1. **Title of the module**

RSST6570 (TH657) – Religion, Nonreligion and the Secular State

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

Division of Arts & Humanities

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

Level 6

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 course(s) of study to which the module contributes**

Optional for BA Religious Studies (Single and Joint Honours)

Also available as an elective module choice

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

8.1 Demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to critically assess, major theoretical approaches to the topic of religion, nonreligion and the secular state;

8.2 Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to critically compare discrete historical examples of political secularism, including European, other Western and non-Western cases;

8.3 Frame their own research interests and disciplinary questions in light of comparative, historical and theoretical approaches to the relationship between politics and religion;

8.4 Reflect critically on key concepts such as ‘secularism’, ‘liberalism’, ‘democracy’, and ‘pluralism’.

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

9.1 Communicate information, ideas, problems, concepts, and analysis to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

9.2 Demonstrate refined essay-writing and argument-construction skills;

9.3 Demonstrate transferable skills such as proficiency in the use of appropriate IT resources, including word processing and critical evaluation of online material;

9.4 Demonstrate honed close reading and analytical skills;

9.5 Analyse theories, which are at the forefront of their discipline, in terms of their application to contemporary contexts or debates.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This course considers the contested relationship between religion and the secular state, and the increasingly significant role of nonreligious identities and worldviews for understanding those states. Both religion and nonreligion have come to new prominence in the twenty-first century, prompting a re-evaluation of what role they should play in policy, law and society, and the nature and viability of political secularism itself. This course explores the key conceptual and theoretical debates shaping contemporary understandings of religion, nonreligion and the secular state, including the nature of secularity and secularism, the role of religious plurality and pluralism, multiple secularities and postsecular approaches, and the role of religion in political liberalism. The second part of the course explores case studies in detail, including differences and similarities between European (including Soviet), North American and Asian secularisms; the relationship between political secularism and the beliefs, practices and identities of local populations; and significant controversies (around blasphemy, reproductive rights and the right to wear religious clothing) and what they tell us about religion, nonreligion and political secularism in contemporary society.

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

Asad, T. (2003). *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Burchardt, M., M. Wohlrab-Sahr and M. Middell, eds. (2015). *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter.

Connolly, W.E. (2001). *Why I’m not a Secularist*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Guesnet, F., C. Laborde and L. Lee (eds), (2017). *Negotiating Religion: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Lee, L. (2015*). Recognizing the Non-religious: Reimagining the Secular*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total Contact Hours: 40

Total Private Study Hours: 260

Total Study Hours: 300

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

* Essay 1 (2,500 words) – 40%
* Essay 2 (3,000 words) – 50%
* Presentation (10 minutes) – 10%

13.2 Reassessment methods

* 100% Coursework (3,000 words)

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* | *9.1* | *9.2* | *9.3* | *9.4* | *9.5* |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Lecture | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  |  |  |  | **x** |
| Seminar | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay 1 | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Essay 2 | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Presentation | **x** |  | **x** | **x** |  | **x** |  | **x** |  | **x** |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The Division 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**

In recent decades, religion has returned the forefront of international politics. Increasingly, nonreligious worldviews are also recognised as having political, legal, and social significance equivalent to religious worldviews. This module engages with these international concerns, focusing on case studies from around the world and understanding individual cases in comparative context.

**DIVISION USE ONLY**

**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) |
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