



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Faculty of Humanities

Academic year 2016-2017

Western Culture and Counterculture

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Western Culture and Counterculture 12 EC

Part of minor Western Esotericism

The module 'Western Culture and Counterculture' is part of the Bachelor minor Western Esotericism (which in itself forms an excellent preparation for the MA in Western Esotericism). It provides an ideal historical and theoretical background for those students who are interested in following the seminars 'Western Esotericism in the Early Modern Period' (Dr. P.J. Forshaw) and 'Western Esotericism from the 18th Century to the Present' (Dr. M. Pasi); but more generally, it will be of interest to all students in the Humanities.

The course 'Western Culture and Counterculture' provides a bird's-eye overview of the main currents of Western intellectual and cultural history from Late Antiquity to the present, with an emphasis on the interwoven histories of philosophy, religion, the natural sciences, and the arts, and with due attention to their political and social context. At the same time, it problematizes the hegemonic agendas and implicit ideological assumptions that have driven traditional historical narratives of Western culture, by giving systematic attention to a range of currents, ideas, practices, and organizations that have tended to be rejected, suppressed, marginalized, or discredited in traditional academic scholarship.

By giving equal attention to normative ideas of 'Western Culture' and to the various kinds of 'Counterculture' against which it defines its own identity, the module both describes **and** questions the 'grand narratives' that have dominated our understanding of Western culture in the academy. Against this background, special attention will go to the basic polemical and apologetic discourses that inform current intellectual as well as public debates about religion and its relation to modernity.

Objectives

Having completed this course, students will have acquired a solid overview of (1) the main general currents of Western intellectual and cultural history from late antiquity to the present, (2) their relation to those currents, ideas, practices, and organizations that have tended to be suppressed, marginalized, or discredited in traditional academic scholarship, and (3) the polemical and apologetic discourses that have produced and regulated the relation between these two.

This course is entirely taught in English.

Course catalogue: 116214022Y

Semester 1

Block 1 en 2 (12 EC): Western Culture and Counterculture

Lecturer: prof.dr. W.J. Hanegraaff

For most current information about this minor and its entry requirements, please contact our study adviser at:

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For general information on the programme Western esotericism, please see: www.amsterdamhermetica.nl

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