

# School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies

Short Courses – Spring 2025



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

These are **day-time and face to face courses**. Each course is **auditing-based** and has either two, one-hour lectures or one two-hours lecture per week.

### Time and Place

All classes take place during the day on the Trinity College Dublin campus, either in the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies Building (Old Physiology building) or theatres nearby.

For specific days and times, please see the modules' descriptions below.

### Duration

Spring Term runs from week starting 20 January to week starting 7 April 2025.

Note: no lectures during reading week starting 3 March 2025.

### Registration

Registration can be made either online through Registration Form available at this [link](#), or by post – please include a completed copy of the Registration Form which is available at the end of this document.

### Fee

The fee per module is **€150**. A concession rate of €100 is available to second and third level students, unemployed persons and those in receipt of a social welfare pension. Payment can be made in person at the School of RTPS (Old Physiology Building) at the following dates/ times: **Monday to Friday, 10 AM-12 PM / 3 – 4 PM**.

Cheques, drafts or postal orders should be made payable to **TRINITY COLLEGE No. 1 ACCOUNT**.

Please return cheques, drafts or postal orders to:

**Administration Officer**

School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies

Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2, D02C1F6

## SPRING 2025 OFFERINGS

### Introducing the New Testament: Texts and Contexts

**Lecturers:** Dr Daniele Pevarello, Dr Benjamin Wold

**Days/ Times:** Mon 1-2 PM and Fri 2-3 PM

The writings included in the canon of the New Testament have been composed by different authors over a relatively long period of time. Translated in countless languages, the stories and ideas found in the New Testament have played a major role in shaping socio-political, ethical and religious discourses across the centuries and in different cultures and have been a constant source of inspiration in art, music and literature. In this module, students will learn about the most relevant scholarly approaches to the study of the New Testament and its background in Second Temple Judaism and in the Graeco-Roman world, examine the variety of literary genres and the diversity of sources and traditions, which contributed to the development of early Christianity and to the formation of new religious and cultural realities in the Graeco-Roman world, and be introduced to the history of interpretation of the New Testament in antiquity and in contemporary culture.

### Introduction to Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Dr Ciarán McGlynn

**Days/ Times:** Tue and Fri 10-11 AM

The module offers an overview of Western philosophy and analyses the questions treated in its main branches. Beginning with the Greeks as the founders of the Western philosophical tradition, key texts and ideas relating to Presocratic philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle will be studied with a particular emphasis on metaphysical questions about the nature of reality and of the soul. The medieval era will be studied

primarily through the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, with particular emphasis on his use of an Aristotelian approach to metaphysical notions of substance and soul, as well as his arguments for the existence of God. The study of modern philosophy will focus on Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Wittgenstein. In this part of the course, we will explore the views of these thinkers on questions like: What is knowledge, and is it possible? How is the mind related to the body? What is meant by virtue ethics? What is the relation between language and the world? Students will be taught how to critically engage with the various philosophical positions.

### Introducing Islam

**Lecturer:** Dr Zohar Hadromi-Allouche

**Days/ Times:** Mon 10-11 AM and Tue 2-3 PM

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world today. This module surveys its emergence, development, beliefs and practices, the 7th century into modernity.

This module aims to

- Provide an overview of Islamic history.
- Present and discuss Islamic scriptures, doctrines and rituals.
- Demonstrate the significance and development within Islam of concepts such as prophethood, revelation, jihad, theology, law and gender.
- Develop an understanding of the contribution of Islamic civilization to human culture.
- Examine various scholarly approaches to the study of Islam.



## Religions in the Ancient Mediterranean

**Lecturer:** Dr Daniele Pevarello

**Days/ Times:** Mon 9-10 AM and Wed 12-1 PM

Employing literary sources as well as inscriptions, funerary art and ancient iconography, and other archaeological finds, this module investigates the religious beliefs and practice of the various peoples and civilisations of the ancient Mediterranean from ancient Egypt to Imperial Rome, focusing on the study of ancient rituals (e.g., burial customs, animal and human sacrifice) and on Mediterranean myths and mythologies (e.g., dying-and-rising deities in Egypt, Syria and ancient Greece). Students will reflect about the methodological challenges of studying ancient religions, focusing on the problem of interpreting fragmentary evidence, understanding ancient definitions of religion and magic, and distinguishing between private and public devotion in ancient societies. The course will help student to think about such questions as did people in antiquity believe in their myths? Why did the Egyptians mummify their dead? What is the significance of the ancient myths of Osiris, Gilgamesh and Baal? Did the ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians practice human sacrifice?

