Syllabus

Paganism & Conversion to Christianity in Late Antiquity & the Early Middle Ages: Guided Source Reading - 39836

Last update 25-09-2016

HU Credits: 1

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: history

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Roy Flechner

Coordinator Email: roy.flechner@ucd.ie

Coordinator Office Hours:

Teaching Staff:
Dr. Roy Flechner
Course/Module description:
The process of Christianisation is one of the most profound and far-reaching processes human civilization has undergone, affecting all strata of society, and transforming not only religious beliefs and practices, but also the nature of government, the priorities of the economy, the character of kinship, and gender relations. The present module will explore conversion to Christianity in Europe from late antiquity to c. AD 1000, and underscore the way in which Christianisation transformed Europe and laid the foundations for the continent's identity in the present. We will be examining political, social, economic and cultural aspects of the conversion process, as well as telling the stories of missionaries, aristocrats, and peasants who took part in it or were affected by it.

Course/Module aims:
The aim of this module is to allow you to familiarise yourselves with central episodes in the process of the conversion of Europe to Christianity, with the primary sources that historians use to study conversion in the early medieval period, and with scholarly debates concerning the political and social implications of conversion, as well as the very meaning of conversion itself. Among the questions we will be asking: what did people convert from? What/who was a pagan? Is conversion entirely a religious phenomenon? What effects did Christianity have on the character of lordship? How important were missions in bringing about conversion? Is there a difference between conversion and Christianisation? Was there only one kind of Christianity or should we speak of Christianities? How were people encouraged or made to convert? How important (or not) was Christianity in defining people's identities? Did conversion change social structures? Did it affect the status of women for better or worse?

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
In the seminars, what we will mainly be doing is to gain familiarity with contemporary evidence, consisting not only of written sources but also of material evidence, such as graves and art-historical evidence. We will also be analysing central historiographical debates revolving around questions of evidence interpretation.

Attendance requirements(%):

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: lecture
Course/Module Content:
  1- The Roman Empire Converts

2- Paganism

3- Theory and Methodology in the Study of Conversion

4- Conversion from Below: Approaches and Sources

Required Reading:
  A. Cameron, The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity AD 395–600 (1993), ch. 3.
  J. R. Curran, Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century (Oxford,
  I. N. Wood, "The pagans and the Other: varying presentations in the early middle
  ages", Networks and Neighbours 1 (2013), 1–22. [also Online Open Access]
  J. Robbins, "How do religions end? Theorizing religious traditions from the point of
  C. Wickham, "The comparative method and early medieval religious conversion", in
  The Introduction of Christianity into the Early Medieval Insular World. Converting the
  W. Davies and R. Flechner, "Conversion to Christianity and economic change:
  consequence or coincidence?", in The Introduction of Christianity into the Early
  Medieval Insular World. Converting the Isles I, ed. R. Flechner and M. N̄ Mhaonaigh
  Orri V̆steinsson, "Conversion and Cultural Change. Burial Paradigms in Viking Age
  Iceland", in The Introduction of Christianity into the Early Medieval Insular World.

Additional Reading Material:
  See Moodle

Course/Module evaluation:
  End of year written/oral examination 0 %
  Presentation 0 %
  Participation in Tutorials 0 %
  Project work 0 %
  Assignments 0 %
  Reports 0 %
  Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 100 %

Additional information: