The last pagan Roman emperor Julian (361-363) introduced a policy of reviving the traditional cults. Ritual and sacrifices were central to Julian’s pagan religiosity. In 363 Julian decided to restore the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (destroyed in 70 CE) in order to offer the Jews the opportunity to perform sacrificial rites again which they were only allowed to do in the Temple in Jerusalem. The focus of this lecture is on Julian's attempt to restore the Temple, the reasons for its failure, and the Christian responses to its restoration.

Guest Speaker: Jan Willem, Professor of History, University of Gröningen, Netherlands

Bio: His research focuses on culture of leadership in the late Roman Empire, Christianization of the Roman Empire, Jewish-Christian relations, late-antique historiography (Ammianus Marcellinus), and Latin panegyrics.