

Programme Specification

MA Religion in Society

Postgraduate Diploma Religion in Society

Postgraduate Certificate Religion in Society

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Theology and Religious Studies
<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 St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Diploma Religion in Society Postgraduate Certificate Religion in Society
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Not applicable
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study¹ for full-time / part-time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

Our MA in Religion in Society offers a distinctive and flexible pattern of study which will meet the needs of a wide range of students interested in the current role, representation and function of religion in society today. The programme will emphasise the importance of understanding the current religious climate, including the representation of religion in the media and popular culture, its activity in the public sphere and its significance for identity and wellbeing. In particular, by engaging with the Centre for Religion in Society (CRiS) and the wide range of journalists, political activists and religious practitioners invited to give Ebor lectures, the MA will explore the interrelation of secular and religious communities in relation to social justice and the complex issues of gender and sexuality, spirituality and mental health. The MA offers a varied and exciting programme taught by experienced, research-active academics designed to develop students' knowledge and skills in philosophy of religion, theology or religious studies through critical exploration of the theory and practice of religion in society.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate](#) study. In addition, you must have:

- 2:2 or above in cognate discipline.

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 enable students to gain advanced skills in the study of religion and the nature and role of religion in society.
2. To offer students the opportunity to study in depth particular topics related to the expression and understanding of religion in society.

Programme learning outcomes

This programme will be taught and assessed at FHEQ level 7 in accordance with the Level 7 Subject Standard Benchmarks in Theology and Religious Studies (2014).

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

Level 7

- 7.1 Demonstrate advanced skills in studying particular aspects of religion in society through independent enquiry, working with peers, and engaging selectively and critically with a range of primary and secondary material from academic books/journals and online sources.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Communicate the results of study concisely 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 where appropriate.

In addition, Masters of Arts Religion in Society students will:

- 7.4 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 demonstrating awareness of ethical issues.

Programme structure – MA and PGDip

Code	Level	Term	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
REL7013M	7	1	The Changing Face of Religion in Society	30	C	X
* PGDip and MA students will choose THREE modules from the list of optional modules.						
REL7014M	7	1 or 2	Conceptions of the Good Life	30	O*	X
REL7015M	7	1 or 2	Religion, Gender and Sexuality	30	O*	X
REL7016M	7	1 or 2	Spirituality and Public Life	30	O*	X
REL7017M	7	1 or 2	Religion, Media and Popular Culture	30	O*	X
REL7018M	7	1 or 2	Religion and Peacebuilding	30	O*	X
REL7019M	7	1 or 2	Religion and Public Life	30	O*	X
REL7020M	7	1 or 2 (or 3 in year 1 for part-time students)	Independent Study	30	O*	X
Compulsory for MA students (not applicable to PGDip students):						
REL7021M	7	3	Dissertation	60	C	NC

* All optional modules are subject to staffing and timetable availability each year.

Programme structure – PGCert

Code	Level	Term	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
REL7013M	7	1	The Changing Face of Religion in Society	30	C	NC
* PGCert students will choose ONE from the list of optional modules.						
REL7014M	7	1 or 2	Conceptions of the Good Life	30	O*	NC
REL7015M	7	1 or 2	Religion, Gender and Sexuality	30	O*	NC
REL7016M	7	1 or 2	Spirituality and Public Life	30	O*	NC
REL7017M	7	1 or 2	Religion, Media and Popular Culture	30	O*	NC
REL7018M	7	1 or 2	Religion and Peacebuilding	30	O*	NC
REL7019M	7	1 or 2	Religion and Public Life	30	O*	NC

* All optional modules are subject to staffing and timetable availability each year.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The pedagogic approach of the MA in Religion in Society involves a variety of methods for developing a critical understanding of the role, representation and function of religion in society today. Learning and teaching is rooted in critical analysis and the creation of a learning environment in which you can develop your own knowledge, skills and critical abilities in tandem with your lecturers and peers. The compulsory foundational module *The Changing Face of Religion in Society* is designed to equip you with high-level

scholarly research skills by introducing you to a range of approaches to the study of religion. In addition, you will begin to engage critically with the theory and practice of religion in society today by engaging with the Ebor lectures, involving you in writing blog entries for the Centre for Religion in Society (CRiS). The module will also begin to prepare you for the dissertation through an assessed annotated bibliography and presentation; this will require a preliminary literature review in a specific area of interest related to religion in society. So, using a variety of pedagogic strategies, you will be inducted into the subject area and equipped with the scholarly skills required to progress with confidence through the other modules, as well as a variety of employability skills beneficial for future career development.

The subsequent taught modules will introduce you to a range of topics within the field. You will examine 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 seminar discussions, presentations and debates. There is a strong emphasis throughout the programme on developing independent, critical thinking and the seminar discussion group is a key element in this. With relatively small groups, this teaching environment provides a rich pedagogic space for the development of advanced critical thinking skills and scholarly research skills, as well as skills in articulating and presenting arguments and ideas, contributing to both intellectual and personal development, as well as providing practice for employability or further postgraduate work.

The culmination of the MA is the dissertation module, an independent research module which will be supervised by a tutor with knowledge in the subject area. Teaching on the dissertation is through in-depth individual tutoring, accompanied by personal reflection that will guide your work and progress on a particular research project in the area of religion in society, developing time-management and self-motivation as well as religious literacy.

For all modules on the programme, individual tutorial contact between you and the tutor is an integral part of the learning experience. Individual tutorials can enhance your learning by addressing individual study needs; offering structured, regular feedback on work in progress and after assessment; and by supporting your personal academic development.

Assessments

A variety of assessments will be used in this programme to reflect the range of skills and tasks required by researchers and professionals in the discipline. This programme will deliberately use assessment not simply to see if you know something or can do something, but also as a means of enabling you to learn.

The programme places a strong emphasis on independent research and writing skills and the assessment strategies are designed to develop these skills.

Methods of assessment will include:

1. Written assignments for taught modules and independent studies
2. Dissertations
3. Annotated bibliographies
4. Blog entries
5. Presentations

The modules will be summatively assessed by one or more of the above methods. The critical research essay is the dominant mode of assessment, allowing you to develop the skills needed to go on to do doctoral-level research in the discipline. Writing blog entries allows you to develop additional skills in researching and digital literacy by writing for a wider public audience, utilising technology and engaging directly with the Ebor lectures and the Centre for Religion in Society; while presentations enable you to hone your verbal discursive skills.

Formative 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, as well as verbal feedback on seminar presentations or class exercises. Given the importance of conducting presentations in professional practice, and as an employability skill, you will present seminar

papers and/or research tasks during the course of your modules; these will be used as a basis for formative feedback which will then feed into your written work for summative assessment.

Written feedback will also be given on the summative 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 as non-compensatable.

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]
- [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Theology and Religious Studies 2014](#)
- [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Philosophy 2015](#)
- [QAA Masters Degree: Characteristics Statement 2015](#)
- [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2014](#)

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