

Programme specification
BA (Hons) Religious Studies

<i>School:</i>	Humanities, Religion and Philosophy
<i>Entry from:</i>	September 2017
<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>	BA (Ord) BA Religious Studies Diploma of Higher Education in Theology & Religious Studies Certificate of Higher Education in Theology & Religious Studies
<i>UCAS Code / GTTR / Other:</i>	V610 Religious Studies
<i>Joint Honours Combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA Benchmark Group(s):</i>	Theology & Religious Studies
<i>Mode/s of Study:</i>	Full-time for 3 years Part-time for 4-6 years
<i>Language of Study:</i>	English

Introduction and Special Features

Introduction

Religion has played a central and important role in the lives of people across the world throughout history and continues to do so in the contemporary world. Religious ideas underpin social ethics and provide individuals with a source of comfort and hope, yet it has also been the cause of violence and conflict. Why and how this happens is at the heart of the study of religion. A degree in Religious Studies will equip you to better understand the major world religions in their varying forms, as well as lesser known ones. Furthermore, Religious Studies offers you the opportunity to explore the relationship between religions and history, politics, society, and culture utilising interdisciplinary approaches that include sociology, anthropology, feminist and philosophical.

Within the award there are unique opportunities to develop your understanding and ideas through creative expression. We believe that learning is more than just understanding the ideas of others; we want you to be creative thinkers and makers beyond your life in university. To facilitate this, we run two modules which explore the creative arts as a medium for religious and theological ideas. The module Religion and the Visual Arts involves students producing a visual piece of art as part of an exhibition, while the module Creative Writing and the Search for Meaning allows you to submit a piece of creative writing as part of your assessment. Both these modules enable students to communicate independent and innovative subject knowledge gained from learning within their named award through visual art and creative writing.

Overall, this programme will equip you to have an empathic understanding of people from a range of religious traditions and cultural awareness which will help prepare you for work in a range of occupations. Students completing the Religious Studies programme will also have opportunities to reflect on the ways in which religious communities articulate the practice of work as well as exploring opportunities, challenges and ethical issues involved in potential career pathways.

Learning opportunities

During your degree you will take a range of compulsory modules, which will ensure that you develop the skills necessary for study in higher education, and enable you to gain an understanding of a range of religions and the approaches used to study them:

- The major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism
- Important considerations in the method of studying religion and religions, such as the insider or outsider, empathetic or impartial debates
- Variations of dominant religions: Sunni, Shia and Sufi forms of Islam, Protestant and Roman Catholic Christianity, different schools in Buddhism, Reform, Orthodox and Messianic forms of Judaism.
- Approaches to religion, such as the anthropological, sociological, psychological and historical

A wide range of optional modules will give you the chance to explore selected areas in greater depth, for example:

- Indigenous religions: Shintoism, Haitian Voodoo, Australian Aboriginal, Rastafarian, Native American, African, Maori.
- Important figures in modern religious studies (e.g. Edward Tylor, Emile Durkheim, Clifford Geertz, Ninian Smart)
- New Age Religions: Wiccan, Neo-Paganism, Goddess spirituality
- Historical, textual and sociological and anthropological approaches to the study of religion
- Contemporary issues that impact of religion: the media, politics, gender, fundamentalism, globalisation
- The philosophy and ethics of religion
- Feminist approaches to ethical and religious thought

In your final year you will write a dissertation on a topic of your choice, which involves planning and carrying out your own research into a particular area, with support from your supervisor. In addition, the programme offers the following:

- On several modules, the opportunity to spend time away from the University campus at places of worship, social projects with religious foundations, or places of religious interest, as part of an experiential learning approach which has vocational benefit;
- The opportunity to study modern foreign languages and British sign language;
- The opportunity to engage in international exchange for a semester at Level 5 or a month during Level 6 and brief educational visits abroad to places of religious and cultural significance;
- Opportunities for additional independent research modules at level 6.

Admissions Criteria

In addition to the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study, students must have:

- Three GCSEs at grade C or above (including English language).

If the first language is not English, students 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/>).

If students do not have traditional qualifications, they may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). Applications for entry with advanced standing will also be considered.

All applicants will be treated as set out in the York St John University Admissions Policy in line with the University's standard entrance requirements.

Programme Aims

The overall aims of the **BA Theology and Religious Studies** degree programme are:

1. To give students the opportunity to develop both breadth and depth of knowledge in their subject specialism within the context of a broader Theology and Religious Studies curriculum
2. To produce a learning environment that encourages open rational and disciplined discourse and study, promoting qualities of respect, self-awareness, fairness and integrity
3. To enable students to engage critically and empathetically with Theology and Religious Studies from a range of methodologies and sources
4. To give students opportunities to become both collaborative and independent learners through engagement with tutors, peer groups and faith communities in both local and wider contexts
5. To provide students with opportunities to develop the skills which enable them to explore personal, academic, vocational and career pathways through engagement with the supportive environment offered by the university

Programme Learning Outcomes

The aims of the Religious Studies Named Award are: Religious Studies
Level 4

- 1.1 Identify and describe key figures, classical and contemporary texts and issues which are relevant to the study of Religious Studies
- 1.2 Identify and explain key themes, theories and approaches utilised in the study of religion, using primary and secondary sources
- 1.3 Engage in active listening to people of different faith perspectives in order to represent their views fairly and accurately, demonstrating sensitivity, fairness and respect
- 1.4 Explain the relationship between religious beliefs, texts, institutions and practices, demonstrating awareness of the wider social and cultural contexts in which Religious Studies operates
- 1.5 Identify and explain a number of complementary methods of study used in the field of Religious Studies (e.g. historical, systematic, phenomenological, empirical, social scientific)
- 1.6 Utilise teamwork and communication skills to explain key concepts in the field of Religious Studies
- 1.7 Reflect on academic strengths (including time-management and self-management) and set appropriate developmental targets
- 1.8 Gather and use a range of both printed and technological resources to communicate information and ideas, by means of clearly organised written, oral and visual presentation which adheres to academic standards

Level 5

- 2.1 Analyse key themes in the study of world religions from a variety of historical and cultural contexts reflecting a range of academic traditions
- 2.2 Analyse themes and debates in Religious Studies, with some critical awareness of the contribution of primary and secondary sources
- 2.3 Engage in empathetic listening to people from a range of religions and worldviews in order to represent their views fairly and accurately, demonstrating awareness of the qualities of empathy, sensitivity, fairness, respect and integrity
- 2.4 Assess key themes in Religious Studies (e.g. gender, ritual, symbol, myth) and their relationship to social, cultural and political contexts
- 2.5 Apply a range of methods of study to selected issues within Religious Studies discourses
- 2.6 Work collaboratively through fieldwork and placement experiences to demonstrate the development of skills in preparation for the workplace (e.g. dialogue, encounter and observation) and generic skill building (e.g. teamwork, problem-solving and communication)
- 2.7 Reflect on academic and personal strengths (including time-management, self-management and reliability) and set appropriate developmental targets
- 2.8 Gather and make use of a range of both printed and technological resources to communicate information, ideas and arguments, by means of clearly organised written, oral and visual presentation which adheres to academic conventions

Level 6

- 3.1 Critically analyse in depth selected figures and texts from both classical and contemporary sources, applying cross disciplinary approaches in the study of religion (e.g. political, ethical, social, historical and aesthetical)
- 3.2 Construct critical arguments from a range of contemporary themes and debates in Religious Studies using theological terminology as appropriate, drawing on independently gathered and critically assessed primary and secondary sources
- 3.3 Engage critically with views of or about people from a range of religions and worldviews in the public and private arena in order to represent their views fairly and accurately with empathy, sensitivity, fairness, respect and integrity
- 3.4 Critically assess the relationships of world religions with social, political and global contexts
- 3.5 Critically and creatively engage with Religious Studies in dialogue with other disciplines (e.g. historical, systematic, phenomenological, anthropological, empirical, social-scientific)
- 3.6 Plan, implement and evaluate independent research into religious studies
- 3.7 Critically reflect on academic, professional and personal strengths (including time-management, self-management and reliability) demonstrating self-awareness and setting appropriate developmental targets
- 3.8 Independently research and make critical use of a full range of both printed and technological resources to communicate information, ideas, arguments, principles and theories by means of clearly organised written presentation which adheres to academic standards

