PROF. PAUL OSLINGTON
“Religion and Economics: Adam Smith as Theologian”

Tuesday Seminar
17 April 3.30-5pm

Seminar Abstract:
Adam Smith is a crucial figure in any theological engagement with economics. Contemporary theologians struggle for an entry point into the discourse of economics, but this most famous figure in economics can be shown to be thoroughly soaked with theology. Like many of his 18th century Scottish Enlightenment friends, Smith was shaped by the Calvinism of the dominant Presbyterian Kirk. Newton and the British tradition of scientific natural theology provided the framework for his economic investigations. The Continental natural law ethics of Pufendorf and others influenced his moral philosophy, far more than utilitarianism. Aristotle was always in the background. In the following paper, I will test a theological reading of Smith’s works through the invisible hand passages.