UCLouvain

# ltheo2431

*2026*

# Bible and culture

| 4.00 credits | 30.0 h | Q2 |
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**This biannual learning unit is not being organized in 2026-2027 !**

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| Teacher(s) | Burnet Régis ;Odak Stipe ; |
| Language : | French |
| Place of the course | Louvain-la-Neuve |
| Learning outcomes | **At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to :**<br>1 - recognise biblical traditions in the arts (music, literature and visual arts)<br>2 - become familiar with the reception of biblical traditions and their interpretations in the arts<br>3 - interpret different artistic expressions against the background of a concrete biblical tradition and to appreciate them as legitimate interpretations of the bible<br>4 - valorise the bible as a source of inspiration for the arts |
| Evaluation methods | The assessment will consist of an oral examination. Students will be provided with a list of questions in advance. On the day of the exam, one or two questions will be chosen at random. Students will then have 15 minutes to prepare before the 15-minute oral examination. |
| Content | This course explores the complex relationship between the Bible and culture. Far from considering the Bible as a simple ancient text, we will approach it as a rich universe that has nourished and continues to profoundly influence literature, art, politics and even our collective memory. Conversely, we will see how culture itself influences the interpretation of the Bible.<br>The aim is to provide critical tools for analysing how religious texts are received and reinterpreted in various contexts, from 'high culture' to popular culture.<br>The course will not take a chronological approach, but rather a thematic one, in order to explore the dynamics of this living relationship. We will examine several major questions:<br>· The Bible as a cultural ‘reservoir’: how the Bible functions as a source of images, stories, narrative structures (messianic salvation, for example) and emotions that permeate our culture, often implicitly.<br>· Freedom and fidelity: how much latitude does an artist or author have when dealing with the biblical text? We will examine the tension between fidelity to the letter and fidelity to the ‘spirit’ of the text, analysing examples ranging from provocative literalism to the most liberal reinterpretation.<br>· “Hot” and ‘cold’ periods: the Bible's presence in culture is not constant. Like an electrocardiogram, it experiences peaks of innovation and periods of lesser intensity.<br>· Contemporary issues: the course will address themes such as blasphemy in contemporary art, religious kitsch, and the presence of biblical references in political discourse.<br>Several in-depth case studies will be considered. |
| Faculty or entity in charge | TEBI |

## Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)

| Program title | Acronym | Credits | Prerequisite | Learning outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Certificat universitaire en théologie (approfondissement) | TECB9CE | 4 | | |
| Master [120] in Theology | THEO2M | 4 | | |
| Master [120] in History of Art and Archaeology: Musicology | MUSI2M | 5 | | |
| Master [120] in Sciences of Religions | SREL2M | 4 | | |
| Master [120] in History of Art and Archaeology : General | ARKE2M | 5 | | |
| Master [60] in History of Art and Archaeology: Musicology | MUSI2M1 | 5 | | |
| Master [120] in Biblical Studies | EBIB2M | 4 | | |