



Faculties of Humanities and Theology

## **RHIB22, History of Religions: Ancient Gnosticism - Texts and Traditions, 7.5 credits**

*Religionshistoria: Antik gnosticism - texter och traditioner, 7,5  
högskolepoäng*  
**First Cycle / Grundnivå**

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### **Details of approval**

The syllabus is an old version, approved by the pro-dean for first-cycle studies at the Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2015-03-06 and was valid from 2015-06-08, spring semester 2015.

### **General Information**

Subject: History of Religions

The course is offered as a freestanding course. It can be included in a first or second cycle degree.

*Main field of studies*

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*Depth of study relative to the degree requirements*

G1F, First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

### **Learning outcomes**

On completion of the course, the students shall be able to

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- provide a general account of the features of key movements, texts and conceptions of classical Gnosticism
- identify fundamental and classical philosophical discussions in Gnostic texts and world views

- discuss similarities, differences and relations between different Gnostic groups
- account for problems of methodology and theory of science with regard to research on Gnosticism

### **Competence and skills**

- identify and provide a basic analysis and assessment of source problems for classical texts
- discuss translation problems and hermeneutic issues in speech and writing
- interrogate the term 'Gnosticism' from the point of view of the differences between emic and etic language use

### **Judgement and approach**

- interrogate Gnostic sources and traditions from the point of view of gender and minority perspectives

### **Course content**

The course is an introduction to the myths, rites and liturgy of classical Gnosticism. The focus is placed on the two subgroups Sethianism and Valentinianism but attention is also paid to Hermetic and Thomasine texts and traditions which are introduced and discussed from certain points of view.

The texts studied in the course are translations of original texts, mainly from the Nag Hammadi library, but the descriptions of Gnosticism by the Church Fathers are also considered. The source situation is interrogated, compared and discussed in lectures and seminars. The point of departure of the course is a reexamination of the term Gnosticism, and among the topics discussed are the 'origins' of Gnosticism, and the relation to Christianity, Judaism and Hellenism. Furthermore, the course deals with the relationship between Gnostic texts and contemporary Greek and Roman religion and philosophy, with special emphasis on representatives of Middle Platonism and Stoicism.

At the end of the course, some issues of popular history recently aired in the media will be discussed. These issues will be contextualised and interrogated. Among the issues introduced on the course are the authenticity and relevance of the fragment called? The Gospel of Jesus' Wife, the view of women and femininity in Gnostic groups in Antiquity. Among other topics addressed are the relationship between the New Testament and texts and groups that have been classified as Gnostic, e.g. the Gospel of Thomas and Valentinus of Alexandria, and the relevance of Gnostic texts for information about the historical Jesus.

## Course design

The teaching consists of lectures and a compulsory seminar. Absence from the seminar can be compensated for in accordance with instructions from the lecturer.

## Assessment

The assessment is based on active participation in the seminar and on a final written exam.

*Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.*

## Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction.

## Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, students must have 30 credits in a field of their choice.

## Further information

1. The course is offered at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University.
2. The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree.
3. For further details see the current registration information and other relevant documentation.

## Subcourses in RHIB22, History of Religions: Ancient Gnosticism - Texts and Traditions

Applies from V15

1501 Ancient Gnosticism - Texts and Traditions, 7,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction