1. **Title of the module**

RSST6410 (TH641) – Death and the Afterlife

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

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 students will be able to:**

8.1 Understand the nature and scope of perspectives on death, eschatology and apocalypticism within a variety of world religions;

8.2 Identify, discuss and analyse the contribution made by key theologians and philosophers to the concept and necessity of an afterlife;

8.3 Identify and understand competing philosophical, theological and religious claims surrounding such teachings as the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the flesh;

8.4 Demonstrate a comprehensive awareness of the diversity of eschatological models within a variety of traditions (e.g. realised and future forms of eschatology, mind-dependent worlds, reincarnation and the concepts of the New Jerusalem and moksa);

8.5 Examine the purported evidence about the possibility of out-of-body and near-death experiences with reference to specific thinkers, as well as with respect to academic scepticism in this area;

8.6 Evaluate the influence of historical and scientific contexts on the eschatological and apocalyptic hopes that have arisen;

8.7 Appraise the ways in which novelists and filmmakers have contributed to our cultural or theological understanding of heaven and hell with reference to particular novels or films.

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

9.1 Demonstrate a growing ability to work independently and effectively;

9.2 Present evidence of an ability to structure scholarly and carefully thought through arguments;

9.3 Use electronic media to identify and collate appropriate academic resources from the library material, including primary sources, online journals, and other reliable electronic sources, and reference this material effectively;

9.4 Deploy a range of IT skills effectively, such as word-processing text with footnotes, basic formatting, searching databases and text files;

9.5 Demonstrate a capacity to take responsibility for their own personal and professional learning and development.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This module will evaluate and critique a range of historical, philosophical, theological and secular perspectives on death and the afterlife, beginning with the way the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, the Qu’ran, the Tibetan Book of the Dead and the Upanishads conceptualise the nature and destiny of humankind, including such concepts as sheol, moksha, purgatory, eternal life, heaven and hell. This will be followed by a discussion of the interplay in western theological and philosophical traditions between competing notions of the resurrection of the flesh and the immortality of the body as well as an evaluation of what various Christian thinkers, including Augustine and Origen, believed that an eternity in heaven or hell might be like.

The module will then investigate the range of eschatological teachings that different traditions have offered, including in Christian thought the diversity of realised and future forms of eschatology, as well as the tenability of purported testimony surrounding the possibility of out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences and mind-dependent worlds, and the way in which such endeavours have been sustained or critiqued in the light of scientific and historical advances.

The module will conclude with a detailed study of the way in which filmmakers and novelists have approached eschatological and apocalyptic teachings and reconceptualised them. This will be done with specific reference to Conrad Ostwalt’s work on the desacralisation of the apocalypse in Jewish and Christian thought in a range of 1990’s Hollywood science fiction movies, and the impact that such attempts have had on the way questions of life after death have conventionally been approached.

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

Bailey, L.W. & Yates, J. (eds.). (1996). *The Near-Death Experience: A Reader*. New York & London: Routledge.

Coward, H. (ed.). (2000). *Life after Death in World Religions*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.

Deacy, C. (2012). *Screening the Afterlife: Theology, Eschatology and Film*. London: Routledge.

Hick, J. (1976). *Death and Eternal Life*. London: Collins.

McDannell, C. & Lang, B. (1990). *Heaven: A History*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Neusner, J. (ed.). (2000). *Death and the Afterlife*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.

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 1 (1,500 words) – 25%
* Essay 2 (2,000 words) – 35%
* Examination (2 hours) – 40%

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 | 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** | **x** | **x** |
| Lecture | **x** | **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** |
| Essay 2 |  |  | **x** |  | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Examination | **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 has a broad international dimension, covering the worldviews of a range of religious traditions across primarily Europe and Asia, as well as the work of a number of largely American-based scholars on Near-Death Experiences, together with the work of predominantly American filmmakers whose visions of heaven, hell and the apocalypse are key to the Learning Outcomes.

**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.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| 06/02/18 | Major | September 2018 | 8-9 | No |
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