

## Programme specification

### BA (Hons) Religion, Philosophy & Ethics

Est.  
1841 | YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

<i>School:</i>	Humanities, Religion and Philosophy
<i>Entry in:</i>	September 2019
<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 Religion, Philosophy and Ethics Certificate of Higher Education in Theology & Religious Studies Diploma of Higher Education in Theology & Religious Studies
<i>UCAS Code / GTTR / Other:</i>	VV65 Religion, Philosophy and Ethics
<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, philosophy and ethics have always been closely related, and understanding their interaction is vital when thinking about some of the deepest and most problematic issues that concern us today in both Eastern and Western cultures. Religious traditions have played an important role in shaping the way that we approach ethical questions like, 'what does it mean to be human?' or, 'what is justice?' and philosophy has had a huge influence on the development of religious and ethical thought throughout history. This award will introduce you to some of the most important topics, traditions and texts in these areas, so as to give you a clear understanding of the complex relationship between religion, philosophy and ethics, both historically, and in contemporary contexts. However, we also encourage students to explore topics that don't always appear in the textbooks; for example, how have philosophers understood a controversial idea like forgiveness, or a complex emotion like compassion? How might watching films be a way of exploring ethical problems? At York St John we see philosophy not just as an intriguing intellectual pursuit, but also as a way of engaging with the world around us, and the problems it presents us with. Within the award there are also 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.

Overall, this programme will equip you to think in an attentive, empathetic critical and rigorous manner; a characteristic which, as well as possessing its own intrinsic worth, will also prepare you well for working in a range of occupations. Students completing the programme also take with them generic skills such as research competence; effective written and oral communication; self-management; teamwork; effective use of IT.

### 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 central areas such as:

- Key problems in 'the philosophy of religion' (e.g. arguments for the existence of God; the problem of evil)
- Important figures in modern western philosophy (e.g. René Descartes, David Hume, Friedrich Nietzsche)
- Major world religions
- Key concepts in ethics

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

- Ethical thought within particular religious traditions (e.g. Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity)
- Non-western philosophy (e.g. Indian philosophy)
- A range of contemporary ethical issues such as: abortion and stem cell research; the nature of forgiveness; war and peace
- Feminist approaches to ethical and religious thought
- Theology and ethics in and through film
- Philosophical theology

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.yorks.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 <http://www.yorks.ac.uk/study/admissions/admissions-policy/entry-criteria.aspx>;

## Programme Aims

The overall aims of the 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 Religion, Philosophy and Ethics Named Award are:

#### Level 4

- 1.1 Identify and describe key figures and texts relevant to the interaction between religion, philosophy and ethics (e.g. Aquinas' *Summa*; Hume's *Dialogues*; Kant's *Groundwork*)
- 1.2 Identify and explain key themes and debates relevant to the interaction between religion, philosophy and ethics, using primary and secondary sources (e.g. arguments for the existence of God, the relationship between reason and revelation, the nature of religious belief).
- 1.3 Engage in active listening to people of different faith perspectives and none 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 religion, philosophy and ethics operate.
- 1.5 Identify and articulate the conceptual issues underlying intellectual debates in religion, philosophy and ethics with sensitivity, clarity and precision of expression
- 1.6 Utilise teamwork and communication skills to explain key concepts in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics.
- 1.7 Reflect on academic strengths (including time-management and self-management) and set appropriate developmental targets
- 1.8 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 adhere to standard academic conventions

#### Level 5

- 2.1 Analyse a range of key figures and texts relevant to the interaction between religion, philosophy and ethics, in selected historical and cultural contexts (e.g. Western modernity; classical Indian thought; postmodernity).

- 2.2 Analyse themes and debates relevant to the interaction between religion, philosophy and ethics, employing critical analysis of the contribution of primary and secondary sources
- 2.3 Engage in empathetic listening to people of different faith perspectives and none 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 within religious, philosophical and ethical enquiry in relation to their social and global contexts
- 2.5 Apply philosophical forms of reasoning to various intellectual positions within religious and ethical thought, so as to assess them with sensitivity, balance and rigour.
- 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 adhere to standard academic conventions.

#### **Level 6**

- 3.1 Critically analyse selected figures and texts relevant to the interaction between religion, philosophy and ethics, in dialogue with other disciplines as appropriate (e.g. politics, social theory, peace studies).
- 3.2 Construct critical arguments from a range of contemporary themes and debates relevant to the interaction between religion, philosophy and ethics, using technical terminology as appropriate, drawing on independently gathered and critically assessed primary and secondary sources
- 3.3 Engage critically with people of different faith and community perspectives and none 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 interaction between philosophical, religious and ethical enquiry and their social, political and global contexts.
- 3.5 Construct rationally persuasive and balanced arguments with clarity and rigour, and in dialogue with other disciplines as appropriate.
- 3.6 Plan, execute and evaluate independent research in religion, philosophy and ethics.
- 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 Gather and make discriminating 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 adhere to standard academic conventions.

