

Power & Belief: The Cult of the Saints in the Medieval World

7.1 Module Overview									
Module Number		Module Title	Power & Belief: The Cult of the Saints in the Medieval World						
Stage of Principal Programme			3	Semester	1	Duration. <i>(Weeks F/T)</i>	12	ECTS	5
Mandatory / Elective (M/E)	E	Hours of Learner Effort / Week	2						
Analysis of required hours of learning effort									
Teaching and Learning Modalities					✓if relevant to this module	Approx. proportion of total (hours)			
Contact Hours									
In person face-to-face					✓	24			
Synchronous									
Indirect/Non-Contact Hours									
Asynchronous									
Work Based									
Other:									
• Independent reading					✓	45			
• Research and preparation of assessments					✓	56			
Total						125			

Pre-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Co-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	120
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.	
Role e.g., Tutor, Mentor, Lecturer, Research Supervisor, etc.	Qualifications & experience required
Lecturer/Tutor	A minimum level 9 qualification in History or closely cognate area
	Staff - Learner Ratio X:Y
	1:120

Assessment Techniques – percentage contribution				
Continuous Assessment	100%	Proctored Exam – in person		Practical Skills Based
Project		Proctored Exam - online		Work Based
Capstone (Y/N)?	N	If Yes, describe		

7.2 Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)	
MIMLO	Related MIPLO #
On completion of this module a learner will be able to:	
1. Understand the origins and development of Christian belief and the cult of the saints in the medieval period.	1, 2, 4
2. Critically engage with the historical and methodological frameworks through which religious belief can be analysed.	1, 3, 4

3. Demonstrate a critical appreciation of the primary written and material sources for the cult of the saints.	1, 3, 4, 7
4. Effectively engage with relevant scholarship and debates in both written assessments and in-class discussion.	3, 4, 5, 7

7.3 Indicative Module Content, Organisation and Structure

The aim of this module is to provide learners with an in-depth appreciation of the medieval period through an examination of one of its greatest phenomena, the cult of the saints. In doing so learners will be asked to engage with a range of primary and secondary material, concepts, theories, and approaches to the study of belief in the medieval world. The module will be divided into three main blocks: 1. the origins of the cult of the saints, 2. expressions of belief, and 3. case studies of the saints. Lectures 1-4 will focus on the beginnings of the phenomenon, lectures 5-9 on the ways in which medieval people engaged with and responded to the saints, and lectures 10-12 on specific cults of note within their local and global contexts. An indicative lecture structure is as follows:

1. Who were the saints?
2. Origins: the cult of the martyrs
3. Origins: ascetics and confessors
4. Using sources for the cult of the saints
5. Miracles and meaning
6. The cult of relics
7. Pilgrimage and power
8. Writing saints: hagiography
9. Saints in the later Middle Ages
10. Case study: saints in local contexts
11. Case study: national and patron saints
12. Conclusions: why can the dead do such great things?

7.4 Work-based learning and practice-placement *(if applicable)*

N/A

7.5 Specific module resources required *(if applicable)*

This module involves a visit to the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, where learners will visit the Treasures Room to assess the relics and reliquaries housed there. This visit will inform the first assessment, the object biography. The College and module coordinator will need to arrange travel to Dublin via bus or train.

7.6 Application of programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies to this module

Teaching and Learning

This module will be delivered via a two-hour lecture/seminar each week. It will also include a half-day visit to the National Museum in Dublin. In the first hour of the lecture, learners will be engaged through lecturer-led presentations focusing on the weekly theme. During the second hour of class learners will be provided with a range of activities and primary sources which they will be asked to explore and discuss in smaller groups. Lecture content will primarily be displayed via a slideshow, which will be included on the module Moodle page each week (alongside weekly and further reading). Where applicable learners will be directed to useful online databases, websites, and content.

Continuous Assessment

This module is continually assessed through attendance at lectures, an object biography, and a final end-of-term essay. The object biography involves the assessment of one group of material objects associated with the veneration of the saints e.g. corporeal relics, shrines, contact relics. In this assessment learners are expected to explore material objects creatively while expanding and deepening their methodological approach to history. The final assessment is an essay. Learners will pick from a selection of essay questions that focus on the aspects of saintly veneration and debates in the field. Essays will be designed to develop the critical and analytical skills of the learner, while advancing their written communication.

7.7 Summative Assessment Strategy for this module

MIMLOs	Technique(s)	Weighting
1, 2, 3	Object Biography: examination of one group of material objects associated with the cult of the saints.	30%
1, 2, 3, 4	Essay: answer one question that explores aspects of the cult of the saints. Essays will enhance the learner's ability to 1. engage with primary and secondary sources, and 2. critically analyse this material in their writing.	60%
	Lecture attendance	10%

7.8 Sample Assessment Materials

Object Biography:

Write an assessment of one of the following group of objects: **Bells, Reliquaries, Corporeal Relics**. Use both object centred, and object driven approaches in your assessment. You must explore at least one example in your answer.

Portfolio Marking Rubric:

- Accuracy of information and evidence of secondary reading [40%]
- Critical understanding of materiality from object-centred and object-driven perspectives [40%]
- Written presentation of material [20%]

Sample essay questions:

1. Do you agree that the cult of the saints is as much about political power as it is about belief? Explain your answer with reference to at least one cult.
2. While not historical, hagiographical writing is historicist in nature. Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?
3. Even within their local contexts medieval saints are quintessentially global. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Marking of assessments will be in line with the Marking Assessment Guidelines as outlined in Section 3.3 of the College's [Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards](#) unless otherwise indicated.

7.9 Indicative reading lists and other information resources

Indicative Core Reading:

1. Bartlett, R., *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, 2013).
2. Brown, P., *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981).
3. Kleinberg, A., *Flesh Made Word: Saints' Stories and the Western Imagination*, J.M. Todd (trans.) (Harvard, 2008).
4. Smith, J., 'The remains of the saints: the evidence of early medieval relic collections' *Early Medieval Europe* 28, issue 3 (2020), 388–424.
5. Vauchez, A., *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997).
6. 100 objects website: [100 Objects](#)

Indicative Other Resources:

This list provides an overview of the broad range of material available, from studies of medieval Christianity and belief to those focused on specific aspects of the cult of the saints (e.g. hagiography and relics). Over the

course of the module learners will be provided with additional, more specific readings that relate to the weekly theme.

7. Angenendt, A., 'Holiness of the person – holiness of space,' *Studia Liturgica* 38 (2008), 53–63.
8. Arnold, J. H., *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity* (Oxford, 2014).
9. Bagnoli, M. et. al. (eds.), *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (London, 2011).
10. Brown, P., *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* revised edition (United Kingdom, 2013).
11. Gosden, C., and Y. Marshall, 'The cultural biography of objects' *World Archaeology* vol.31 no.2 (1999), 169-178.
12. Heffernan, T. J., *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1992).
13. Hillman, J. & E. Tingle (eds.), *Spiritual Journeys in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 2019).
14. Kleinberg, A., *Prophets In Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1997).
15. Moss, R. (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ireland: Medieval* (Dublin, 2014).
16. Noble, F. X. & T. Head, *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1995).
17. Overbey, K., *Sacral Geographies: Saints, Shrines and Territory in Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout, 2012).
18. Palmer, J.T., *Early Medieval Hagiography* (Leeds, 2018).
19. Walker Bynum, C., *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York, 2011).