

## Introduction

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**The Research Institute for Philosophy, Theology, and Religious Studies addresses fundamental questions concerning the nature, place and meaning of humans in the world. It covers philosophical, theological and socio-cultural issues, and notably philosophical and religious concepts and world-views of past and present. The Institute's research is subdivided into five themes, of which three coincide with existing research centers.**

*(1) Center for the History of Philosophy and Science (CHPS)*

The CHPS is the world's only research center investigating the history of philosophy and of science as intertwined phenomena. It investigates the emergence and development of the rich discipline of natural philosophy from Antiquity to its eventual fragmentation into the modern scientific disciplines in the modern age. It also enquires into today's relation between philosophy and science.

*(2) Center for Catholic Studies (CCS)*

This Center investigates the historical and contemporary intertwinement of religion, theology and spirituality with cultural developments and intellectual debates. It contributes to the understanding of the complexities of our globalized society and their implication for religion. It focuses on public theology, a field that addresses the public relevance of the Christian tradition, and on the historical roots of current issues within the religious domain.

*(3) Cognition, Culture and Language (CCL)*

Researchers at CCL focus on interdisciplinary issues at the intersection of cognition, culture and language. The overlapping areas of their research are 'situated knowledge' (how are cognitive capacities shaped by cultural norms and linguistic concepts?), 'ordinary discourse' (what is the role of pragmatics, convention and context in the interpretation of everyday language?), and 'ancient texts' (what do they tell us about the concept of mind in Hebrew and Greek culture?).

*(4) Center for Contemporary European Philosophy (CCEP)*

CCEP is the Netherlands' only research center concentrating on continental philosophy, contributes to a variety of contemporary currents, including phenomenology, metaphysics, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, critical theory, political philosophy and virtue ethics. Subjects of particular interest are the impact and critique of modernity and its various symptoms, including secularization and rationalization of society.

*(5) Religion and the Crisis of Meaning (RCM)*

RCM investigates religiosity and spirituality in relation to death, conflict and contingency, and it does so from Christian, Islamic and Asian religious perspectives. Probing the limits of secularization and modernization, it analyzes ongoing transformations of religious meaning. It investigates the 'crisis of meaning', which manifests itself at the macro-level of religion in the public domain, the meso-level of institutions, and the micro-level of the individual's difficulties in dealing with the vicissitudes of life.

## Research facilities

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The Faculty library, integrated in the central humanities library, boasts excellent collections of books and journals in philosophy, theology and religious studies. Its special collections include the Catholic Documentation Centre, a unique source for anthropological and missiological research. The Institute also houses one of the world's largest microfilm collections of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts on logic, semantics, natural philosophy, metaphysics and theology.

## Collaboration

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Researchers at the Institute collaborate with colleagues locally, nationally and internationally. Locally, collaborations involve colleagues at other faculties of our University. Nationally, they involve engagement in various research schools. There also exist formal ties with the University of Groningen. Internationally, researchers collaborate with individuals and groups at dozens of universities.

In 2016, researchers at the *CHPS* were engaged in joint PhD projects with the Technische Universität, Berlin, the Université Libre de Bruxelles, the University of Oxford, and the University of Pisa. They collaborated with British universities in trying to recover the material legacy of Charles Lyell. Researchers at the *CCS* collaborated with institutes in Belgium, France, Slovenia and Germany, and enrolled in the Global Network for Public Theology, together with other 30 institutions. Researchers of *CCL* obtained funds to work at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and the Dementia Institute of Mental Health, Zwolle. The *CCEP* set up a collaboration with the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (Senegal), with a number of visits back and forth. They also contributed to the International Society for Psychoanalysis and Philosophy and the Collegium Phaenomenologicum. Researchers of *RCM* were engaged in the European Research Network on Death Rituals, in the Precious Relics Project of the Moesgaard Museum/Aarhus University (Denmark), and in the international research group on Religion and Human Rights.