## Programme Structure

### Modules for the Religion, Philosophy and Ethics 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. **C<sup>1</sup>** and **C<sup>2</sup>** 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.

At level four all students will complete 6 modules totalling 120 credits. This will consist of:

- Compulsory for progression module: 1RS008 *Values and Virtues: Ethics and Religion*
- Compulsory for progression module: 1RS009 *Philosophy and Religion*
- Compulsory for progression module: 1RS010 *Studying Religion*
- Optional module: selected from the list below\*
- Optional module: selected from the list below\*  
or Modern Foreign Language  
or British Sign Language

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1RS005	4	1	Foundations of Christian Theology	20	O
1RS012	4	1	World Christianity	20	O
1RS007	4	1	Jewish Belief and Practice	20	O
1RS009	4	1	Philosophy and Religion	20	CP
1RS010	4	1	Studying Religion	20	CP
1RS008	4	2	Values and Virtues: Ethics and Religion	20	CP
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	O
1RS004	4	2	Introduction to Asian Religions	20	O
1RS011	4	2	Religion and Art	20	O
XXXXX	4		BSL module	20	O

*CP This module must be studied and passed to progress to the next level.*

#### 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.

At level five all students will complete 6 modules totalling 120 credits. This will consist of:

- Compulsory for progression module: 2RS020 *Work Related Learning (Religion Philosophy & Ethics)*

- Compulsory for progression module: 2RS014 *From Descartes to Marx: Philosophers and Religion*
- Compulsory for Named Award module: 2RS011 *Indian Philosophy* or 2RS012 *Philosophical Texts* or 2RS 016 *Matters of Life or Death*
- Optional module: selected from the list below\*
- Optional module: selected from the list below\*
- Optional module: selected from the list below\*  
or Modern Foreign Language  
or British Sign Language

Code	Level		Title	Credits	Status of Module*
2RS001	5	1	Religion and Human Diversity	20	O
2RS023	5	1	Mysticism and World Religions	20	O
2RS003	5	1	Buddhism in India and Southeast Asia	20	O
2RS004	5	1	Religions of East Asia	20	O
2RS007	5	1	Studying the Old Testament	20	O
2RS011	5	1	Indian Philosophy	20	O/C <sup>1</sup>
2RS013	5	1	Christian Theology in the Modern World	20	O
2RS014	5	1	From Descartes to Marx: Philosophers and Religion	20	CP
2RS018	5	1	Film, Ethics and Theology	20	O
2RS002	5	2	Theology: Action and Reflection	20	O
2RS005	5	2	Texts and Practice in Hindu Traditions	20	O
2RS006	5	2	Specialist Topic: Religious Studies	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
2RS012	5	2	Engaging with Philosophical Texts	20	O/C <sup>1</sup>
2RS015	5	2	Islam in a Global Context	20	O
2RS016	5	2	Matters of Life and Death	20	O/C <sup>1</sup>
2RS017	5	2	Sikh Tradition	20	O
2RS020	5	2	Work Related Learning (Religion Philosophy & Ethics)	20	CP
2SC005	5	2	Sociology of Religion	20	O
XXXXX	5		BSL module	20	O

*O/C<sup>1</sup> These modules are options but at least one of these modules must be passed in order to obtain the honours award.*

*CP This module must be studied and passed to progress to the next level.*

## 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 Religion, Philosophy and Ethics module (one of 3RS005, 006, 008, 009, 010, 013, 014)

You may select the remaining credits from the list below.

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
3RS001	6	1	Contemporary Christianity	20	O
3RS004	6	1	Religion and Creative Writing	20	O
3RS006	6	1	Religion and Globalisation	20	O
3RS007	6	1	Issues in Contemporary Theology	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
3RS014	6	1	Religion and Myth	20	O
3RS016	6	1	Negotiated Study 1	20	O
3RS022	6	1	Short Dissertation	20	O/CA <sup>1</sup>
3RS002	6	1	Religion and the Visual Arts	20	O
3RS003	6	2	Feminist Theologies	20	O
3RS005	6	2	Buddhist Ethics	20	O
3RS008	6	2	Forgiveness and Reconciliation	20	O
3RS013	6	2	Responses to the Holocaust	20	O
3RS015	6	2	Studies in Philosophical Theology	20	O
3RS027	6	2	Religion in the Public Sphere	20	O
3RS017	6	2	Negotiated Study 2	20	O
3RS023	6	Year	Dissertation	40	O/CA <sup>1</sup>

*O/CA<sup>1</sup> One of these modules must be studied and passed in order to obtain the honours award.*

## 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 through reflection 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 both academic and personal learning and the challenges this 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 subject knowledge, deconstructing prejudices and preconceptions and 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 and you will reflect on the learning process, identifying ways in which you can utilise the skills acquired in your future personal and professional life.

### **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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