate insights from ancient philosophy to developments in Christian theology;
- Can reflect on important perspectives in pedagogy and is able to connect them to a virtue ethics perspective.

Course Content

The course primarily focuses on an integrative approach for practical theology, the approach that combines the hermeneutical, empirical, and strategic (critical) perspective in practical theology. The integrative approach requires an interrelationship between different branches of theology and enables practical theology to enter into sincere dialogue with the social sciences in order both to interpret contexts and practices as well as to think creatively about the development of new strategies and practices. The course also represents the vital relevance of the concept of lived religion to the study of practical theology. It helps students to understand the lived particularities of different societal and ecclesial challenges as embodied practices in which (religious) stories and narratives are created, transformed, and shared. This course also has a philosophical component and introduces virtue ethics.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

Students are expected to come to class having done the required reading (see under assessments). Students are expected to attend and actively participate in class. Out of the twelve classes, students can miss, for whatever reason, at most two. If you miss more than two classes you cannot pass the course. Class participation means actively contributing to the class discussion but not dominating them or just giving your opinion about anything for the sake of it (that is, it is important that you also give others the chance to participate).

Method of Assessment

Grading will be based on a group presentation (50%) and a final essay (50%). Group presentations are on case studies (e.g. pastoral counselling, liturgy, leadership, education) that are chosen, prepared and presented in groups of maximum 3 people. The final (individual) essay will focus on a specific phenomenon in relation to a specific theological/religious issue.

Literature

Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry and the Life of the Church*(Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017)

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition, (London: SCM Press, 2016)

Nancy T. Ammerman, *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes, Finding Religion in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) [Available as E-book VU Library]