1. **Title of the module**

RSST8320 (TH832) – The Study of Religion: Genealogies, Inventions and Interventions

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 7

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**

Compulsory for MA Religion

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

8.1 A critical awareness of the formation of the discipline of religion in relation to other modern disciplines and foundational modern concepts (e.g. the theoretical definition of ‘the political’);

8.2 A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how, and why, and with what consequences the category of religion was invented;

8.3 A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of major ‘inventors’ of religion and techniques for studying religion;

8.4 An ability to analyse critical approaches to the study of religion;

8.5 The ability to situate their own specialist area (e.g. Hindu Studies, Biblical Studies) in relation to the genealogies and questions mapped in this course.

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

9.1 Demonstrate autonomy and self-direction in a) designing and implementing projects and b) decisions about how to apply the wider histories of the discipline to the student’s particular area of study;

9.2 Demonstrate the ability to analyse competing arguments at an advanced level, and take positions and explain and justify those positions;

9.3 Demonstrate the ability to look at diverse data and create meaningful larger narratives. Collectively and individually, students will be encouraged to make new stories and new genealogies of religion in relation to foundational Modern concepts;

9.4 Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate advanced scholarship.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

The category of religion is hardwired into histories of Enlightenment, modernity, and post-modernity to the point that it is now difficult to discuss any of these periods without negotiating religion as a problem of central importance. This course develops a multidisciplinary mapping of religion as an object of academic research in order to better understand the polemics, politics, assumptions and everyday practices which continue to determine the status of religion. Working with various subfields within the study of religion, this comparative and collaborative course develops new maps of mutual influence, borrowing, translation and struggle between subfields, all of which produced the dominant images of religion within university and popular cultural contexts alike.

Indicative topics include: how and why did the study of religion emerge as a ‘human science’ opposed to earlier research on theology? What cultural and political projects shaped the category of “world religion”? How did scholars of biblical and European traditions react to nineteenth-century developments in the study of Buddhist and Hindu traditions? What were the political tendencies behind modern European and North American denigrations of ritualised practice in favour of religion as the study of “belief”? What were universities’ roles in establishing the limits and value of the concept of the “secular”, and why are so many academic discussions of religion currently so keen to dislodge the same concept?

Students will learn to engage in sophisticated ways with classic primary texts by those who lastingly shaped the modern invention of the academic study of religion, figures like G. W. F. Hegel, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Max Müller, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Sigmund Freud, Marcel Mauss.

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

Durkheim, E. (2008). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Feuerbach, L. (2008). *The Essence of Religion*, London: Prometheus

Frazer, J. (2009). *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, ed. Robert Fraser; Oxford: Oxford University Press

Masuzawa, T. (2005). *The Invention of World Religions, or How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, Chicago: Chicago University Press

Schleiermacher, F. (1996). *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Strauss, D.F. (2012). *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, trans. George Eliot; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Weber, M. (2008). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Stephen Kalberg; Oxford: Oxford University Press

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total Contact Hours: 20

Private Study Hours: 280

Total Study Hours: 300

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

* Essay (5,000 words) – 100%
  1. 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* | *9.1* | *9.2* | *9.3* | *9.4* |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Lecture/Seminar | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay | **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**

Students come to this MA module from the full range of departmental sub-disciplines and global foci, as well as from a wide range of international and multidisciplinary backgrounds. The learning outcomes and scheduled meetings for the module alike encourage students to develop skills and knowledge so that they can address themselves to the international, colonial and globalising contexts within which religion came to be imagined as a modern academic subject. Regular discussions with lecturers and other students will reinforce the global dimensions of our research as well as the international implications of our various projects. Students will be encouraged to develop practical and conceptual implications of their research for ongoing questions of the historical, international, and globalising contexts of the discourses of religion and the secular.

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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 the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
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| Revised FSO Jan 2018 |