



Call for Applications

Summer Research Seminar, 30 July – 22 August, 2017

McGill University, Montréal, Québec

Metaphysics of Conversion from Late Antiquity to Early Modernity

Seminar leaders:

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(<http://earlymodernconversions.com>)

“Metaphysics of Conversion from Late Antiquity to Early Modernity” is a month-long summer research seminar that will address conversion by focusing on the theme of the analogy of soul and cosmos in the western intellectual tradition. The seminar will explore conversion not only as a philosophical and religious phenomenon, but also as an approach to early modern thinking about hermeneutics, psychology, and cosmology. In particular we will seek to examine the sources of Renaissance and Early Modern thought (e.g. of Nicholas Cusanus, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Desiderius Erasmus, Descartes, and the Cambridge Platonists) in the *philosophia perennis* of Antiquity (Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Proclus). The key premise of the seminar is that the western intellectual tradition constitutes a continuous unfolding conversation within which ‘conversion’ provides an underlying concept of critical significance.

Doctoral students in their final year, postdoctoral fellows, and early-career faculty are invited to apply to take part in this research seminar by defining research projects that address some aspect of this theme in the period from late Antiquity through to the seventeenth century. Projects may attend to any relevant treatment of the concept of conversion in the intellectual history of this period. Studies of the theme of conversion in the metaphysical poetry of the period are also encouraged.

Usually meeting on weekday afternoons, the seminar will include discussions of readings and analysis of various philosophical and literary sources as participants work on refining their own projects. Participants will be invited to make presentations of their research. Fieldtrips during the seminar will include a visit to the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Benoit-du-Lac.

Travel expenses, furnished studio apartment accommodation at Trylon Apartments near campus <http://trylon.ca/furnished-apartments-hotel/furnished-apartments-at-3463-sainte-famille/>, and a stipend for meal expenses (600\$) will be provided by the Early Modern Conversions Partnership. At the end of the seminar, participants will participate in the Annual Team Meeting of Early Modern Conversions held at McGill on 23-25 August 2018.

Seminars will be held at the School of Religious Studies in the Birks Building. McGill offers helpful resources for research and study including the McLennan Library and the Birks Reading Room. There are additional accessible research facilities at Concordia University, Université de Montréal, and the Jesuit Archives at Collège Ste-Marie.

Doctoral candidates in their final year of study, recent PhD graduates, and junior faculty are invited to apply to participate. Candidates should send a cover letter, CV, a research proposal (max 5pp) and an article-length writing sample to conversions@mcgill.ca by 15 December 2017. Two confidential letters of recommendation should be sent to the same address by the same deadline; referees are asked to indicate the name of the candidate in the subject line of their email. At least one referee should confirm time to completion for applicants who have not yet graduated.