## Research results

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*CHPS*: In a monograph, Frederik Bakker described how Epicurus and his followers treated meteorology, deviating from tradition by systematically providing multiple explanations and relying exclusively on sensory evidence. Paul Bakker and Michiel Streijger published the second volume of their edition of John Buridan's massive Latin *Physics* commentary. Kuni Sakamoto a monograph on the important Renaissance scholar Julius Caesar Scaliger and his best-selling *Exoticae Exercitationes* (1557). In her prize-winning essay, Carla Rita Palmerino located in the Leuven professor Libertus Fromondus the source of one of Leibniz' late writings on the problem of the continuum. Christoph Lüthy, Carla Rita Palmerino and Hans Thijssen contributed essays to the volume *The Challenge of Chance* (eds. Landsman & van Wolde). Finally, Antonio Cimino co-published a collection of essays on *Rethinking Faith*, which examines the role religion and faith play in the discussions, in Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Heidegger, of the classical metaphysical motifs they criticize.

*CCS:* Joshua Furnal retraced the openness to modern ways of thinking in Catholic theology before the Second Vatican Council. Inigo Bocken uncovered in Nicolas of Cusa's work a notion of *concordantia* that is useful in reconciling theology and modernity. Elisabeth Hense discovered spiritual sources in societal renewal movements, while Maaïke de Haardt found spiritual and religious undertones in philosophical and practical forms of new cosmopolitanism. Christoph Hübenthal delineated public theology as two ways of apologetic communication, namely discourse and witnessing. With an eye to contemporary issues, Daniela Müller analyzed the deeper motives and consequences of the persecution of medieval Cathars.

*CCL:* Corien Bary's ERC project 'Perspective' found a fundamental semantic distinction between eventive and evidential speech reports. For the latter, that something was said is not at issue, while for the former, it is: the speech event itself possesses certain properties. Sammie Tareskeen investigated systematic redundancies in the way people speak, notably when employing colour terms. Marc Slors and Leon de Bruin proposed to view cultures as basic forms of extended cognition, which, because of our cognitive needs for stability, would help explain our resistance to cultural change. Ellen van Wolde, co-leader of the university-wide research project on the nature of chance, emphasized in the *Challenge of Chance* the importance of the contextuality of chance, which manifests itself, in different scientific disciplines, as scale-dependence, language variation, random genetic mutations, historical contingency, the financial world or individual psychology.

*CCEP:* Evert van der Zweerde suggested that democracy should be defined as a quality, rather than as a regime or culture, and as being subject to 'glocalisation': after all, the successful implementation of democratic 'qualities' depends on an adaptation to specific circumstances. Annabelle Dufourcq's enquiry into the imaginary of animals led her to investigate the paradoxes of the concept of stupidity in contemporary philosophy. Philippe Van Haute and Herman Westerink examined the origins of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, finding that Freud was originally less 'Oedipal' than hitherto assumed. Gert-Jan van der Heiden's work on witnessing showed that contemporary continental philosophy proposes two fundamentally different figures: the martyr and the survivor. Finally, the NWO-funded project on the impact of the letters of Saint Paul on contemporary thought documented that in both cases, faith or belief is not understood in opposition to reason, but rather in terms of trust and trustworthiness, and as a mode of existence.

*RCM:* Frans Wijsen, relying on Bakhtin's theory, developed an analytic approach that combines dialogical self-theory and discourse analysis. Ton Bernts and Joantine Berghuijs' survey, *God in Nederland 1966-2015*, described a dramatic decrease in church participation and indicated that spiritual currents are becoming less relevant. Michael Scherer-Rath, Hans Schilderman and colleagues clarified meaning loss in care settings, and found that spiritual interventions had a moderately beneficial effect on the quality of life of cancer patients. Sophie van Bijsterveld studied dissenting opinions on religious issues at the European Court of Human Rights, finding church autonomy and religious privacy to remain important in court rulings. Concluding their NWO project, Carl Sterkens and colleagues identified religious beliefs that either induce or reduce support for interreligious violence in Indonesia and the Philippines. Paul Vermeer examined factors explaining the success of conservative

