



## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### *Syllabus*

## *Religion and Visual Culture - 24972*

*Last update 23-09-2021*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)*

*Responsible Department: Comparative Religion*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 2nd Semester*

*Teaching Languages: English*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Hannelies Koloska*

*Coordinator Email: [hannelie.koloska@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:hannelie.koloska@mail.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesday 1-2pm or upon appointment*

*Teaching Staff:*

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Dr. Hannelies Koloska

Course/Module description:

The "Unbelieving Thomas" is one of the most famous paintings by the Italian painter Caravaggio (1573-1610). It depicts the moment of Jesus showing his wounds to his disciple Thomas, who would not believe in his resurrection unless seeing and touching his body. In the Biblical story, Jesus will tell him that he believed because he saw (John 20:27). Is the relation between vision and belief as simple as that - "if I see, I will believe" - or is vision a much more complicated experience? How do humans see the world? How do religions affect visual culture? How does visual culture affect the way religions are practiced? What is the relation between a viewer and a visual object? What do visual arts tell us about religions in ways that written scripture cannot? And what does religion tell us about the meanings of visual arts in ways that art history cannot?

Course/Module aims:

This course will introduce to the academic field of Religious Visual Culture Studies. It will examine particular case studies from different religious traditions, mainly from the three monotheistic religions.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- students can demonstrate a working knowledge of, and the ability to apply theories, methodological perspectives, approaches from visual culture studies to religious phenomena
- students can demonstrate knowledge and the ability to apply theories, methodological perspectives and approaches from religious studies to phenomena in visual culture
- students can demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between visual culture and religion
- students will become familiar with the ways in which religious visual cultures are shaped by social institutions
- students can critical comparisons among religious traditions, experiences, and practices

Attendance requirements(%):

In case of absence, the teacher has to be notified (not more than 2 times)

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: - group/pair or individual works  
- interactive learning

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Course/Module Content:

- 1) Religion and Visual Culture: What is Religion?
- 2) Religion and Visual Culture: What is Visual Culture?
- 3) Aisthesis: Perception and Religious Experience
- 4) Practices of Looking/ The Sense of Seeing in Religions
- 5) Christianity: Jesus – the image of the invisible God / The Icon
- 6) Islam: Qur’anic Visuality/ The Hilya
- 7) Judaism: Seeing the Face of God
- 8) Buddhism: Seeing the Mind
- 9) Hinduism: Divine Images

Content may be subject to change

Required Reading:

Moodle

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %  
Presentation 10 %  
Participation in Tutorials 20 %  
Project work 60 %  
Assignments 10 %  
Reports 0 %  
Research project 0 %  
Quizzes 0 %  
Other 0 %

Additional information:

This course will include an on-campus excursion (Seeing Religion at university).

Final papers can be submitted in English or Arabic.