1. **Title of the module**

RSST8330 (TH833) – Contemporary Critical Approaches to the Study of 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 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 Demonstrate critical awareness of the major recent debates and controversies in the contemporary study of religion;

8.2 Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of major theories and methodologies in the study of religion, as they have developed post-1945;

8.3 Apply these contemporary techniques and apparatuses to the study of religion, and to critically analyse those techniques and critical approaches;

8.4 Discuss the complexities and controversies attached to keywords (for example ‘culture’ and ‘belief’);

8.5 Apply these debates and controversies to the student’s own area of interest (for example Hinduism, Biblical Studies) and to work out what these debates mean for their own particular area of expertise;

8.6 Design their own personal methodological framework and vocabularies for the study of religion in general, as well as for their own specialist field.

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) the identification of key issues b) the decisions about how to apply those key issues to the student’s particular area of study and c) designing and implementing projects;

9.2 Analyse competing arguments at an advanced level, and take positions and explain and justify those positions;

9.3 Communicate conclusions to a specialist audience;

9.4 Demonstrate new skills and vocabularies—including but also beyond those already in existence in the discipline;

9.5 Critically evaluate scholarship.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

The focus of this module is on major contemporary developments in the study of religion. Topics to be dealt with include (without being confined to): gender/sexuality; postcolonialism; poststructuralism and critical theory; media; economy; the construction of ‘the secular’; and the contestation of religion as a category of analysis.

Students will focus on key thinkers and debates and key terms and key words (for example, ‘What controversies have developed around terms like “culture” and “belief”?’). The course will also examine the latest developments and controversies in methodologies and theories of religion. These include (without being confined to) textual studies; anthropology; sociology; comparative religion; psychology of religion; media theory; philosophy of religion.

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: Stanford University Press

Bender, C. and Ann Tayes (2012). *What Matters? Ethnographies of Value in a Not So Secular Age*, New York: Columbia University Press

King, R. (1999). *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the “Mystic East”*, London and New York: Routledge

Lynch, G. (2014). *The Sacred in the Modern World: A Cultural Sociological Approach*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Sherwood, Y. (2012). *Biblical Blaspheming: Trials of the Sacred for a Secular Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Taylor, M. (ed.) (1998). *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

de Vries, H. (ed.) (2008). *Religion: Beyond a Concept*, New York: Fordham

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 (4,000 words) – 80%
* Critical Analysis (1,000 words) – 20%
  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* | *8.6* | *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** |
| Lecture/Seminar | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Critical Analysis |  |  |  |  | **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, post-colonial and globalising contexts within which religion continues to be imagined as a modern academic subject and topic of popular cultural discussion. Regular conversations 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 international and often political implications of the categories of religion.

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