evangelical churches in the Netherlands. Much work was done in the field of thanatology: Brenda Mathijssen showed that cremated remains have social lives of their own, as the identity of the deceased determines the appropriateness of the place and time to dispose the ashes. Nienke Fortuin distinguished three thanatological cultural niches, canonical, utilitarian and expressive. With respect to graves, Anne Kjærsgaard and Eric Venbrux found that, paradoxically, photography contributes to a re-enchantment of the dead by integrating the deceased into the social time of the bereaved. Thomas Quartier classified different types of ritual-liturgical participation among German abbey visitors. Karin van Nieuwkerk's NWO project on 'Islam and Performing Arts' concluded with the volume 'Islam and Popular Culture'. Roel Meijer's published on the history and relevance of the concept of citizenship (*muwatana*) in the Middle East. Martijn de Koning, finally, connected today's debate over radicalizing Muslims with that over secularism, examining the voices of Muslim public figures in this contested field.

## Societal impact

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The societal relevance of research in the humanities manifests itself primarily in active contributions to the public domain, which take the form of publications, lectures, media appearances or exhibitions, as well as engagement in public debates or advising and training of professionals. The Institute's main instrument here is *Radboud Reflects*, which through lectures, debates, workshops and festivals seeks to make the world of scholarship and science, philosophically enhanced, accessible to a wide audience. Each year, Radboud Reflects organizes more than a hundred events attended by over 10,000 people, reaching over 100,000 people through its website and social media. The Institute's researchers also reach out to pupils, senior citizens and professionals in the medical, theological or legislative worlds. The following gives an incomplete impression of these activities.

Members of *CHPS* taught secondary school students, participants at summer or autumn schools (including Paul Bakker's, at Saint Anselm College, USA), students of the Radboud Honours Academy, and senior citizens. Paul Bakker, Cees Leijenhorst, Christoph Lüthy and Carla Rita Palmerino organized and participated in dozens of public events for Radboud Reflects, the Philosophical Café, LUX, and the Radboud Ambassadors Lectures.

*CCS* and the Titus Brandsma Institute, under the leadership of Inigo Bocken, developed educational models for Foundation Carmelscollege (40.000 high school students). Elisabeth Hense produced a book on projects of sustainable agriculture and a related website ([volle-oogst.nl](http://volle-oogst.nl)). Daniela Müller and Maaike de Haardt spoke at large-scale conferences in Athens and Vienna, respectively. *CS* also co-organized well-attended study days on Ignatian spirituality and theology and on education in Catholic schools as public theology.

As for *CCL*, Jan Bransen delivered talks related to his book *Waar filosofen van houden*. Leon de Bruin lectured at a recertification course for psychiatrists and psychologists, while Harmen Gijzen offered a workshop for high-school students at Gymnasium Apeldoorn. Marc Slors was highly visible during Daniel Dennett's visit to the Netherlands, the culmination being his discussion with Dennett in the fully booked 'Vereniging'. Ellen van Wolde co-initiated the 'Week of Chance', which attracted much attention from newspapers, websites

and radio stations, and which led to a theatre performance, a KNAW symposium, and the official speech at RU's *Dies natalis*.

As for *CCEP*, it financed the Dutch translation of Souleyman Bachir Diagne's book *Philosopher en Islam*, for which Herman Westerink and Evert van der Zweerde wrote an epilogue. Veronica Vasterling organized a public symposium on gender and diversity in Antwerp. Marcel Becker visited many policy institutions, including city councils, discussing the integrity issues. Jean-Pierre Wils contributed to the programme *Kann man Gott beleidigen?*, broadcast by Arte, and chaired the ethico-medical *Eid-Kommission* in Zurich. Evert van der Zweerde reached sizeable audience with public lectures on the philosophical and ideological background of Russia's current policies. He also continued to lead the 'Werkgroep Democratisch Laboratorium', which organized a public conference on the 'Refugee Crisis & Democracy' and brought out a crowd-funded board game called DEMOS. Anya Topolski addressed present-day anti-Semitism in a number of publications.

The societal impact of *RCM* was facilitated by KASKI, the Faculty's research center for religion and society, and VERUS, the Netherlands organization for Christian and Catholic education. Ton Bernts and Joantine Berghuijs' *God in Nederland* generated much media attention. Hans Schilderman, editor-in-chief of 'Handelingen', edited special issues on radical religion and life-orientation in higher education. Frans Wijsen and Carl Sterkens participated in activities of the Netherlands-Indonesia Consortium for Muslim-Christian Relationships, a non-governmental network of university and civil society organizations. Thomas Quartier published an acclaimed book on monastic spirituality, while Peter Nissen co-edited a popular book on dragons, accompanying an exhibition at the Limburgs Museum and Ghent City Museum. Paul van der Velde contributed to the Buddha exhibition in Leiden and Amsterdam. Eric Venbrux did likewise for a forthcoming exhibition on Australian Aborigines at Geneva's ethnographic museum. Ria van den Brandt co-organized the 8<sup>th</sup> Radboud Holocaust Memorial Day. Roel Meijer gave various public lectures on the theme of citizenship, also before EU officials, while Martijn de Koning participated in public debate on radicalization and Islamophobia in national newspapers and on radio.

## Future research

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At *CHPS*, Davide Cellamare will start a postdoc project on Cartesianism at Dutch universities. Lukas Wolf will start a joint PhD project with the University of Groningen. Chiara Beneduce will work on an edition of Henricus Bate of Mechelen's *Speculum*. Frederik Bakker and colleagues will publish a volume on *Space, Imagination and the Cosmos from Antiquity to the Early-modern Period*. Lüthy and Cellamare will publish a database of all Renaissance Latin editions of Aristotle's works, and Antonio Cimino will organize a conference on *Contemporary European Thought and the Idea of Care*.

The systematic theologians at *CCS* will continue to probe into public theology, with Inigo Bocken and Christoph Hübenenthal investigating the period between the Middle Ages and early Modernity. Elisabeth Hense will investigate new realms of public spirituality. Joshua Furnal and Christiane Alpers will extract ideas from theologians like Cornelio Fabro and Edward Schillebeeckx to systematize public theology. Daniela Müller and colleagues will

work on 'Sacred Suicide', examining early-modern concepts of 'provoked' martyrdom in the history of Christianity and Islam.

At *CCL*, Marc Slors will complete a book on cognition and cultural scaffolding. Harmen Ghijsen will investigate implicit bias in the way we see things. Ellen van Wolde will further pursue her research line 'When mind meets history', and Corien Bary's ERC team will apply their computation tools to theoretical research questions about the relation between narrative perspective and vocabulary distribution.

At *CCEP*, Anya Topolski will develop a European critical philosophy of race. Marcel Becker's work on the impact of digitalization on our life world will zero in on the topic of privacy. Herman Westerink and Philippe Van Haute will reconstruct the history of Freudianism on the basis of different editions of Freud's *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*. Evert van der Zwerde will conclude his research on 'glocal democracy' and Annabelle Dufourcq and Veronica Vasterling prepare a project 'Towards a new ontology of organic nature'.

Members of *RCM* will conduct empirical research into the evolving role of religion at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, Frans Jespers and colleagues focusing on the relationship of religion to human flourishing, Thomas Quartier planning an international survey among monks on experiences of the Eucharist, Ria van den Brandt and Peter Nissen engaging with newly discovered sources on Etty Hillesum, and Paul Vermeer and colleagues placing their empirical study of evangelical churches in an international setting. Karin van Nieuwkerk will deepen her investigations into conversion and apostasy in Islam and start a project on masculinity in Egypt. Roel Meijer will continue to publish on the notion of citizenship in the Middle East, while Martijn de Koning will focus on Dutch Muslims who migrated to the UK.

