1. **KentVision Code and title of the module**

RSST6570 The Sacred Secular: Religion, Nonreligion and Politics in the Twenty-first Century

1. **Division and School/Department or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

Division of Arts & Humanities, Department of Religious Studies

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 6

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** **and/or any module restrictions**

None

1. **The course(s) of study to which the module contributes**

Optional for BA Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

Also available as an elective module choice

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
   1. Demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to critically assess, major theoretical approaches to the topic of religion, nonreligion and the secular state;
   2. Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to critically compare discrete historical examples of political secularism, including European, other Western and non-Western cases;
   3. Frame their own research interests and disciplinary questions in light of comparative, historical and theoretical approaches to the relationship between politics and religion;
   4. Reflect critically on key concepts such as ‘secularism’, ‘liberalism’, ‘democracy’, and ‘pluralism’.
2. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
   1. Communicate information, ideas, problems, concepts, and analysis to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
   2. Demonstrate refined essay-writing and argument-construction skills;
   3. Demonstrate transferable skills such as proficiency in the use of appropriate IT resources, including word processing and critical evaluation of online material;
   4. Demonstrate honed close reading and analytical skills;
   5. Analyse theories, which are at the forefront of their discipline, in terms of their application to contemporary contexts or debates.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

In the twentieth century, religion was seen as becoming increasingly irrelevant to politics. The secularisation of societies and the emergence of secular democracy as a dominant form of government were chipping away at religion’s official and unofficial authority in all aspects of public life. In the twenty-first century, the ongoing relevance of religion to politics has become clear, and key theories of secularism, liberalism and democracy have been revisited. At the same time, the growth of nonreligious identities and worldviews have opened up new questions about the role that these outlooks should play in policy, law and society. This course explores the key conceptual and theoretical debates shaping contemporary understandings of secularism, including the nature of secularity and secularism; the nature and significance of religious diversity and pluralism in politics in the modern period; multiple secularities and postsecular approaches; and the role of religious and nonreligious traditions in political liberalism. The course explores case studies in detail, including differences and similarities between European (including Soviet), North American and Asian secularisms; the relationship between political secularism and the beliefs, practices and identities of local populations; and significant controversies (around blasphemy, reproductive rights and the right to wear religious clothing) and what they tell us about religion, nonreligion and political secularism in contemporary society.

1. **Reading list**

The University is committed to ensuring that core reading materials are in accessible electronic format in line with the Kent Inclusive Practices.

The most up to date reading list for each module can be found on the university's [reading list pages](https://kent.rl.talis.com/index.html).

1. **Contact hours**

Total Contact Hours: 40

Total Private Study Hours: 260

Total Study Hours: 300

1. **Assessment methods**
   1. Main assessment methods

* Essay 1 (2,500 words) – 40%
* Essay 2 (3,000 words) – 50%
* Presentation (10 minutes) – 10%

13.2 Reassessment methods

* 100% Coursework (3,000 words)

1. **Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods and methods of assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module learning outcome** | *8.1* | *8.2* | *8.3* | *8.4* | *8.5* | *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** |
| Lecture | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  |  |  |  | **x** |
| Seminar | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay 1 | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Essay 2 | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Presentation | **x** |  | **x** | **x** |  | **x** |  | **x** |  | **x** |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The Division 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**

In recent decades, religion has returned the forefront of international politics. Increasingly, nonreligious worldviews are also recognised as having political, legal, and social significance equivalent to religious worldviews. This module engages with these international concerns, focusing on case studies from around the world and understanding individual cases in comparative context.

**DIVISION USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| 27/01/2023 | Minor | 2023/24 | 1,7,10 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |