

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Religion

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| <i>School:</i> | Humanities |
| <i>Subject area:</i> | Religion |
| <i>Entry from academic year:</i> | 2025-26 |
| <i>in the month(s) of</i> | September |
| <i>Awarding institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Teaching institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Delivery location:</i> | York Campus |
| <i>Programme/s accredited by:</i> | |
| <i>Exit awards:</i> | PG Dip Religion PG Cert Religion |
| <i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i> | |
| <i>Joint Honours combinations:</i> | N/A |
| <i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i> | Theology and Religious Studies |
| <i>Mode/s of study:</i> | Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time/ part time 1 year full time 2 years part time |
| <i>Language of study:</i> | English |
| <i>Paired with Foundation Year</i> | No |
| <i>Study abroad opportunities:</i> | No |
| <i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i> | No |
| <i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i> | No |

Introduction and special features

The MA Religion at York St John University is a vibrant, contemporary programme which focuses on the intersection between Religion and public life. You will examine the relationship between Religion and the key issues that affect all our lives including issues of poverty and inequality; diversity and inclusion; and sustainability and tackling the environmental crisis. Throughout the programme, we address the need for change towards social justice, examining the ways in which Religion has been both an obstacle to, and a source of inspiration for, bringing about positive social change.

The MA Religion is for students who want to explore the contemporary relevance of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices. In the taught modules you will be introduced to a wide variety of ideas and practices from different religious traditions and spiritualities. You will also examine different outlooks and lenses through which to make sense of the world, some of which will challenge our current understanding. Through academic rigour, criticality and empathy, we will reflect on these outlooks, working towards an approach which is inclusive and moves away from prejudice and marginalisation. We will question narrow, parochial outlooks, aiming to decolonise the curriculum.

With a key focus on research, MA Religion will introduce and develop research skills, exploring methodologies, disciplines and theoretical outlooks relevant to the study of Religion. Flexibility is built into our programme, so that you can study to suit your own research interests and preferred methodologies. These can include philosophical, theological or social scientific approaches to the study of religion and spirituality.

You will be taught by research-active scholars in the field. In addition to taught sessions, you will receive advice and tailored support through one-to-one sessions with the module leaders, your Academic Tutor and Dissertation Supervisor. Academic staff are available to help you explore your own interests and to assist you to achieve your goals.

Assessment tasks are designed to develop key transferable skills relevant to future employment. There is a 'real-world' emphasis for the programme and you will have the opportunity to engage with stakeholders, for example, religious leaders, worshippers participating in action for social justice and organisations working for social change. The MA programme draws on the vibrant research culture of the study of Religion at York St John, including [the Centre for Religion in Society](#) and the flagship [Ebor Lectures](#). You will have the opportunity to meet with, and work alongside, scholars, practitioners and opinion-formers in the field.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

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.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

1. To explore and critically analyse the roles of Religion in public life, paying particular attention to the key issues which shape society including: diversity and inclusion, poverty and inequality and living sustainably.
2. To examine the ways in which religious and spiritual beliefs and practices can contribute to bringing about change towards social justice.
3. To equip students with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to effectively research the roles of Religion in public life, including key transferable skills relevant to future employment, such as critical thinking and the development of advanced communication skills.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

- 7.1** Demonstrate advanced skills in researching particular aspects of the roles of Religion in society through independent enquiry, self-direction and knowledge of appropriate research methods.
- 7.2** Critically engage with scholarship and the experiences of practitioners and key stakeholders in the field, to produce a sophisticated analysis.
- 7.3** Synthesise and apply systematic knowledge and critical understanding of how various aspects of religion are understood in different contexts and discourses, including advanced understanding of methodological and hermeneutical issues related to the discipline.

- 7.4** Communicate the results of study clearly and precisely in ways appropriate to the discipline, showing awareness and critical understanding of the complexities of issues and the ability to reflect critically on their own particular standpoint and the perspectives that they employ.
- 7.5** Devise and produce a sustained piece of writing within the discipline, using critical evaluation of existing literature to suggest clear research questions and how these can be answered using appropriate methods, including awareness of ethical issues raised by the research.

Programme structure

| Code | Semester | Title | Credits | Module status | |
|----------|----------|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|---|
| | | | | Compulsory (C) or optional (O) | non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X) |
| REL7022M | 1 | Researching Religion | 30 | C | X |
| REL7023M | 1 or 2 | Religion, Media and Popular Culture | 30 | C | X |
| REL7024M | 1 or 2 | Religion and Intersectionality | 30 | C | X |
| REL7025M | 1 or 2 | Religion and Public Life | 30 | C | X |
| REL7026M | 3 | Dissertation | 60 | C | NC |

Please note that not all modules may be available in a given semester as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 50) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Teaching sessions will be highly interactive with a strong emphasis on discussion. You will be encouraged to explore your own areas of interest within the field. There will be a focus on paying attention to research methodology throughout the programme and the MA programme will equip you with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out research, and communicate your findings, in an effective manner. Tailored feedback and one-to-one tutorials will support you in this task.

There is a wide variety of forms of assessment which have been designed to develop transferable skills relevant to future employment. These include production of web-page content, a critical analysis of a lecture, a professional report and an annotated bibliography. Your studies culminate in the production of a dissertation based on a research proposal, which takes the form of a critical analysis of an area of your own interest within the field. You will be supported by a dissertation supervisor, who can offer one to one advice to help you explore your chosen area of interest and assist you in developing your skills of independent research, equipping you to go forward and produce innovative research.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [regulations](#) for taught postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

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

Late result modules

This programme contains the following modules, where the result of the first attempt is not known in time for the June School Assessment Boards (or equivalent level progression point for non-standard entry points). This may delay progression to the next level of study.

- REL7026M Dissertation
The MA Programme operates over a full calendar year with the Dissertation being studied in Semester 3. The submission date will be in September and hence results will go forward to the Autumn SAP.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission, Culture and Values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: November 2024

Programme originally approved: