1. **Title of the module**

RSST6110/RSST6120 (TH611/TH612) The Sacred in Contemporary Society

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 (RSST6110) and Level 6 (RSST6120)

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)

Also available as a ‘Wild’ module

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

8.1 Demonstrate critical understanding of the differences between ontological and cultural theories of the sacred;

8.2 Situate cultural theories of the sacred within broader forms of cultural theory (e.g. cultural sociology);

8.3 Engage critically with key cultural theorists of the sacred, demonstrating a clear understanding of their work, an ability to articulate a balanced and well-informed critique of it, and an ability to use their concepts, where appropriate, to relevant social and cultural phenomena;

8.4 Provide balanced and well-evidenced arguments on whether a particular contemporary cultural phenomenon can be appropriately understood in sacred terms, as well as what this suggests about the nature of the sacred as a cultural structure.

**On successfully completing the module Level 6 students will be able to:**

8.5 Demonstrate a critical appreciation of differences between ontological and cultural theories of the sacred in ways that connect systematically with broader theoretical debates in the study of religion;

8.6 Make appropriate use of wider forms of cultural theory (e.g. cultural sociology) to develop nuanced analyses of the nature and significance of the sacred and the profane in the social and cultural conditions of modernity;

8.7 Engage critically with the leading edge of work on the cultural study of the sacred and reflect on its specific strengths and limitations in providing a theoretical framework for analysing contemporary social and cultural life;

8.8 Demonstrate understanding and make use of methodological approaches used by leading theorists of the cultural study of the sacred in ways that both establish their value and limitations for understanding a contemporary cultural phenomenon in terms of the sacred and the profane, as well as the value and limitations of particular methodological approaches more generally.

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

9.1 Demonstrate a clear understanding of relevant literature;

9.2 Identify and critically evaluate sources relevant to a particular theory or debate;

9.3 Identify and analyse relevant primary case material drawn from outside academic texts (e.g. news media).

**On successfully completing the module Level 6 students will be able to:**

9.4 Demonstrate the ability to understand key and advanced concepts and to be able to apply these across a range of different contexts and issues;

9.5 Demonstrate advanced skills in searching for approach literature and other relevant sources appropriate to their work (e.g. use of online databases);

9.6 Demonstrate flexibility, creativity and autonomy in researching sources that are relevant to the particular issue and theoretical concepts they are working with by obtaining and analysing relevant primary data from non-academic sources.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

The primary aims of this module are to give students a critical grounding in current cultural theories of the sacred, to provide them with opportunities to explore how these concepts relate to contemporary social and cultural phenomena, and to reflect on how this process might help us to refine cultural theories of the sacred. The module will enable students to distinguish between ontological and cultural theories of the sacred, and will introduce them to key cultural theorists of the sacred such as Durkheim, Shils, Bellah, and Alexander. A range of cases will also be explored to provide students with opportunities to think about how relevant concepts might relate to specific social and cultural phenomena, and to provide a basis for the analytical work they undertake in their assessed work.

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

Aldridge, A. (2007). *Religion in the Contemporary World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Alexander, J. (2005). *The Meanings of Social Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Durkheim, E. (1995). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: Free Press.

Lynch, G. (2012). *On the Sacred*. London: Acumen.

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total Contact Hours: 40

Private Study Hours: 260

Total Study Hours: 300

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

* Essay (5,000 words) – 50%
* 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 / 8.5 | 8.2 / 8.6 | 8.3 / 8.7 | 8.4 / 8.8 | 9.1 / 9.4 | 9.2 / 9.5 | 9.3 / 9.6 |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** |  | **x** |  |  |
| Lecture | **x** | **x** | **x** |  | **x** | **x** |  |
| Seminar |  | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay |  |  | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Examination | **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**

The entire module explores themes, issues and methods in the cultural and social scientific study of the sacred from a global and internationalised perspective. By exploring case studies from different localities of the globe, the module examines how the sacred and the profane are organised in different geographies. As such, it provides the means for considering the methods, approaches and hermeneutic challenges involved in considering the sacred within a cross-cultural and international context.

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

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| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| 18/12/2018 | Major | September 2019 | 11, 12, 17 |  |
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