Join Radboud Summer School 2017!

Mysticism & Modern Critique

change perspective

Radboud Universiteit
The course focuses on the inherently critical dimension of Western mystical tradition. By closely reading some key mystical texts (Pseudo-Dionysius, Teresa of Avila, Fenelon), the course shows how the mystical corpus has become an important reference for contemporary cultural criticism (Agamben, Foucault, Pasolini, de Certeau).

Contrary to religion, which has lost its self-evidence, spirituality and mysticism make better headway. In the writings of the mystics, many find what they miss in institutional religion. Yet, what the study of the mystical corpus all too often neglects is the surprisingly critical dimension of the mystical tradition. Of course, that tradition is full of exemplary piety but it cannot be reduced to only that. Piety did not prevent the mystics from developing an important critique, pointing to the hot topics of their day, including religious, ethical and political ones. The ‘letter to Louis XIV’, for instance, by the 17th century French Catholic mystic François de Fenelon, is one of the harshest critiques of political absolutism of his time.

Not only is the mystical tradition inherently critical, it has itself become an important reference for contemporary cultural criticism as well. One of the basic texts in Christian mysticism, Pseudo-Dionysius’ Celestial Hierarchies, lays bare the hidden fundamentals of Western political power, as the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben argues. And mystical asceticism has more strictly philosophical roots than generally thought in that quality; it still strongly influences modern ethics, according to the thesis defended by Michel Foucault.

After this course you are able to
• Read and analyse exemplary texts of the Western mystical tradition
• Detect the critical dimensions in those text
• See how the mystical texts conceal ‘dispositives' and 'structures' at work in the non-religious (political/ethical/cultural) discourses of modernity
• Understand the connection between the ‘old' classic mystical argumentation and today's way of dealing with social and cultural challenges.

Númer of EC
2 ECTS credits
Entry level
Master, PhD, Postdoc and Professional

Course leader
Prof. Peter Nissen, Professor of Spirituality Studies, Faculty of Theology, Religious Studies, Radboud University

This course is designed for
Master and PhD students, Postdocs, and Professionals in Culture and Arts, Humanities, Philosophy, Theology, Religious Studies, and Social Sciences. The course is highly recommended for interdisciplinary-oriented students with a strong interest in the religious and mystical legacy of late-modern culture and society.

Admission documents
• Motivation letter
• CV

Dates
Monday 14 August - Friday 18 August 2017

Course fee
€ 450

Discounts
• 10% discount if you register before April 1, 2017.
• 15% additional partner-discount for students from partners universities on all course fees! See website for complete partner list!
Want to be part of the RSS experience?

More than just a course!
Radboud Summer School is more than an academic event. It is a unique opportunity to meet other international students and researchers and to get to know Radboud University and the city of Nijmegen. Our participants come from all over the world and have different cultural and academic backgrounds. Our programme includes the following activities free of charge: welcome reception, sports activity, guest lecture and farewell drink. We offer also a BBQ, River Cruise, City Tour, Pub quiz and excursion for a small fee.

Have a look at what participants had to say about their experience!

And do not forget to register now!

Deadline application
June 1, 2017

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www.ru.nl/radboudsummerschool, August 6-18 2017