

TRVN14 Mysticism, Philosophy and Wisdom Traditions in Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Course content

In late Antiquity, Jewish, Christian and Islamic theology mysticism and wisdom traditions emerged and developed against a background of primarily Hellenic philosophical traditions. In this course the development of those traditions in these three religions will be studied and compared, in particular the transmission, interpretation, and use of texts of wisdom. For the ancients, philosophy as well as theology was a way of life, and for some, closely connected to religious mysticism. A person's way of thinking, reading, acting – and praying – were seen as interrelated. Mystical experiences—gods descending to earth and humans ascending to heaven—were seen as an inherent part of a larger philosophical tradition. In the course, the shared Greek philosophical school tradition will be presented, and a variety of forms of reception and transformation of this heritage will be analyzed and discussed both diachronically and synchronically.

Time Period

Teaching: weeks 5-20, 2021

Compact seminar: Copenhagen March 18–19 2021.

Examination: Paper to be handed in by June 4

Instructors and institution

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Prerequisites

The same as for the program.

Teaching Methods

E-learning, compact seminar, tutorials

Instruction is provided via the internet and through a compact seminar and supported by tutorials at the student's home university. Participation in the course forum on the internet is a requirement, as well as the submission of an essay. Students are provided with a reading list to be read independently aided by introductions and weekly assignments on the internet through Canvas. The students may be asked to prepare some additional material for the compact seminar.

Examination

The student writes a paper between eight and ten pages in length (19,200 to 24,000 characters including spaces and references but excluding bibliography and table of contents) on a subject, question or material chosen by the student and approved by the teacher. To qualify for the exam the students must complete 80% of the e-learning assignments (i.e. 6 out of 7 assignments) no later than May 24. The first opportunity to

do a re-exam is August 23- 27, 2021, the next January 17-20, 2022. The student must register for an exam by sending an e-mail to one of the instructors three weeks prior to the exam date.

Literature and syllabus

The syllabus includes approximately 1300 pages of secondary scholarly literature and primary texts in translation. Approximately 900 of these pages are defined by the instructor. Students choose the remaining approximately 400 pages.

Learning outcomes

The following represent the most important aspects of the learning outcomes.

More details may be found in the RRE study plan:

<http://religious-studies.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/RRE-Study-Plan-2017.pdf>

On completion of the course the student should be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- briefly describe the main development trajectories with regard to philosophy, wisdom, and mysticism traditions in Judaism, Christianity and Islam during late Antiquity
- relate the developments of philosophy, wisdom and mysticism traditions in Judaism, Christianity and Islam to biblical traditions and to the Greco-Roman philosophical schools of late Antiquity

Competence and skills

- identify similarities and differences between Jewish, Christian and Islamic philosophy, wisdom and mysticism traditions

Judgement and approach

- critically compare and discuss a few primary sources from Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions.