History of Religions: Classical Antiquity and Early Christianity (A000292)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0   **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

| A (semester 1) | Dutch | Gent | lecture |
| | | | independent work |

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

| Praet, Danny | | LW01 | lecturer-in-charge |

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027	**crdts**	**offering**
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - French)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - German)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Italian)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Latin)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Spanish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Swedish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Swedish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - German)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Italian)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Latin)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Spanish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Swedish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Italian)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Spanish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Swedish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Italian)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Spanish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Swedish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in History	5	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Elective Set Religion Studies	5	A
Elective Set The Classical Tradition	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

History of religions, Classical Antiquity, Greek and Roman Paganism, Early Christianity

Position of the course

This introductory course wants to give insight into the specific characteristics of the ancient Greco-Roman religions, the fundamental differences between those religions and the current revelation religions and into the place and function of religion in classical societies. Aside from the main characteristics of the public cults, the focus is also on the ancient mystery cults and the so-called "oriental religions" (Cumont) and the parallels with early christianity.

The course introduces the students to the main characteristics of the religious "Umwelt" of early Christianity outside the Greco-Roman context: the Jewish tradition, ancient Middle East, Persia,... The course explains the factors that contributed to the emergence of early Christianity and gives knowledge of synchronic and diachronic diversity of the Christian tradition up until 500 AD.

Contents

Classical Antiquity
Introductory chapter on religion in general and the scientific approach to religion. Sketching the morphology of the classical religions: social dimension, religious practices (prayer and rites) presentations on the holy, religious experience. Presentation of the most important mystery cults and the so-called "oriental religions".

Christianity
This course deals with the emergence and development of Christianity as part of the religious history of the Hellenistic period. Its starting point is this period, from the third century B.C. to the Roman period, when the Middle East was characterised by a unity culture with Greek as its main language. Christianity as a historical phenomenon needs to be understood as a result of the influences Judaism underwent from this unity culture, but also from Persian Mazdeism. This course will offer an overview of the spread and development of early Christianity until roughly a century before the emergence of Islam. Special attention will go the immense diversity of early Christianity.

Initial competences

Student have successfully finished secondary school education.

Final competences

1 To have insight into the specific characteristics of the classical religions.
2 To have knowledge of the main points of the different aspects of the classical religions.
3 To know the religious Umwelt of early Christianity.
4 To recognise the factors which have contributed to the rise of Christianity.
5 To understand the synchronic and diachronic diversity of Christianity.
6 To have insight into the borrowing and transformation of several religious cultures by Christianity in a historical perspective.

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

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

• Lectures (in Dutch):
• Independent work: personal reading in preparation of the (possibly online) lectures

Study material

Type: Syllabus

> Name: pdf op ufora
> Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
> Optional: no
> Language : Dutch
> Available on Ufora : Yes
> Additional information: pdf on ufora

References

Grieks-Romeins: bibliography in reader
early Christianity:
Extensive bibliography op Ufora

Course content-related study coaching

Lecturer available for questions before and after lectures; fixed contact hours one afternoon a week . Danny Praet: Thursday afternoon 14-16 h

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

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

Written assessment

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

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Assessment moment
Periodical (100%): written exam

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodical (100%)

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:
1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
2 Possible rescheduling of an oral examination to a different time in the same academic year
3 Feedback can be given by telephone or Teams, after an appointment is made during office hours
For more information contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy: https://www.ugent. be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm