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Reading Mystical Texts

change perspective

Radboud University
In the writings of the mystics, many find what they miss in institutional religion. Yet, the study of the mystical corpus all too often neglects the surprisingly critical dimension of the mystical tradition. Close-readings of monastic sources, Hadewijch, Nicolaus Cusanus, Fenelon, Protestant mysticism, Etty Hillesum, Marie Noël and others will discover that neglected dimension.

This course offers a promenade through some of the major mystical texts from the Christian tradition. The richness exemplified in the selected passages is explored, as well as the critical dimension present in these mystical texts and the potential for contemporary thought. In times when the Cartesian Ego was not yet fully established, it was already being 'deconstructed' in the writings of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. In the works of Meister Eckhart, Ruusbroec and Thomas a Kempis, the criticism of the emerging 'bourgeois' mentality was already an important aspect.

The mystical tradition is inherently critical, and has itself become an important reference for contemporary cultural criticism. One of the basic texts in Christian mysticism, Pseudo-Dionysius' Celestial Hierarchies, lays bare the hidden fundamentals of Western political power, so the philosopher Giorgio Agamben argues. Other contemporary critical theologians and philosophers, such as Michel Foucault and John Caputo, are also inspired by writings from the mystical tradition.

**After this course you are able to**
- Read and analyze exemplary texts from the mystical tradition of western Christianity
- Detect the critical dimension in those texts
- See how the mystical texts conceal 'disposables' and 'structures' at work in the non-religious discourses of modernity
- Understand the connection between the 'old' classic mystical argumentation and contemporary social and cultural challenges

**Number of EC**
2 ECTS credits

**Course leaders**
- Peter Nissen, Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies, Radboud University
- Marc de Kesel, Titus Brandsma Institute Nijmegen
Admission documents
Motivation letter and CV

Entry level
Master, PhD, Postdoc and Professional

This course is designed for
Everyone in the fields of Theology, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Culture and Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences who are interdisciplinary oriented and have a strong interest in the religious and mystical legacy of the Christian tradition

You can find more details about this course on our website

Course date
Monday 12 August - Friday 16 August 2019

Course fee
€ 450

Deadline application
1 June 2019

Discounts
• 10% discount for early bird applicants. The early bird deadline is 1 March 2019.
• 15% discount for students and PhD candidates from partner universities. Please note that these discounts can be combined if you apply before 1 March 2019.

Apply now!
What is the RSS experience?

RSS is more than just a course!

Radboud Summer School offers you a unique opportunity to meet other students and researchers from all over the world with different cultural and academic backgrounds. You will also get to know Radboud University and the city of Nijmegen.

Our social programme includes a welcome reception, guest lecture and farewell drinks. And for a small fee you can join our BBQ, River Cruise on a pancake boat, a Pub Quiz, Sports Activities or a City Game.

Want to know more?
Have a look at what participants have said about their experience on our website!

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