

Religion and Theology



Undergraduate study

Courses

Single Honours

BA Religion and Theology

three years V600

MArts Religion and Theology with Study Abroad

four years V601

Joint Honours

BA Philosophy and Theology

three years VV56

BA Theology and Sociology

three years VL63

Why study religion and theology at Bristol?

Our Single and Joint Honours degrees and MArts Religion and Theology involve studying some of the world's major religions – Buddhism, Chinese religions, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism – and their foundational texts. We are a friendly department with eight permanent staff engaged in teaching and research, ranked fifth out of 33 departments in the UK for our research according to analysis of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 by *Times Higher Education*.

Our courses are modular and allow you the flexibility to either concentrate on certain areas or choose units from many areas of study. Whichever path you follow, you will find that the department has a tradition of intellectual innovation, using a range of archaeological, historical, linguistic, philosophical and theological approaches. The only commitment asked of you is an academic one: belief in the importance of the subject and a willingness to pursue it seriously.

Besides the core focus on religion and theology, you will also have the opportunity to contextualise your studies by taking options beyond your department. You may choose to take units in related or broader subject areas or in a foreign language. You will also take part in the Bristol Futures programme, which builds knowledge and experience in the fields of innovation and enterprise, global citizenship and sustainable development.

You may choose to spend one semester (for BA courses) or one year (for the MArts course) living and studying abroad, an experience which broadens horizons and which employers value highly.

'Academic staff are experts in their focus areas and produce exciting, cutting-edge and peer-respected work through a variety of prestigious journals and book publishers.'

Marek (BA Religion and Theology)

This leaflet contains information for students planning to start university in autumn 2019. We have made every effort to ensure all details are correct at the time of going to press (June 2018). However, since this information is subject to change, you are advised to check the University's website, bristol.ac.uk/ug-study, for the latest updates.

What will you study?

The various religious traditions of the world represent significant expressions of cultural values and ideas about the meaning of life and death. It is not possible to have a mature understanding of the past and present state of the world without some knowledge of these traditions. Our courses introduce you to the history, practices and ideas of some of the world's principal living religions, focusing in particular on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese traditions, as well as the philosophy of religion.

Our welcoming classroom environment enables you to interact closely with lecturers as you explore key issues of world religions and learn how leading scholars approach the subject. You may also choose to study a language: Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin or Sanskrit. By looking at sacred texts, ritual, ethics, sexuality, politics, philosophy, history and law, you will consider how religion informs and has informed the ways that millions of people, both individually and collectively, live their lives, finding meaning and purpose in the process.

In the first and second years, you will take a symposium in religion and theology – a small discussion group, which considers key questions in the academic investigation of religion. These symposia – Approaches to the Study of Religion and Issues in the Study of Religion – run in alternate years.

First-year students also take The Living Religions unit, which introduces major world faiths, and choose three other units from a diverse range, such as:

- Clash of Religion: Christianity and Islam
- Philosophy of Religion
- Divine Love and Hinduism
- language units.

In addition to the symposium, second-year students also take four optional units, for example:

- Early and Pre-Modern Christianity
- Philosophy of Religion
- Divine Love in Hinduism
- introductory language units.

You may also have the option of spending a semester at one of our overseas exchange partners.

If you are studying for the BA course, in your third year you will work one-to-one with a member of staff on either a 12,000-word dissertation or a dissertation with fieldwork (comprising an 8,000-word dissertation and a 4,000-word portfolio). If you choose the fieldwork option you will attend workshops in fieldwork skills. You will also take four optional units, for example:

- Sex, Marriage and Deviance in the Early Modern Era
- Atheism
- Medieval Mystics.

MArts students have a rare opportunity to study at home and abroad. You will spend a year at one of our world-renowned partner institutions in Asia, Australia, Canada, the USA or Continental Europe.

In your final year you will study comparative religions and take optional units that allow you to focus on a particular religion or pursue broader themes. You will also compose a dissertation on a bespoke topic.



Our teaching

Our teaching and learning deliver an education at the forefront of the subject. You will also acquire the key skills and attributes sought by employers for a very wide range of careers. Our diverse range of assessments ensures that you gain a thorough training in advanced research, source analysis and sharing your findings in a number of ways.

We will make sure that you graduate with experience in formal writing and presentation skills, and in using digital formats and other media to present knowledge, ideas and arguments. You will be experienced in working individually and in groups, and in making connections with and communicating to audiences beyond the University.

Ranked 7th in the UK for
Theology and Religious
Studies.

Complete University Guide 2019



Careers and graduate destinations

The skills that arts students traditionally bring to the workplace are now, more than ever, valued in every part of the employment market. Our students go on to succeed in careers as diverse as the subjects they study – education, the charity sector, law, accountancy, theatre, museums, publishing, journalism, commerce, tech start-ups, politics and international relations, to name just a few. Arts graduates also go on to work in sectors perhaps not immediately associated with arts disciplines, such as engineering and IT.

To ensure arts graduates continue to be appealing to employers, the Bristol Skills Framework enables students to recognise their development in areas such as academic writing, problem solving, group work and individual and group presentation. We will equip you with the tools to market your skills, your achievement and your potential in whatever career path you choose to pursue after you graduate.

Employers place great value on the transferable skills that religion and theology graduates offer. These include the ability to think critically, write fluently, and appreciate ideas and opinions different from their own. Recent graduates have entered varied fields, such as teaching, international development, law, social work and business.

Alternatively, there is the possibility of postgraduate study on our full-time (one year) and part-time (two years) MA and MPhil programmes. Research work at PhD level can also be undertaken. The department also hosts two highly active research centres: the Centre for Buddhist Studies and the Centre for Christianity and Culture.

The University of Bristol has one of the best employment records in the UK. We are rated sixth in the UK in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2018 and are the fourth most targeted university by top UK graduate employers (High Fliers Research 2018).

Making your application

Typical offer for BA Religion and Theology*

Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug19-religion for Joint Honours and other qualifications.

A-levels AAB (contextual BBB[†]).

IB Diploma 34 overall (contextual 31[†]) to include 17 points (contextual 15[†]) at Higher Level.

English Language profile B^{††}

GCSEs No specific subjects required.

[†]For information on contextual offers, visit bristol.ac.uk/contextual-offers.

^{††}For details of English language profiles, visit bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

Selection UCAS or Common Application.

*The typical offer is indicative only and the University accepts a wide range of qualifications. The information is correct at the time of printing (June 2018); however, we recommend you check the University's website for the most up-to-date information: bristol.ac.uk/ug-study.

All candidates are judged according to the following categories:

- academic potential;
- enthusiasm for and commitment to the subject;
- self-motivation and management;
- communication skills;
- responses to challenges faced.

Taking a degree in religion and theology at Bristol does not require you to be religious; in fact, staff and students in the department are rather diverse in that regard. Whether you have a religious commitment or not, you are very welcome. What is expected of applicants is a genuine fascination with the religious ideas of humanity and their role in framing people's lives, past and present, including religious literature, art, music, politics, philosophy and ethics.

If you are applying, you should familiarise yourself with the kinds of issues studied in religion and theology at university level and show this in your application. If some time has elapsed since you gained relevant qualifications (eg A-levels), we may invite you to interview.

Further information

Find out more about the Department of Religion and Theology: bristol.ac.uk/religion.



Contact us

Enquiries Team

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If you have any questions about courses, applications or any aspect of being a UK or international student at Bristol please contact the Enquiries Team.

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University guide to the city of Bristol

bristol.ac.uk/citybristol

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