Programme specification
MA Theology & Religious Studies

Faculty: Faculty of Education and Theology
Entry in: September 2016
Awarding Institution: York St John University
Teaching Institution: York St John University
Delivery Location: York St John University
Programme/s Accredited by: Not applicable
Exit Awards: Postgraduate Certificate Theology & Religious Studies
Postgraduate Diploma Theology & Religious Studies
UCAS Code / GTTR / Other: Not applicable
Joint Honours Combinations: Not applicable
QAA Benchmark Group(s): Theology & Religious Studies
Mode/s of Study: Full-time for 13 months - 2 years
Part-time for 3 years
Language of Study: English

Introduction and Special Features
This is a flexible programme that allows you to study a range of subjects related to the study of religion. Most students will study for an MA award, though it is also possible to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, and the programme’s “pay as you learn” structure allows part-time students to pay for modules when they take them.

The modules from this award can be drawn from two other awards offered by the department:

- The MA Theology and Ministry is aimed at a wide range of students who may or may not be in some sort of Christian ministry. Modules on this route are taught in ten evening sessions or in blocks on three Saturdays. You can complete the programme on this route in a year of full-time study, though most students are part time and take 2-4 years.

- The MA Contemporary Religion modules are taught during the day and cover a range of topics related to the study of religion in contemporary society.

To receive the award of an MA Theology & Religious Studies you would study taught modules from one or both of these programmes and combine it with a dissertation that falls under the broad discipline of theology and religious studies. This allows a high degree of flexibility in tailoring your studies to suit your interests.

Admissions Criteria
In addition to the University’s general entry criteria for postgraduate study, you must have an upper second-class or first-class honours degree (or equivalent). This can be in any subject, though priority will be given to students with degrees in humanities and especially in theology or religious studies.

Applicants with a lower second-class degree and knowledge of theology and/or religious studies may be accepted onto the programme following an interview. This includes applicants who may have a lower second-class degree in another subject area and who have evidence of having studied theology or religious studies at certificate or diploma level (for example as part of ministry training).
If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/). You must pass at 6.5 or higher in all four aspects of the test (listening, reading, speaking and writing).

**Associate Student entry route**
If you do not qualify for direct entry to the programme you might be offered enrolment as an associate student on a single module. This depends on your qualifications and experience, and how you do on your interview. If you are accepted as an associate student you will be given extra support by your module tutor and help in preparing the assignment. Students who successfully pass the module may enrol on the MA programme in the following academic year, and transfer their credit automatically. Associate students can only register for a single module, and therefore this is not a suitable entry for full-time students, including international students.

**International students**
International students will be admitted through the procedures of York St John International, according to the prevailing University and programme rules.

**Accredited Prior Experience and Learning (APEL)**
Candidates for a Masters award with suitable prior learning or experience may be exempt from up to two of the optional taught modules (60 credits). Normal university rules for credit transfer will apply, and equivalency of learning outcomes to the programme outcomes will need to be demonstrated through the usual University procedures. Applications based on experience will need to be evidenced by a portfolio, and you will be charged for portfolio assessment. APEL will not be given towards the award of Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma. For more information see the University policy document: Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning (APL/APEL).

**Programme Aims**

1. To offer students the opportunity to gain advanced knowledge and critical understanding of a range of issues in theology and religious studies.
2. To offer students the opportunity to study in depth particular topics related to the nature and expression of religion in contemporary societies.
3. To encourage students to tailor the content of their learning according to their particular interests or professional needs by generalising in the study of religion.
4. To develop the ability of students to study and research independently, at an advanced level, specific questions concerning religious studies.

**Programme Learning Outcomes**

**Level M / FHEQ L7**
All students who complete the MA Theology and Religious Studies successfully will:

1. be able to communicate the results of study concisely in ways appropriate to the discipline, showing awareness and critical understanding of the complexities of issues;
2. be able to devise, plan and execute a research project demonstrating awareness of ethical issues, critical distance from sources, and the ability think independently and creatively;
3. be able to integrate theory and practice, reflecting critically on their own standpoint and practice in creative and discipline-specific ways;
4. have advanced skills in studying particular aspects of religion in various contexts through independent enquiry, working with peers, and engaging selectively and critically with a range of primary and secondary material from traditional and online sources;
5. have systematic knowledge and critical understanding of how various aspects of religion are understood in different contexts and discourses, including good understanding of methodological and hermeneutical issues related to the discipline.
Programme Structure

The MA award is based on taking four 30-credit modules and a 60-credit dissertation of 12,000 words. You can do this award full-time over 12-18 months or part-time over 2-4 years.

