

Free-Standing Modules in Theology and Religious Studies

Pursue your subject interests or professional development in a way that works for you. Choose from a wide range of modules from our MA programmes in Religious studies and Theology. Benefit from the breadth of expertise of [staff](#) in one of the largest departments of Theology and Religious Studies in the UK. See if post-graduate study in Theology and Religious Studies is for you.

We offer a wide range of modules which you can apply to study on a *free-standing* basis. If you later apply successfully to study for a full MA, you can bring credit you've gained from the study of free-standing MA modules with you, so long as they map on to the programme's modules.

Modules usually take place over a term (10 weeks), and are delivered in a variety ways: face to face, by residential or online through moodle, our Virtual Learning Environment.

Assessment

Assessment for each module (20 credits) is usually by a written essay of 4,000 words. The exceptions are double-weighted modules (40 credits), which are starred below.

Entry requirements

Applicants for free-standing level 7 modules should normally meet the admissions requirements for the University's MA programme in [Theology](#) or [Religious Studies](#), whichever is most appropriate to the subject of the module.

Where an applicant's prior learning and experience does not straightforwardly evidence their suitability for this level of study, they may be admitted to study up to 20 credits at level 7 in the first instance. Should they wish to apply to study further modules or be admitted to one of the MA programmes, their assessment for these credits will be taken as a further indicator of their readiness for study at this level.

Please contact [Dr. Ben Fulford](#) (Deputy Head for PG Programmes) for further advice.

The modules available next year (2016-17) are:

Theology

TH7021 Themes and Methods in Practical and Contextual Theology (40 Credits)**

This module is designed to give you a grounding in the core disciplines of practical and contextual theologies. It will introduce you to key methodological concerns - most aptly, how context and experience inform the way theology is done within these contexts, and you will address these concerns in relation to a number of theological themes. (*Theology Pathway Only*) *Delivery: face to face*

TH7023 Contemporary Issues in Contextual Theology

This module will be delivered through a combination of a residential event and one-to-one tutorials. Each year, the residential event will focus on one key theme within contextual theology. Students

will engage critically and in depth with a key theme within contextual theology. (*Theology Pathway Only*)

TH7026 Jews, Christians and Pagans 168BCE - 132CE

This module examines the beliefs and practices of Jews, Christians, and Pagans between the Maccabean and Bar Kochba revolts. Beginning with the religion, culture, and politics of the Roman Empire, you will have opportunities to explore how communities of Jews and Christians organised themselves, examining issues where they demonstrate conformity and confrontation with wider cultural, political, social, and religion norms. The third section of the module looks specifically at the birth and development of Christianity, covering topics such as: the mission of Jesus; the 'parting of the ways' from Judaism; Paul's Gentile mission; sexual ethics; Church and State; ecclesiology; and suffering, persecution, and martyrdom. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*) *Delivery: face to face*

TH7029 Key Theological Texts (40 Credits)**

This module considers key questions about God in Christian theology through reading extracts from a selection of classic and contemporary texts in seminars and independently. By reading these texts we will encounter a variety of approaches to Christian theology and a variety of genres, and will be able to trace important developments in thinking about God as Trinity, in modern theology and in respect of current challenges. In so doing, we aim to learn how to understand and engage these texts critically and constructively, in dialogue with others. The module also provides training in putting together a literature review and a research proposal. (*Theology Pathway Only*) *Delivery: face to face*

TH7039 Spirituality and Popular Culture

Interest in spirituality and popular culture has increased exponentially in recent times. Indeed, popular culture cannot be ignored in any attempt to comprehend the contemporary religious and spiritual landscape in which we find ourselves. What is the significance of the development of new media such as the internet for religious traditions? How does popular culture influence religion and spirituality, and how do we evaluate such relationships? This module will equip you with the necessary tools to undertake analysis of the interface between cultures of everyday life and religion/spirituality. After focusing upon methodological approaches to this discipline, examination of some of the following areas will be undertaken: religion and spirituality in film; religious motifs in music; cyber-spirituality; apocalyptic ideas in popular culture; spirituality and celebrity culture. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

TH7043 Urban Theology

The aim of this module is to examine and critically evaluate a range of theoretical and theological responses to the phenomenon of urbanisation and urban living. This will be undertaken with particular reference to the changing context of the major cities of the North West England region (Liverpool and Manchester). The module will examine the emergence of modern urban theory and some of the most significant theological traditions of engagement with urbanisation, before considering and evaluating various strategies of faith-based involvement in urban regeneration. Contemporary ideas such as mongrel and hybrid cities, the post-secular city, planetary urbanism and emerging concepts of post-Christian theology and missiology, including 'third space' thinking and the 'deconstructed' church, will be critiqued and explored. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

TH7048 Practice-Based Research Project (40 credits)**

This self-guided module involves producing a portfolio which collects evidence of your critical reflection on some aspect of your professional or voluntary practice. The emphasis on all aspects of the portfolio is the demonstration of the interrelationship of 'theory' to 'practice' and vice versa.

The module will encourage you to do further reading into the field of qualitative research and to find appropriate resources for undertaking a project involving research into practice - your own or others'. This involves a degree of what is called 'reflexivity', or understanding of your own positionality as a researcher, as 'insider' (to your practice) and 'outsider' (as critical commentator and investigator). (*Theology Pathway Only*)

TH7049 Contemporary Issues in Public Theology

This module provides an introduction to the study of the origin, nature and methods of public theology. The content of this course seeks to provide a critical understanding of the role of theology in relation to public issues facing individuals and society today. (*Theology Pathway Only*)

TH7054 TRS Conference Study

In order to be able to do this module, you must first negotiate with your Programme Leader which conference you will attend. Success in this module is highly dependent on your ability to work independently to construct a research question and respond to that question in an extended piece of work. It will involve you attending a conference event either in the Department or externally and writing up a piece of work related to the theme of that conference. A supervisor will be appointed to work with you through the module. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

TH7060 Introduction to the Study of Theology, Media and Communication (40 Credits)**

This module provides a critical introduction to relevant literature, concepts, methods and perspectives in the study of religion, media, culture and communication. It will introduce you to essential themes in media and communications theory, as well as enabling you to locate, interpret and apply a range of theological approaches to communication, culture and society. (*Theology Pathway Only*) *Delivery: face to face*

TH7061 Media Ethics

This module will address some of the moral and legal dimensions of media and communication, with special emphasis on the impact of media on society. It will offer students some theological and ethical frameworks through which to analyse a number of issues, including representation of minorities, commercialism, freedom of speech and the use and abuse of new media. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

TH7067 Contemporary Religion: Shifting paradigms and patterns

This module will provide an immersion in social theory exploring the interaction between modernity and religion, with particular reference but not confined to Western Europe and North America. You will engage with some of the following: Influence of Modernity; Secularisation theory; Post-secular theories (inc. SBNR); Rise of fundamentalisms; Public face of religion; Globalisation; Religion and identity politics; Virtual religions.

You will engage with empirical data, and have the opportunity, but no obligation, to engage first-hand with a small qualitative or quantitative research project. You will develop a critical awareness of the changing significance of religion in the context of modernity and beyond. You will also identify

ways in which religion and spirituality have proven remarkably resilient, and may be mutating into new forms for emerging cultural contexts. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

TH7068 Key Texts in Christian Theological Ethics

This module consists of the study of a number of extracts of texts in Christian theological ethics, drawn from a variety of perspectives in Christian theology both contemporary and historical. The selection of texts is determined by the teaching staff and may change from year to year to reflect staff and student interests. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

TH7071 Academic Writing for Publication

This module focuses on the elements and stages involved in the production of a publishable piece of academic work capable of demonstrating a contribution to knowledge in relation to a chosen topic area. The module introduces participants to some of the protocols and procedures of academic publishing from start to finish as well as supporting you in drafting, revising and presenting your work. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

Religious Studies

TH7045 Advanced Theories in the Study of Religions

This core module is an exciting opportunity for students to develop their critical skills in the study of religion. The course is divided into four sections: (1) Hermeneutics (an exploration of the contribution of Heidegger, Ricoeur and Gadamer); (2) Postmodernism, post-structuralism and critical theory (an analysis of the post-modern condition with reference to Derrida, Foucault, Bourdieu, Baudrillard, Irigaray, Cixous, Lyotard, Vattimo, Žižek); (3) Phenomenology of religion (a discussion on the theories of Husserl, Van der Leuw and Eliade); (4) Alterity and the Other (an exploration of emic and etic perspectives in the study of religion through the works of Said, Levinas, Chakravorty-Spivak, Gramsci and de Martino). *(Religious Studies Only) Delivery: face to face*

TH7047 Advanced Research Methods in the Study of Religions

The purpose of this module is to provide students with the tools needed to study religions at an advanced level and to enable them to become initiated into the scholarly standards in their respective fields. An exploration is undertaken of the professional and ethical standards for undertaking research in field settings including discussions about confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent, briefing and debriefing, the right to withdraw, vulnerable groups, sensitive issues etc. Practical and empirical research methods are explored, including quantitative and qualitative research methods, sampling, interviewing, grounded research method, participant observation, case studies, focus groups, documentary making and mixed method approaches. Issues for research such as emic/etic perspectives, the significance of insider information, gendered discourses, questions of power and indigenous categories are explored. Students are introduced to the professional bodies and peer-reviewed literature associated with their fields. *(Religious Studies Only) Delivery: face to face*