Modules for the Religious Studies Named Award

The full list of modules at each of the three levels is set out below (key - **C**: Compulsory for progression to the next level or, at level six, for the award, **O**: option. **C¹** and **C²** etc.: you must take one of these modules). Not all optional modules will be available to you every year, but there will be a range of choices which cover a number of areas of interest. Your Academic Tutor will be available to help you to make your choices, both in terms of your interests and your potential future career.

Level Four

The level four programme is designed to provide you with an introduction to the Study of Religion and a thorough grounding in your chosen named award, with the option to select a Modern Foreign Language.

Level Five

At level five, consolidate your chosen named award and have the opportunity to either strengthen your named award or broaden your interests with the option to select a Modern Foreign Language or British Sign Language.

Level Six

At level six you may either strengthen your named award or broaden your study. You must complete a minimum of 40 credits within your named award. You may take:

- Either a 40 credit dissertation
- Or a 20 credit short dissertation plus one other Religious Studies modules (one of 3RS002, 005, 006, 010, 012, 013, 014)

Passing one of 3RS020 or 3RS021 is compulsory for award

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1RS001	4	2	New Age and Pagan Spiritualities	20	O
1RS002	4	2	The Story of the Bible	20	O
1RS003	4	2	Introduction to Islam	20	CP
1RS004	4	2	Introduction to Asian Religions	20	CP
1RS005	4	2	Foundations of Christian Theology	20	O
1RS006	4	1	Introduction to Christianity	20	O
1RS007	4	1	Jewish Belief and Practice	20	O
1RS008	4	2	Values and Virtues: Ethics and Religion	20	O
1RS009	4	1	Philosophy and Religion	20	O
1RS010	4	1	Studying Religion	20	CP
1RS011	4	1	Religion and Art	20	O
XXXXX	4		Language/BSL module	20	O
2RS001	5	1	Religion and Human Diversity	20	CP
2RS002	5	2	Theology: Action and Reflection	20	O
2RS003	5	1	Buddhism in India and Southeast Asia	20	C ¹
2RS004	5	1	Religions of East Asia	20	O
2RS005	5	2	Texts and Practice in Hindu Traditions	20	O
2RS006	5	2	Specialist Topic: Religious Studies	20	O
2RS007	5	1	Studying the Old Testament	20	O
2RS008	5	2	New Testament Studies	20	O
2RS009	5	2	Specialist Topic: Christian Theology	20	O
2RS010	5	2	Issues in Contemporary Judaism	20	O
2RS011	5	1	Indian Philosophy	20	O
2RS012	5	2	Engaging with Philosophical Texts	20	O

2RS013	5	1	Christian Theology in the Modern World	20	O
2RS014	5	1	From Descartes to Marx: Philosophers and Religion	20	O
2RS015	5	2	Islam in a Global Context	20	C ²
2RS016	5	2	Matters of Life and Death	20	O
2RS017	5	1	Sikh Tradition	20	O
2RS018	5	1	Film, Ethics and Theology	20	O
2RS021	5	2	Work Related Learning (Religious Studies)	20	CP
2SC005	5	2	Sociology of Religion	20	O
XXXXX	5		Language module/BSL module	20	O
3RS001	6	1	Contemporary Christianity	20	O
3RS002	6	2	Religion and the Visual Arts	20	O
3RS003	6	2	Feminist Theologies	20	O
3RS004	6	1	Religion and Creative Writing	20	O
3RS005	6	2	Buddhist Ethics	20	O
3RS006	6	1	Religion and Globalisation	20	O
3RS007	6	2	Issues in Contemporary Theology	20	O
3RS008	6	2	Forgiveness and Reconciliation	20	O
3RS009	6	1	Evolution, Theology and Ethics	20	O
3RS010	6	1	Feminist Ethics and Religion	20	O
3RS011	6	1	Theological Interpretation of the Bible	20	O
3RS012	6	2	Mystical Traditions in the Abrahamic Religions	20	O
3RS013	6	2	Responses to the Holocaust	20	O
3RS014	6	2	Religion and Myth	20	O
3RS015	6	2	Studies in Philosophical Theology	20	O
3RS027	6	1 or 2	Religion in the Public Sphere	20	O
3RS016	6	1	Negotiated Study 1	20	O
3RS017	6	2	Negotiated Study 2	20	O
3RS026	6	2	Religious Approaches to War and Peace	20	O
3RS020	6	1	Short Dissertation	20	CA ¹
3RS021	6	Year	Dissertation	40	CA ²