Modules can be drawn from the MA Theology & Ministry (modules with codes starting ‘MTM’ in the table below), for which teaching is delivered over ten two-hour evening sessions in terms 1 and 2 or over three Saturdays in term 3, or from the MA Contemporary Religion (modules with codes starting ‘MCR’ in the table below), where modules are offered during the day.

Modules for the Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Status of Module*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MTM001</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Contemporary Christian Theology</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTM002</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Contemporary Biblical Studies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTM003</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ordinary Theology</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTM004</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Bible and the Church</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTM005</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Church, Culture &amp; Mission</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTM006</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Contemporary Christian Ministry</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTM015</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Any</td>
<td>Independent Study (Theology &amp; Religious Studies)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTM016</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Any</td>
<td>Dissertation (Theology &amp; Religious Studies)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR003</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>Religion in the Public Sphere</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR004</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>Religion &amp; Philosophy in Contemporary Life</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR005</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>Religion &amp; Popular Culture</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR006</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>Religion &amp; Psychology</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR007</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>Religion &amp; Peace-building</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR008</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>Religion in Contemporary Practice</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*C: Compulsory, CP: Compulsory for progression to the next level, CA: Compulsory for award, O: option or E: elective.

Modules in Theology and Ministry will be offered in a two-year cycle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MTM001</td>
<td>Contemporary Christian Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MTM004</td>
<td>The Bible and the Church</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MTM002</td>
<td>Contemporary Biblical Studies</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>MTM003</td>
<td>Ordinary Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MTM006</td>
<td>Contemporary Christian Ministry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your final award will depend on which route you do and how you combine modules across routes or within programmes. Full time students will take the Independent Study module, or elect to take a taught module from the MA Contemporary Religion programme. The requirements for each set of named awards are set out under graduation requirements.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The programme will aim to create opportunities for you to interact with tutors, peers and the subject area in ways that allow you to pursue your own goals and interests. You will be expected to be proactive in shaping the way that you use the programme to achieve your
learning objectives. Teaching will come in different forms which can be roughly grouped according to module type:

**Taught modules** will introduce you to relevant ideas and key theoretical frameworks, exposing you to current research, and helping you to develop independence of thought and self-directed learning. Teaching will involve some lecturing but also extended discussions and debates.

**Research modules** (dissertations) will be supervised by someone with knowledge in the topic. This kind of teaching offers in-depth individual tutoring that will guide your work on a particular research project.

**Assessment**
The assessment on this programme is deliberately less varied than on the MA Contemporary Religion, which is primarily designed to teach skills. The aim of this programme is not necessarily to develop practical skills in ministry, but to develop critical and reflective skills that can be used to assess and develop ministry.

The distinction between learning and assessment is less clear at Masters Level because so much of the learning that takes place is in the process of producing assignments. This programme will deliberately use assessment not simply to see if you know something, but also as a means of enabling you to learn.

Methods of assessment will include:
1. Written assignments for taught modules and independent studies.
2. Dissertations.
3. Proposals.

Informal feedback (i.e. comment on work that does not include a pass/fail assessment or mark) will be offered in a variety of ways according to the module. For most modules this will be comments on drafts of essays, but for some it might be verbal feedback on class presentations or class exercises. Feedback will also be given as part of the required assessments which are specified for each module.

**Progression and Graduation Requirements**
The University's [general regulations for postgraduate awards](#) apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:
- For the Postgraduate Certificate Theology & Religious Studies credit cannot include any Independent Study modules.
- For the MA Theology & Religious Studies credit must include MTM016 Dissertation (Theology & Religious Studies).

**Internal and External Reference Points**
This programme specification was formulated with reference to:
- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- [Master's degree characteristics (QAA 2010)](#)
- [Theology and religious studies benchmarks (QAA 2007)](#)
- Theology and religious studies M-Level benchmarks (QAA draft 2013)
Further Information

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (faculty)
- Module handbooks (faculty)

Date written / revised: 28/05/14