Research Seminar: Early Modern History (A004043)

Course Specifications
Valid as from the academic year 2017-2018

Lecturers in academic year 2017-2018
Touber, Jetze
LW03 lecturer-in-charge

Course offerings in academic year 2017-2018
A (semester 1) Dutch

Offered in the following programmes in 2017-2018
- Master of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies 5 A
- Master of Arts in History 5 A

Teaching languages
Dutch

Keywords
Early modern cultural history; Religion; Intellectual history

Position of the course
In this research seminar students are familiarized with concepts and debates current in the historiography of the Early Modern Era. They are trained to independently evaluate these and to set up and carry out new research. This research seminar serves as a completion course regarding the application of historical criticism.

Contents
_Europeans and the world religions in the early modern period (with a focus on the Dutch Republic)_

Ever since the turn of the millennium, there is public discomfort about the relation between the secularised majority and an Islamic minority. In the passionate debate this gives rise to, concepts are appealed to that we may acknowledge to have been at stake for centuries: tolerance, orthodoxy, scepticism, and unbelief. In this course we turn to a period in which Europe was confronted for the first time in a structural way with a range of religions of non-western societies—Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism—, a period moreover in which said concepts became very topical: the late Renaissance and the early Enlightenment. How did Europeans (particularly inhabitants of the Dutch Republic) respond to the plethora of religions practised in the corners of the world? How were non-Christian ritual and theology represented? How were non-western religions incorporated in a Christian worldview?

We study literature on the early modern contacts of the West with non-Christian religions. Then we delve into primary sources to research how (mainly) the Dutch Republic perceived and reacted to the religious plurality across the world: travel accounts, academic publications, polemical treatises. How should early modern commentaries on ‘paganism’ and ‘idolatry’ be interpreted? Do we observe the demonization of ‘the Other’? Or were new experiences incorporated in one’s own traditions seamlessly? Which models of interpretation did European scholars appeal to: syncretism, diffusionism, supersessionism? What consequences did the encounter with non-Christian religions have for politics and culture? We study both texts and images, and we ask whether a ‘clash of civilizations’ was inevitable.

Initial competences
The students meet the final attainment level of the UGent bachelor in history. In particular they have a good prior knowledge of Early Modern history.

Final competences

Contact hrs 45.0 h
Study time 150 h

Credits 5.0

Teaching languages Dutch

Nominal values; actual values may depend on programme

Course size

1

(Approved)
1. To demonstrate advanced knowledge of and insight into the subject matter of the research seminar.
2. To critically evaluate existing concepts and theories related to Early Modern history and to be able to apply these in a subject covered in this research seminar.
3. To be able to make a critical and historically sound judgement about the topic of this research seminar.
4. To be able to autonomously find, process and interpret archival sources related to the topic of this research seminar.
5. To be able to present research findings orally and written in a scientifically sound way.

Conditions for credit contract
Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract
This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods
Extra information on the teaching methods
Lessons are combination of thematic discussion and research practice. In the thematic discussions we reflect on secondary literature, touching upon historiographical concepts as well as research methods. In the research practice students work with primary sources, in small assignments related to the issues discussed. In the final weeks of the course students write a research paper, engaging critically with both secondary literature and primary sources.

Learning materials and price
Reader (consisting of secondary literature and source material) and powerpoint-presentations downloadable via Minerva.

References

Course content-related study coaching
The Minerva website, office hours of the lecturer, feedback to papers, presentation and exams.

Evaluation methods
continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation
Written examination, participation, assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation
examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods
Period independent:
- Participation
- Portfolio assignments
- Research paper

Calculation of the examination mark
- Participation (attendance and contribution to discussions) 15%
- Portfolio assignments 25%
- Research paper 60%

NB The research paper needs to be scored at least a 10 out of 20 for the course to be passed.

Facilities for Working Students
Facilities:
1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
   NB: this is only possible if discussed with the lecturer prior to the start of the course.
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year

(Approved)
Feedback can be given during an appointment during or after office hours.