## The Historical Jesus and the Gospels

**Lecturer:** Dr Benjamin Wold

**Days/ Times:** Thurs 1-2 PM and Fri 4-5 PM

Jesus is undoubtedly one of the most important figures in Western Civilization. His name permeates world cultures, and his morality is widely considered. For Christians, who Jesus is has eternal consequences and belief in him is growing rapidly in the developing world. But what do we know about the historical person Jesus and how do we know it? Can we know anything about the Jesus who lived in time and space and if so, then why are there so many different

historical portraits of his life? Jesus has been seen to be a Cynic philosopher, revolutionary, social progressive, magician, exorcist, and apocalyptic prophet. However, he could not have been all of these. This module is interested in historical sources and historical methods. Regarding sources, we will consider the not only the gospels of the New Testament but ask whether “lost” gospels contribute to historical Jesus’ research. In relation to methods, we will explore the so-called “Quests” for the historical Jesus and ongoing debates about the relationship of history to theology. Anyone interested in the texts and contexts, from Nag Hammadi to the Dead Sea Scrolls, stands to benefit from this exploration of the historical person Jesus.

## Medieval Theology: Women, Learning, Universities

**Lecturer:** Dr Fáinche Ryan

**Days/ Times:** Mon 12-1 PM and Wed 11-12noon

The purpose of this module is to survey the political, cultural and religious context in which Catholic theology developed in the medieval period. An important aim will be to introduce the student to some representative figures in the theology of the period. This period was particularly fruitful in the formation of theology in the Catholic tradition. The course will study: • The theology of the Monastic and Cathedral schools • The emergence of the University • The significance of Aquinas’ work • The role of women in the medieval period • The early Irish medieval church.

## Digital Innovation To Achieve The Sustainable Development Goals

**Lecturers:** Dr PJ Wall, Dr Tim Savage, Dr Linda Hogan

**Days/ Times:** Thurs 9-11 AM

This module will introduce students to the key issues and current academic debates of relevance in a variety of fields, and also equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and manage these challenges in an appropriate and effective manner.

The module will pay particular attention to the ethical issues involved with innovation for the SDGs, and critically examine the role played by social, political, cultural and human factors when designing, introducing and using technologies. This module therefore contributes to the broader programme outcomes related to ethics, reasoning, and moral inquiry.

The module links most strongly with the SDGs which can be addressed by new, disruptive and innovative approaches and technologies. This module has a particular focus on the SDGs which can be addressed by smaller, community-level and citizen-led technology-based initiatives. Examples of this include designing innovative ways of leveraging the ubiquity of mobile phones in the Global South for healthcare and education, and the design, evaluation, and implementation of innovative techniques which are designed to be ethically, socially and culturally appropriate for their particular context.

The module content includes relevant, authentic, situated cases from the Global South and Europe that have been developed specifically for the module. These multimedia-enhanced cases focus on projects from Ireland, India, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

## Religion Through Bollywood

**Lecturer:** Dr Seema Chauhan

**Days/ Times:** Wed 3-4 PM and Fri 12-1 PM

When we think of “religion”, the first thing that likely springs to mind is ancient scriptures written by monks isolated from everyone except the small group of highly educated individuals that they address. By contrast, the outlandish world of Bollywood which attracts billions of viewers worldwide is rarely considered a medium in which religious discourse is conveyed.

In this course, students will explore modern representations of “religion” among South Asians from 1947 to 2023 through the contemporaneous history of Bollywood cinema. Students will watch six Bollywood films that were produced in five different decades and examine how each film acts a vehicle, whether intentionally or not, for constructing modern discourses about religion. In particular, students will examine the construction of religious pluralism; Hindu-Muslim relations; and the rise of secularism and atheism.

## Cosmology, Religion and Science

**Lecturer:** Dr Cathriona Russell

**Days/ Times:** Mon 12-1PM and Wed 11AM-12noon

It explores how specific cosmologies emerged and in turn impacted on theology, science and culture, in astronomy, thermodynamics, emerging universe models, evolutionary theory and the return to narrative in the natural sciences. It includes implications for anthropology: the human person as created in the image of God (*imago Dei*); as embodied and free, contingent and subject to frailty and failure (‘sin’); as ‘steward’ of creation; and as inhabitant of the earthly *cosmopolis*.

