



MA IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY
(Validated by The University Of Winchester)

CELTIC SPIRITUALITY

June 2011

Aims

- To explore aspects of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon spiritual traditions within their historical context.
- To explore the life and work of the Venerable Bede.
- To reflect on the influence of the Synod of Whitby on the subsequent development of spiritual and religious life in the British Isles.
- To examine the approach to the miraculous in the *Lives* of the saints.
- To consider some of aspects of pre-Christian Celtic religion and spirituality.
- To examine aspects of the life and teaching of Pelagius.
- To consider the importance of Island and Coastal churches in the Celtic world.
- To assess the importance of Columbanus for our understanding of spirituality.
- To reflect on the spiritual significance of *The Dream of the Rood*.
- To explore the potential of aspects of the Celtic spiritual tradition for life and spirituality today.

Credit Value

20 credits

Course Content

This course begins with a general introduction to the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon spiritual traditions and their context. Against this backdrop we shall reflect on some of the major themes in Celtic/Anglo-Saxon spirituality. We will examine significant people, literature and events of this time: the Venerable Bede, aspects of early Celtic religion, the Synod of Whitby, and the lives and work of Columbanus and Pelagius. Some attention will be given to aspects of early medieval hagiography, and with the aid of primary textual material we will examine the Celtic approach to the miraculous in the *Lives* of the saints. Consideration will also be given to the potential application of Celtic approaches to life and faith today.

First evening

The Celtic/Anglo-Saxon world: an overview and introduction to the week

Day 1

The Venerable Bede: lecture

The Venerable Bede: Text Seminar

The Synod of Whitby

Celtic Spirituality Today

Day 2

Early Medieval Hagiography

The Miraculous in Adomnan and Bede

Approaches to Early Celtic Religion (1)

Approaches to Early Celtic Religion (2)

Day 3

Pelagius

Tutorials/private study time

Columbanus

The Dream of the Rood

Outline Structure

The module will be taught by means of a three-day intensive plus an opening evening. There will be 12 classroom sessions of 1-1½ hours each, consisting of formal lectures, discussion, work with texts and some small group work. There will be an optional film on the Tuesday evening (*Bright Sea, Dark Shore* (50 minutes plus short introduction)). There will be opportunities for tutorial support, and the library will be open throughout the course.

Learning Outcomes

Having completed this module successfully students should be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Appreciate the broad context of the Celtic/Anglo-Saxon Christian spiritual traditions.
- Understand the importance of significant figures and movements to the development of the traditions.
- Appreciate some of the key themes and concepts in Celtic and Anglo-Saxon spirituality, both historically, and in relation to spirituality today.
- Appreciate the significance of aspects of pre-Christian Celtic religion, and its importance to the development of the Celtic Christian tradition.
- Understand the Celtic approach to the miraculous in the *Lives* of the saints.
- Appreciate the spiritual significance of *The Dream of the Rood*.

Transferable Skills

- To have acquired skills of interpretation and reflection.
- To have acquired the cognitive skills to reflect upon and discuss complex material and issues in a rational and controlled way.
- To have demonstrated the personal skills to work under self-direction and self-organisation to accomplish tasks and meet set deadlines.
- Selection, comprehension and interpretation of relevant primary and secondary literature,
- Criticism and analysis of primary and secondary literature,
- Written presentation.

Learning methods

The intensive module will be a combination of lectures with discussion, work with textual material and some small group work. Students will be provided with reading lists and tutorial support to enable them to continue further personal study after the intensive and to prepare a paper for assessment.

Assessment

One essay of 5,000 words.

Celtic/Anglo-Saxon Spirituality: Indicative Bibliography

Pelagius

- Bettenson, H./ Maunder, C (eds) (1999) *Documents of the Christian Church*, new ed. Oxford 1999.
- Hall, S.G.(1991) *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church*, London 1991
- Kelly, J.N.D. (1960) *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1960.
- McGrath, A. (2001 and subsequent editions) *Christian Theology – An Introduction*, Oxford.
- McGrath, A. (2002) and subsequent editions) *The Christian Theology Reader*, Oxford.
- Rees, B.R.(1991) *Pelagius: Life and Letters*, Boydell Press
- Stevenson, J.(1989) *Creeds, Councils, Controversies*, London.
- Williams, R. (1989) *The Making of Orthodoxy*, Cambridge University Press.

Dream of the Rood

- Carragáin, É. Ó (2005) *Ritual and the Rood*, Toronto.
- Jones, C., Wainwright, G., Yarnold, E (eds) (1992) *The Study of Spirituality*, Part Two, section V.
- Swanton, M (1987) *The Dream of the Rood*, Exeter Press.

Columbanus

- Dunn, Marilyn (2003) *The emergence of Monasticism from the Desert fathers to the Early Middle Ages*, Blackwell 2003.
- Jones, C., Wainwright, G., Yarnold, E (eds) (1992) *The Study of Spirituality*, Part Two, section V.
- Lack, K. (2000) *The Eagle and the Dove*, SPCK.
- Ó Fiaich, T. (1990) *Columbanus in his own words*, Veritas.

The Venerable Bede and the Synod of Whitby

- Dales, D., *Light to the Isles: Missionary theology in Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Britain*, Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1997
- Lapidge, M., Blair, J., Keynes, S., Scragg, D. (eds), *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999
- Mayr-Harting, H., *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1972
- Sherley-Price, L. (trans.), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, London: Penguin, 1955, 1990
- Stenton, F., *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971
- Ward, Benedicta, *The Venerable Bede* London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990
- Webb, J. F. (trans.), 'Bede: Life of Cuthbert' and 'Eddius Stephanus: Life of Wilfrid' in *The Age of Bede*, London: Penguin, 1965

The miraculous in Adomnán and Bede

- Bruce, J., *Prophecy, Miracles, Angels and Heavenly Light?* London: Paternoster, 2004
- Herbert, M., *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996
- Lacey, B., *Colum Cille and the Columban Tradition*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997
- O'Loughlin, Thomas, *Celtic Theology*, London: Continuum, 2000
- Sharpe, R. (trans.), *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba*, London: Penguin, 1995
- Ward, B., *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, Aldershot: Wildwood, 1982, 1987
- Ward, B., *The Venerable Bede*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990, 1998
- Webb, J. F. (trans.), 'Bede: Life of Cuthbert' in *The Age of Bede*, London: Penguin, 1965

Background articles on hagiography in *The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* and *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*

Early Celtic Religion

- Davies, O., *Celtic Spirituality*, New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1999
- Green, Miranda J., *Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1992
- Green, Miranda J. (ed), *The Celtic World*, London: Routledge, 1995
- Johnston, Elva, 'The 'pagan' and 'Christian' identities of the Irish female saint' in Mark Atherton, (ed), *Celts and Christians*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002
- Low, Mary, *Celtic Christianity and Nature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996

Contemporary applications

- Adam, David, *The Eye of the Eagle*, London: SPCK (Triangle), 1995
- Adam, David, *Tides and Seasons*, London: SPCK (Triangle), 1989
- Bradley, Ian, *The Celtic Way*, London: DLT, 1993
- Bradley, Ian, *Columba: Pilgrim and Penitent*, Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1996
- Bradley, Ian, *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Dreaming Dreams*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999
- Bradley, Ian, *Colonies of Heaven*, London: DLT, 2000
- De Waal, Ester, *The Celtic Way of Prayer*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996
- Mitton, Michael, *Restoring the Woven Chord*, London: DLT, 1995
- Pemberton, Cintra, *Soulfaring: Celtic Pilgrimage Then and Now*, London: SPCK, 1999
- Power, Rosemary, *The Celtic Quest*, Dublin: Columba, 2010
- Sheldrake, Philip, *Living Between Worlds*, London: DLT, 1995