TH7043 Urban Theology

The aim of this module is to examine and critically evaluate a range of theoretical and theological responses to the phenomenon of urbanization and urban living. This will be undertaken with particular reference to the changing context of the three major cities of the North-West England region (Chester, Liverpool and Manchester). The module will examine the emergence of modern urban theory and some of the most significant theological traditions of engagement with urbanization, before considering and evaluating various strategies of faith-based involvement in urban regeneration. Contemporary concepts such as mongrel and hybrid cities, the post-secular city, 'third space' thinking and urban theology will also be examined. *(Theology and Religious Studies Pathways)*

TH7026 Jews, Christians and Pagans (168BCE-132CE)

This module examines the beliefs and practices of Jews, Christians, and 'Pagans' between the Maccabean and Bar Kochba revolts. Beginning with the religion, culture, and politics of the Roman Empire, you will have opportunities to explore how communities of Jews and Christians organised themselves, examining issues where they demonstrate conformity and confrontation with wider cultural, political, social, and religion norms. The third section of the module looks specifically at the birth and development of Christianity, covering topics such as: the mission of Jesus; the 'parting of the ways' from Judaism; Paul's Gentile mission; sexual ethics; Church and State; ecclesiology; suffering, persecution, and martyrdom. *(Theology and Religious Studies Pathways)*

TH7061 Media Ethics

Media Ethics will consider some of the moral and legal dimensions of media and communication, with special emphasis on the impact of media on society. It will offer students some theological and ethical frameworks through which to analyse a number of issues, which may include sex and violence, representation of minorities, commercialism, freedom of speech and the use and abuse of new media. *(Theology and Religious Studies Pathways)*

TH7039 Spirituality and Contemporary Popular Culture

Interest in spirituality and popular culture has increased exponentially in recent times. Indeed, popular culture cannot be ignored in any attempt to comprehend the contemporary religious and spiritual landscape in which we find ourselves. What is the significance of the development of new media such as the Internet for religious traditions? How does popular culture influence religion and spirituality, and how do we evaluate such relationships? This module will equip students with the necessary tools to undertake analysis of the interface between cultures of everyday life and religion/spirituality. After focusing upon methodological approaches to this discipline, examination of some of the following areas will be undertaken: religion and spirituality in film; religious motifs in music; cyber-spirituality; apocalyptic ideas in popular culture; spirituality and celebrity culture. *(Theology and Religious Studies Pathways)*

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TH7040 Indigenous Religions

The module examines problems of 'indigenesness' through a close analysis of several indigenous cultures, their philosophies and religions and the identity assertion movements behind them. It will deal with definitions, categories and methodological issues in the study of indigenous religions using approaches from anthropology and religious studies. Case studies of indigenous religions and worldviews in specific geo-political contexts in different continents will be an important part of the module. Critical issues in the study of indigenous religions will be discussed, which may include an examination of concepts of religion, God and Spirit, issues of inculturation and contextualisation, the politics of representation and controversies regarding non-indigenous participation and appropriation of indigenous religions. *(Religious Studies Only)*

TH7054 TRS Conference Study

In order to be able to do this module, you must first negotiate with your programme leader which conference you will attend. Success in this module is highly dependent on your ability to work independently to construct a research question and respond to that question in an extended piece of work. It will involve you attending a conference event either in the department or externally and writing up a piece of work related to the theme of that conference. A supervisor will be appointed to work with you through the module. *(Theology and Religious Studies Pathways)*

TH7059 Contemporary Islam

This module traces the development of various trends in modern and contemporary Islam through movements and individuals, from pre-modernist reform movements such as Wahhabism, the recent

Islamic 'resurgence' up to contemporary forms of globalised Islam. The evolution of modern and contemporary Muslim political thought and attempts to establish Islamic states, as in Iran, Pakistan or Afghanistan, will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed on social and intellectual challenges faced by Muslims, such as the question of Islam and gender, the situation of Muslims living in the West and the relationship between Islam and democracy. (*Religious Studies Only*)

TH7067 Contemporary Religion: Shifting Paradigms and Patterns

This module introduces you to advanced studies on a variety of contemporary issues that impact religion today. The module explores key areas of social theory which provides the theoretical tools for analysis of the shifting patterns in religion and religious belief in the context of western society. Concepts such as modernisation and globalisation are examined along with theories of secularisation and notions of the post-secular. There is a focus on religion in relation to the public square, politics and identity, as well as an examination of the way technology has been utilised, adopted and adapted by some religious groups. The module also equips students with the tools to undertake data analysis, with particular attention paid to interpreting survey data. By the end of the module you will be suitably equipped to better understand the problems and developments faced by religions amid the complexities of such sociological, political and cultural shifts in the 21st century. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)

TH7071 Academic Writing for Publication

This module focuses on the elements and stages involved in the production of a publishable piece of academic work capable of demonstrating a contribution to knowledge in relation to a chosen topic area. The module introduces participants to some of the protocols and procedures of academic publishing from start to finish as well as supporting you in drafting, revising and presenting your work. (*Theology and Religious Studies Pathways*)