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Teaching and Learning

The Theology and Religious Studies team aims to provide you with a secure and supportive environment in which you can achieve your potential, both intellectually and personally.

We will build up a good working relationship with you, and you will have many opportunities to work with a range of module tutors who are experts in their field. The Head of Programme will have oversight of your journey through the programme and you will be allocated a designated personal academic tutor who will guide and support you through your degree programme.

You will have opportunities to develop expertise within your chosen named award, or you may choose to broaden your studies. Whichever route you choose, you will develop your knowledge and deepen your understanding of the complexities of your chosen area.

We will help you to build on your existing strengths, and find ways to help you to become confident in developing new skills including academic and personal skills and the development of the use of technology in a Higher Education environment.

You will be introduced to a reflective approach to learning to help you develop your academic, personal and professional skills and you will be encouraged to reflect on your learning throughout your degree programme. You will learn to develop a reflective understanding of your

work to equip with the necessary skills for your future personal development and the work-place environment. This will help you to cultivate skills such as perceptions and attitudes towards yourself and other people in relation to the subjects you are studying, identifying the need to learn new academic skills, working with other people, problem solving and communication.

The tutors will use a variety of learning and teaching methods in their sessions which are tailored both towards the subject and different approaches to learning (for example, lectures, seminars, group activities, visiting speakers, media, visits to relevant places of interest.) You will be given opportunities to actively participate in the teaching sessions and to develop your confidence through learning activities such as group discussion and presentations. This will enable you to develop both independence and collaborative skills as you learn both with and from your peers. Your tutor will guide you in preparing for these activities.

You will also engage in independent study outside of the contact hours. This will include guided reading, research tasks, engaging with electronic resources, preparation for teaching sessions and work on assignments.

At level four you will build a foundation for the subject. You will spend four hours per week (plus any visits) for each module in teaching sessions with the tutor. This contact time with the tutor will give you an overview of the subject and provide you with a range of approaches to study the subject in more depth. You will also be encouraged to reflect on your own approach to learning and the challenges your learning presents.

At level five you will begin to apply your knowledge to complex issues in the contemporary world, and you will prepare for independent research. You will spend three hours per week (plus any visits) for each module in teaching sessions with the tutor. You will further develop your analytical skills, and learn how to reflect both on your own learning and engage in beginning to represent people of different faith perspectives with fairness and respect. You will have the opportunity to engage in and reflect upon work related learning, which will support and advise you as you consider possible career paths.

At level six you will spend three hours per week (plus any visits or workshops) for each module in teaching sessions with the tutor, the emphasis will be on enhancing your skills in critical engagement with a wide range of academic resources and personal encounters. You will complete a dissertation on a subject of your choice from within your chosen named award enabling you to demonstrate the skills and attributes you have acquired during your degree programme.

Assessment

You will encounter a range of assessment strategies throughout your degree programme. These are designed to help you to enhance existing skills and build confidence in developing new ones. Assessments will include written, oral and visual communication, which you will be able to build on in the future.

For example: essays, group or individual oral presentations, reflective writing, articles, exhibitions, portfolios and dissertations.

Assessments for each module are spread throughout the academic year. Tutors will build in opportunities for you to work on drafts and receive feedback before you submit your final piece of work for assessment. There are no written examinations on the programme.

Progression and Graduation Requirements

The University's [general regulations for undergraduate 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:

Students on the Theology & Religious Studies programme may change named awards after level 4 if they have taken at least two of the four compulsory level 4 modules in the new named award.

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](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

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 (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

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