

Food for Thought

NOSTER Grand Course in Theology and Religious Studies

For most people in Europe, food is not the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of religion. Yet it is hard to miss. Many religious communities cherish detailed dietary rules about what kinds of food and drink must, may, or may not be taken; about how they should be produced, prepared and shared; and about when one should abstain from food altogether. What is more, many religious traditions present themselves as a form of nutrition, and it is not uncommon for them to suggest that the Divine can be eaten – or that it must be fed. The 2014 NOSTER Grand Course will explore this plethora of links between religion and nutrition. Its aim is to unsettle participants' common sense assumptions, and – more importantly – to familiarize them with a variety of methods in the field of religious studies. The course is meant for PhD and Research Master students who are willing to reconsider and further develop their position in the broad field of Religious Studies and Theology. Teaching staff include, among others, prof. dr. Peter-Ben Smit (Utrecht University/ VU University Amsterdam), dr. David Bos (VU University Amsterdam/University of Amsterdam) and prof. dr. Maaïke de Haardt (Radboud University/ Tilburg University).

The course consists of two parts: a one-day mini-conference (2 October 2014) and, six weeks later, a half-day paper symposium. At the mini-conference, entitled “Food for thought,” scholars from a variety of (sub)disciplines in religious studies and theology will give short lectures on the research they did on food production, purchase, preparation, eating and abstaining. These lectures, and the discussions afterwards, will focus not so much on the findings of the various inquiries, but on the methods employed. All students are expected to prepare for these lectures by reading selected articles and by handing in at least one relevant question or thesis per lecture. After this first part students who take the course for 5 EC will write two short essays, each based on a selection of assigned readings. One of these two essays should be in line with the student's “own” discipline and methodological approach, the second one should employ methods with which the student is *not* familiar. This will challenge students to move beyond their academic comfort zone, and use their intellectual imagination: “Playing with Food.”

For further information: <http://noster.org/course-module-2014-2015/noster-grand-course/>