## Ethics in Sport and Media

**Lecturer:** Dr John Scally

**Days/ Times:** Thurs 9-11 AM

Beginning with an overview of traditions of ethics, this module treats two key areas of applied ethics. Sport in contemporary society has been described both as an expression of the highest human and social values, and as a legally secured parallel world of the elite pursuit of victories and medals. On the one hand, as a sphere of physical self-realization, social formation and of moral training in fairness, it is seen as an area with standards of excellence that can be closely aligned to ethics. On the other hand, individual sport stars and the institutions of organized sport have been subject to multiple enquiries and critiques: for example, on doping, corruption, sponsorship, the power of mentors and child protection. The concluding element deals with some of the most pressing ethical issues in the media today, among them 'Fake news'.

## Words to the Wise: Israelite and Jewish Wisdom Literature

**Lecturer:** Dr Neil Morrison

**Days/ Times:** Fri 10AM-12 noon

This module represents an opportunity to explore the richness of the Wisdom Literature found in the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish traditions. Following an introduction to the Wisdom tradition, the module will offer a close and critical reading of the books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes and how wisdom themes have influenced other parts of the Hebrew canon. There will also be a focus on the divergent strands which emerge within this corpus and the historical context in which these works were produced. Seminar discussions will explore key themes such as divine justice, attitudes to wealth and work and the representation of women. The module will also consider the coherence of each individual book, the nature of the relationship between Hebrew wisdom and

other sapiential traditions and will examine to what extent the Wisdom tradition diverges from other perspectives within the Hebrew Bible.

## Environmental and Technology Ethics

**Lecturer:** Dr Cathriona Russell

**Days/ Times:** Mon 3-4 PM and Tue 1-2 PM

This module explores key concepts and debates in environmental and technology ethics: productionism and the 'tragedy of the commons'; instrumental versus intrinsic value; demographics and consumption; food security and related aspects of animal agriculture; justice and sustainable development; environmental citizenship and the future of work. It will examine key ethics responses rooted in hermeneutics, in philosophical and religious traditions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Daoism) and characterise the role of the ethicist in 'expert' cultures and in policy development in Ireland, the EU and internationally.

## Life of Muhammad: Sources, Methods and Debates

**Lecturer:** Dr Zohar Hadromi-Allouche

**Days/ Times:** Mon 2-3PM and Tue 11AM-12 noon

Muhammad is one of the most influential characters in history. This module discusses his diverse portrayals, from the ones found in the earliest available Islamic sources, to these days. It examines his biography in the early Islamic sources, as well as its diverse interpretations how in later Islamic writings, and modern scholarship.

## Religion, Media and the Public Sphere

**Lecturer:** Dr Alexandra Grieser

**Days/ Times:** Tue 4-5 PM and Fri 1-2 PM

Religion is prominent in public debates, in the media, and in the cultural imaginary of people's daily life, no matter whether they see themselves as believers or not. In turn, religions also 'make use' of media and mediation when creating influential symbols and intense and extraordinary experiences. They do so by means of architecture and music, images and narratives, through clothes, body practices or the TV and the internet.

The module focuses on how the relationship between religion and media can be studied and how this helps to better understand the role of religion in how world views develop and change. This includes theoretical reflection on the "public sphere" as an element of democracy and the question whether we live in a "post-secular" world.

Rethinking the concept of "media" will include but reach beyond social media and the mass media; scripture and dance, money and microphones are means of mediating religion as well. We will ask, what is a medium, how are religions depicted in the media, how do religions respond to new media, and how can religion be understood as mediation while often claiming to provide "immediate" experiences? Students will sign up for a "research team" and develop a case study over the course of the semester.





**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:**

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Course (Module) –** Please select below the module(s) you would like to take.

- Introducing the New Testament: Texts and Contexts
- Introduction to Philosophy
- Introducing Islam
- Religions in the Ancient Mediterranean
- The Historical Jesus and the Gospels
- Medieval Theology: Women, Learning, Universities
- Digital Innovation to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals
- Religion Through Bollywood
- Cosmology, Religion and Science
- Ethics in Sport and in Media
- Words to the Wise: Israelite and Jewish Wisdom Literature
- Environmental and Technology Ethics
- Life of Muhammad: Sources, Methods and Debates
- Religion, Media and the Public Sphere

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**Administrative Officer**

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School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies Building (Old Physiology Building)  
Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2, D02C1F6

For further queries, please call: 01 896 4790 or email: [sradmdbln@tcd.ie](mailto:sradmdbln@tcd.ie).

**For Internal Use, Only**

**Fee:**  €150     €100 (*students, unemployed persons & pensioners with social welfare card*)     Exempt

**Form of Payment:** \_\_\_\_\_