## Awards and grants

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- Hans Thijssen received a medal from Radboud University, for his twelve-year achievements as dean ('Erepenning in brons')
- Herman Westerink was appointed extraordinary professor at the University of Leuven
- Harmen Ghijsen obtained a Veni Project
- Christoph Lüthy, Jan Papy (Leuven) and Davide Cellamare won a FWO-NWO program
- Christinane Alpers received a Christine Mohrman stipend
- Carla Rita Palmerino won the 2016 Leibniz Society Essay Competition, for her "*Geschichte des Kontinuumproblems* or Notes on Fromondus's *Labyrinthus?* On the True Nature of LH XXXVII, IV, 57r<sup>o</sup>-58v<sup>o</sup>"
- Chiara Beneduce received a Brepols-SIEPM Stipend and a Notre Dame-SIEPM Stipend

## Key publications

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1. Bakker, F.A. (2016). *Epicurean Meteorology: Sources, Method, Scope and Organisation* (Philosophia Antiqua, 142). Leiden: Brill.

2. Bernts, T. & Berghuijs, J. (2016). *God in Nederland 1966-2015*. Utrecht: Ten Have.
3. Bocken, Inigo "A Theatre of Desire: The Philosophical Meaning of the Ignatian Exercises", Karim Schelkens (ed.), *Conversion and Church: The Challenge of Ecclesial Renewal* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 87-104.
4. Brandenburg, D. "Implicit Attitudes and the Social Capacity for Free Will," *Philosophical Psychology* 29 (2016), 1215-1228,  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2016.1235263>
5. Christoph Hübenthal, "Apologetic Communication," *International Journal of Public Theology* 10 (2016), 7-27.
6. De Bruin, L. & Michael, J., "Prediction Error Minimization: Implications for Embodied Cognition and the Extended Mind Hypothesis," *Brain and Cognition*. doi: 10.1016/j.bandc.2016.01.009.
7. Fortuin, N.P.M., Schilderman J.B.A.M. & Venbrux H.J.M., "Death and the Search for Meaning: Canonical, Utilitarian and Expressive Thanatological Cultural Niches," *Mortality*, DOI: 10.1080/13576275.2016.1259213
8. Joshua Furnal, *Catholic Theology after Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
9. Landsman, K. & Van Wolde, E., *The Challenge of Chance: A Multidisciplinary Approach from Science and the Humanities* (Springer Verlag, 2016).
10. Meijer, R. (2016). Review Essay. "The Workers' Movement and the Arab Uprisings," *International Review of Social History*, 61 (2016), 487-503, IISN 0020-7438. doi:10.1017/S002085901600050X.
11. Palmerino, C.R., "Geschichte des Kontinuumproblems or Notes on Fromondus's Labyrinthus? On the True Nature of LH XXXVII, IV, 57 r°-58v°" [winner of the Leibniz Essay Award 2016], *The Leibniz Review*, 26 (2016), 63-98.
12. Terpstra, M.J. (2016). *Omstreden moderniteit. Over de gemeenplaats 'Dat is niet meer van deze tijd'* (Nijmegen: Wilde Raven, 2016).
13. van Nieuwkerk, K. LeVine, M. & Stokes, M. (eds), *Islam and Popular Culture* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016).
14. Vasterling, V.L.M., "What Is the Aim of Discussion? A Provisional Answer with the Help of Habermas and Arendt," *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 16 (2016), 1-14.  
doi:10.117/1474022216629124.
15. Westerink, H. & Haute, P.I.M.M. Van, "Sexuality and Its Object in Freud's 1905 Edition of 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality'," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 97 (2016), 563-589.