



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](#).

Historical Roots of Contemporary Religious Issues

Course Code	G_BATRSCC102
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	100
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	prof. dr. J.V. Roitman
Examiner	prof. dr. J.V. Roitman
Teaching Staff	prof. dr. J.V. Roitman, dr. J.W. Hengstmengel
Teaching method(s)	Seminar

Course Objective

After finishing this course, the student:

- has an awareness of the long-term processes that have produced contemporary (religious) issues, debates, and controversies: the story has a history;
- has the ability to trace back, understand, and analyze the historical backgrounds of modern developments;
- has the competence to conduct historical research and the awareness of one's own position in history;
- has the ability to understand what historiography is, how it relates to how historians work, and what strands or trends there are in the study of religious issues.

Course Content

The module aims at exploring historical backgrounds of contemporary religious issues. We all know that societal issues, 'suddenly' popping up in our society, do not really suddenly pop up. On the contrary, modern issues have their historical backgrounds and their story is rooted in historical processes. These historical roots represent also multi-layered structures, which have to be analyzed. The analysis has to be a careful one, taking into account the techniques of historical research as well as philosophical approach of what is 'history'. This course is therefore meant to shed some light on the diverse historical aspects of issues that actually attract our attention. Several topics will be highlighted, such as antisemitism and "economic thinking", particularly the Church and Capitalism, in religion, history, and theology. Students will be asked to read about these topics, to learn how to analyse them, and describe properly the relation between past and present (three

elements). While theology can certainly be an aspect of students' analysis of issues and texts, this course is not theological. Students are expected to learn to think as historians. Thus, they will learn to write a narrative of the historical background of modern issues, based on an understanding and correct use of primary sources. This narrative in itself will be an

exercise in defining historiography. The course will consist of lectures, presentations, and the analysis of texts.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

Seminars (four contact hours per week) [Note: Attendance is mandatory. More than three unexcused absences are grounds for dismissal from the course and/or refusal for eligibility for a resit.]

Method of Assessment

(Take home) final exam: 40%*

Papers: 40%* (20% each)

- two short papers (+/- 2000 words each) in which primary sources will be employed to make the argument.
- One will be on Topic 1 (the Church and Capitalism/economic thinking and religion).
- The second will be on Topic 2 (Antisemitism)

Attendance (20%)

*This exam may be given as an in-person exam

Literature

Mandatory literature:

Readings will be added to Canvas.

Explanation Canvas

The course manual with detailed information will be made available via Canvas.

Recommended background knowledge

This course is, in principle, open to all students. However, students without a background in History and/or Religious Studies should be aware that this course pre-supposes some basic knowledge of History and of Religion (particularly Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). It is a research and writing intensive course.