



## Bachelor's courses Faculty of Social Sciences

VU University Amsterdam - Student- & Onderwijszaken - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2018-2019



# Global Religion

<b>Course code</b>	S_GR ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 5
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
<b>Coordinator</b>	prof. dr. J.T. Sunier
<b>Examinator</b>	prof. dr. J.T. Sunier
<b>Teaching staff</b>	dr. P.G.A. Versteeg, prof. dr. J.T. Sunier
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Lecture
<b>Level</b>	300

## Course objective

Learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding - The student has acquired knowledge and understanding of:

- (1) the anthropological approach of religion as distinct from other disciplinary approaches.
- (2) the classic and contemporary interpretations of religion through the work of classic and contemporary anthropologists.
- (3) religion as a contemporary global phenomenon.

Application - The student has acquired the competences to:

- (4) ask anthropological questions regarding the religious practices that they encounter during this course.
- (5) critically assess different theoretical approaches in the anthropology of religion and their (in)ability to describe, interpret and represent religious praxis;
- (6) describe some of the methodological problems that are typical for anthropology of religion, i.e. the insider-outsider gap, and embodied practice and interpretation (mind vs. body).

Making judgements - The student is able to demonstrate:

- (7) reflection on their assumptions (biases) and an open and interpretive attitude vis a vis religious beliefs and practices.

## Course content

The aim of the course Global Religion is to gain knowledge and insight into the forms of religion as a global practice. Our starting point is the idea that any investigation of religious practice should begin with the concrete forms in which religion presents itself to us in a research setting. The anthropological approach of religion is a social-scientific angle which looks for the way in which religious practice and social processes are related. This basically boils down to two questions: how social structure influences religious practice, and how religious practice influences social processes. This question applies to both small-scale societies and groups, and to large-scale societies, as well as to more network-like forms of social organization, for example, in digital media.

In the perspective of the global, these questions will direct us to the cultural logic of expansion, religious movements, in- and exclusion in religion, the urge for 'purification', and subsequently religion and

violence, as well as relativism and formations of the secular.

**Form of tuition**

Lectures

**Type of assessment**

Weekly assignments: 50%;

Written exam: 50%.

**Course reading**

To be announced in the course manual (see CANVAS).

**Target group**

2nd year bachelorstudents in Cultural Anthropology and Development  
Sociology.

Also open as an elective course for Exchange Students.