1. **Title of the module**

RSST6470 (TH647) – Blasphemy: Sex, Scandal and Religion

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 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 programmes of study to which the module contributes**

Optional for BA Asian Studies (Joint Honours); BA Religious Studies (Single and Joint Honours); BA Liberal Arts with a Year Abroad.

Also available as a ‘wild’ module choice.

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

8.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the key dynamics underlying public cases of ‘blasphemy’;

8.2 Critically analyse the relationship between ideas of blasphemy and the self-understanding of religious communities;

8.3 Critically analyse the relationship between ideas of blasphemy and secularity, especially freedom of speech;

8.4 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the relationship between historical context and (changing) ideas of acceptable expression;

8.5 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the changing legislation on blasphemy and hate speech.

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

9.1 Demonstrate developed skills in analysing complex and multi-faceted material, with reference to advanced scholarship and primary texts;

9.2 Demonstrate competence in the use of appropriate IT resources and critical sources in devising research plans, evaluating relevant material, identifying problems, and framing appropriate solutions;

9.3 Analyse primary and second sources in a variety of media, developing advanced skills in source selection and initiating research plans for acquiring a greater understanding of the material;

9.4 Analyse sources in their historical and cultural contexts, and demonstrate advanced skills in contextual comparison;

9.5 Address controversial topics with sensitivity and nuance.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

In this module we will be looking at famous and obscure blasphemy cases, and asking why an old concept like ‘blasphemy’ continues to be so powerful today. We will analyse a range of recent cases in a variety of media, including Monty Python’s *Life of Brian*; *The Satanic Verses*; the Danish Cartoon Affair; *Visions of Ecstasy*; the *Charlie Hebdo* massacres in 2015; public *Femen* demonstrations; Pussy Riot; *Bezhti*; and the *Gay News* controversy over the homoerotic poem ‘The Love that Dares to Speak its Name’. However, we will also be looking at blasphemy in historical and global contexts. How have old British colonial laws been developed in Pakistan and India, for example? When was the last execution and imprisonment for blasphemy in the UK? ‘Blasphemy’ will be explored as a flashpoint for major controversies at the heart of modern democracies. These include the conflict between freedom of religion and freedom of speech, and the conflict between religion and sexual freedom.

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

Asad, Talal, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler and Saba Mahmood, 2009. *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury and Free Speech*. New York: Fordham.

Butler, Judith, 1997. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. London: Routledge.

Grenda, Christopher, Chris Beneke and David Nash (eds.), 2014. *Profane: Sacriligeous Expression in a Multicultural Age*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Lawton, David, 1993. *Blasphemy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Levy, Leonard, 1995. *Blasphemy: Verbal Offense Against the Sacred From Moses to Salman Rushdie*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Nash, David, 2010. *Blasphemy in the Christian World: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Plate, Brent, 2006. *Blasphemy: Art that Offends*. London: Black Dog.

Taylor, Joan, 2015. *Jesus and Brian: Exploring the Historical Jesus and his Times via Monty Python’s Life of Brian*. London: Bloomsbury.

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 (1,000 words) – 25%
* Essay 2 (3,000 words) – 75%

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 / 8.6 | 8.2 / 8.7 | 8.3 / 8.8 | 8.4 / 8.9 | 8.5 / 8.10 | 9.1 / 9.6 | 9.2 / 9.7 | 9.3 / 9.8 | 9.4 / 9.9 | 9.5 / 9.10 |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Lecture | **x** | **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** | **x** |
| Essay 2 | **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 explores blasphemy from a global perspective. The module asks whether blasphemy is a Christian colonial concept, or one that is ‘indigenous’ to other ‘world religions’. It includes case studies from a range of European countries, and also Indonesia, India and Pakistan.

**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) |
| 10/01/20 | Major | September | 1, 3, 8, 9, 12 | No |
|  |  |  |  |  |