

Course syllabus for a course at third-cycle level

Lived Religion: Representation and Practise 7.5 ECTS credits

Course code: HV012FN

Valid from: Autumn semester 2026

Department: Department of Teaching and Learning

Third-cycle subject: Subject-Matter Education, History of Religions, or equivalent

Specialisation: Third-cycle level

Decision

This course syllabus was approved by the Deputy Head of Department for third-cycle education on 2026-10-15 (Ref. no. SU-130-0054-22).

Entry requirements

Admission to third-cycle education in Subject-Matter Education, History of Religions, or another relevant subject.

Course content

The course provides advanced knowledge of the interdisciplinary research field of lived religion, focusing on everyday religiosity and religious practice as it is enacted, negotiated and reinterpreted by ordinary practitioners – in contrast to normative, institutional perspectives and elite-produced theological interpretations. The course introduces central theoretical positions within the field and provides methodological depth in qualitative ethnographic research, including observation, micro-fieldwork and visual ethnography. Doctoral students are trained in reflexive methodological analysis and develop a critical awareness of positionality, power relations and research ethics in the ethnographic study of religion.

A central element of the course is the critical analysis of how religion is represented and communicated in public contexts – from museum exhibitions and educational material to media representations and digital platforms – and how such representations stand in constant negotiation with religion as lived practice. The course's theoretical components are complemented by a field week held in Sweden or in Istanbul, in collaboration with the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII). Field studies address sites of lived religion, such as places associated with pilgrimage, shrines of saints, religious schools and Sufi lodges, as well as relevant museum exhibitions. Through the field studies, doctoral students develop analytical

and methodological skills for independently investigating and explaining contemporary expressions of religion in complex social contexts.

Intended learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the student should be able to:

- describe central theoretical perspectives and concepts within the research field of lived religion,
- demonstrate advanced knowledge of methodological approaches within qualitative, ethnographic research on religion,
- account for ethical considerations and questions of positionality in the study of lived religion.
- independently apply a lived-religion perspective to empirical source material,
- plan and carry out a delimited ethnographic field study of religious practice,
- critically analyse how religion is represented and communicated in institutional and public contexts, such as museums, educational material and media,
- present and defend research findings, orally and in writing, before peer review.
- critically reflect on the positionality of one's own researcher role, power relations and research-ethical dimensions in the ethnographic study of religion,
- problematise the relationship between normative, institutional perspectives on religion and religion as it is practised and reinterpreted at the grassroots level.

Forms of examination

The course is examined through written assignments.

Grades are awarded according to a two-grade scale:

G = Pass

U = Fail

Teaching/Forms of work

Teaching consists of lectures and seminars at a distance, together with a field week held in Sweden or in Istanbul in collaboration with the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII). Doctoral students who do not take part in the field week in Istanbul carry out an equivalent field study at home, during the same period and in hybrid form.

Teaching is conducted in English.

For more detailed information, please refer to the course description. The course description is available no later than one month before the course starts.

Transitional provisions

When the course is no longer offered, or its content has been substantially changed, the student has the right to be examined once per semester, during a period of three semesters, according to this course syllabus.

Restrictions

The course may not be included in a degree together with another course, completed and passed in Sweden or abroad, the content of which wholly or partly corresponds to the content of this course.

Course literature

See separate reading list.