1. **Title of the module**

RSST6220/RSST6230 (TH622/TH623) – Cracking Biblical Codes: Prophecy, Apocalyptic and Wisdom

1. **School or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

School of European Culture and Languages

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 5 (RSST6220) and Level 6 (RSST6230)

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

30 Credits (15 ECTS)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Autumn or Spring

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

None

1. **The programmes of study to which the module contributes**

Optional for BA Religious Studies (Single and Joint Honours)

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module both Level 5 and Level 6 students will be able to:**

8.1 Demonstrate critical knowledge of and the ability to critically assess attempts (ancient and modern) to decipher the Bible as ‘code’;

8.2 Demonstrate confidence when applying these critical skills in the close reading of biblical texts;

8.3 Demonstrate detailed understanding and awareness of the principal academic methodologies in Biblical Studies and critical appreciation of the range of interpretative models in Judaism and Christianity;

8.4 Demonstrate critical and analytical skills to analyse the interrelations between ancient texts, or ‘mysteries’, and contemporary worlds.

**In addition,** **on successfully completing the module Level 6 students will be able to:**

8.5 Carry out and demonstrate understanding of additional research and critical thinking that shows an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge within biblical studies;

8.6 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of key aspects of the discipline, including a familiarity with the latest research within biblical studies;

8.7 Demonstrate the ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within biblical and religious studies, including those currently at the forefront of the discipline (e.g. hermeneutics and deconstruction);

8.8 Demonstrate the ability to undertake independent learning and to demonstrate this through the sophisticated use of refereed research in leading journals and other original materials within biblical studies;

8.9 Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in their approach to key texts within biblical studies.

1. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module both Level 5 and Level 6 students will be able to:**

9.1 Demonstrate confident communication skills;

9.2 Demonstrate effective organisational skills;

9.3 Demonstrate confidence in the use of appropriate IT resources, including word processing and critical evaluation of online material;

9.4 Analyse theories in terms of their application to contemporary contexts or debates.

**In addition,** **on successfully completing the module Level 6 students will be able to:**

9.5 Demonstrate confidence and independence in initiating and carrying out research projects of their own devising and undertaking independent learning;

9.6 Engage in critical reflection, discussion and analysis of various texts and critical commentary, and devise and sustain arguments relating to this analysis using ideas and techniques at the forefront of the discipline;

9.7 Make independent judgments about the appropriateness of different theoretical approaches to problem solving in texts, frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution, identify a range of solutions, and evaluate the efficacy of such approaches.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This module will explore the theme of ‘Biblical Codes’ from two angles.

Firstly, we will be exploring how different writers and groups (some of them inside the Bible, some of them outside it) have read the Bible as temporal or political code. For example, the biblical book of Daniel attempts to decode the book of Jeremiah, which had already become deeply mysterious to ancient readers. Similarly, the New Testament ‘deciphers’ biblical prophecy and motifs by applying them to Jesus or the Roman Empire. At the other end of the time spectrum, we find bestsellers like Michael Drosnin’s *The Bible Code* (1997), Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye’s attempts to decrypt biblical visions of the end of time by way of contemporary global politics, or recent readings of the book of Ezekiel as prophecies about UFO’s. Techniques of decryption are also built into central developments within Jewish and Christian traditions. In fact, what is often called the history of ‘hermeneutics’ could also be described as the history of ‘How not to read literally’. We will be looking at a range of examples of such developments by focusing on readers like Philo of Alexandria, Augustine of Hippo, or Jewish Kabbalah.

Secondly, we will undertake some in-depth readings of prophecy, apocalyptic, or wisdom texts—the ones that readers of the Bible find most difficult to ‘decode’. Texts to be studied will be taken from the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Pseudepigrapha. We will be exploring the contexts that produced these literatures and thinking about how to read (decipher?) them across the abyss of time.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

Frilingos, C.A. (2004). *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs and the Book of Revelation.* University of Pennsylvania Press

Hartman, L.F. (2007). Alexander A. Di Lella, *Daniel.* Anchor Bible Commentaries; Yale University Press

Pippin, T. (1999). *Apocalyptic Bodies: The Biblical End of the World in Text and Image*. London and New York: Routledge

Pyper, H. (2005). ‘Reading in the Dark: Zechariah, Daniel and the Difficulty of Scripture’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29.4, pp. 485-504.

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total Contact Hours: 30

Private Study Hours: 270

Total Study Hours: 300

1. **Assessment methods**
   1. Main assessment methods

RSST6220:

* Essay 1 (1,500 words) – 20%
* Essay 2 (2,000 words) – 30%
* Examination (3 hours) – 50%

RSST6230:

* Essay 1 (2,000 words) – 20%
* Essay 2 (2,500 words) – 30%
* Examination (3 hours) – 50%

13.2 Reassessment methods

* Reassessment Instrument: 100% Coursework

1. ***Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section12) and methods of assessment (section 13)***

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| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 8.7 | 8.8 | 8.9 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.7 |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Lecture | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Seminar | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay 1 | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Essay 2 | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Examination | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

a) Accessible resources and curriculum

b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

This module compares material from different cultures in order to promote an awareness of the ways cultural borrowing, translation, and competition functioned to establish a wide array of historical norms or inherited sensibilities. Students will be challenged to consider contemporary analogues to these ancient intercultural interactions, and we will focus together on how we might participate in the emergence of new cross-cultural discussions of the various topics. These challenges are encouraged in lectures, discussions, and assessments.

**FACULTIES SUPPORT OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
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