HDB(16)89_G

Humanities Divisional Board

Title of Programme

Master of Studies in the Study of Religion

Brief note about nature of change:

Correction to 'for first examination from' date

Effective date

For students starting from MT 2016

For first examination from 2016-17

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations* online, Master of Studies in the Study of Religions (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/mosistudofreli/)

Detail of change

1.1 1. Each candidate will be required to follow a course of instruction for three terms and present himself or herself for examination in three subjects as set out in the syllabus.

1.2 2. A 10,000-15,000 word dissertation must be offered. All candidates must normally make a written application for approval of the topic no later than Monday of noughth week of Hilary Term. The application should be submitted to the Faculty of Theology and Religion for consideration by the Theology and Religion Graduate Studies Committee. In cases where there is some uncertainty about the acceptability of the proposal, candidates are asked to submit their applications earlier if possible. All applications should be accompanied by a recommendation from the candidate's supervisor. Two copies of the dissertation must be sent to the Chair of Examiners for the Degree of M.St in the Study of Religions, c/o the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford before the end of eighth week of Trinity Term in the year of examination.

1.3 Titles for the two shorter essays must normally be submitted to the Faculty of Theology and Religion no later than Monday of noughth week of Hilary Term for consideration by the Graduate Studies Committee. Two copies of the essays must be submitted to the Examination Schools by the Friday before the beginning of Trinity Term in the year in which the examination

is taken. Decisions on the suitability of titles for both dissertation and essays will be taken in consultation with the Chair of Examiners for that year.

1.4 The three-hour examination will be held in tenth or eleventh week of Trinity Term.

1.5 3. Each candidate will be required to present himself or herself for an oral (viva voce) examination unless individually dispensed by the examiners. This will take place within a few days of the written examination, and may include discussion of both the examination paper and any pre-submitted work.

1.6 4. The examiners may award a distinction to candidates who have performed with special merit in the whole examination.

1.7 5. A candidate who fails the examination will be permitted to retake it on one further occasion only, not later than one year after the initial attempt. Such a candidate whose 10,000-15,000 word essay has been of satisfactory standard may resubmit the same piece of work, while a candidate who had reached a satisfactory standard on the written papers will not be required to retake that part of the examination.

1.8 *Syllabus*

1.9 Candidates must offer the paper on the Nature of Religion, which is comprised of the following two elements: Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion and Themes in the Interaction between Religions, and two papers selected from papers on the major texts and doctrines of (*a*) Buddhism, (*b*) Christianity, (*c*) Islam, (*d*) Judaism, or (*e*) Hinduism, or (*f*) any other paper that may from time to time be approved by the Board of the Faculty of Theology and Religion.

1.10 The ~~paper on one of the~~ candidate's two chosen religions will be examined by two papers, of which one will consist of two essays of up to 5,000 words and one will consist of a dissertation of 10,000–15,000 words. Between them, essays and dissertations must deal with the two chosen religions. Essays and dissertations on the interactions, relations or comparisons between two religions, or approaches taken from one view towards others, are also ~~welcomed,~~ encouraged, with the proviso that ~~so long as they do not~~ there is no overlap between essays and dissertation ~~with work done for any other elements of this degree~~. Decisions on the suitability of titles for both dissertation and essays will be taken in consultation with the Chair of Examiners for that year.

~~1.11 The paper on the other religion will consist of two essays of up to 5,000 words.~~

1.12 Candidates will not normally be allowed to substitute a long essay or two short essays for the paper on The Nature of Religion (Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion and Themes in the Interaction between Religions). Any candidate who believes that he or she has special grounds for seeking a dispensation must present a case to the Graduate Studies Committee, with the supervisor's approval, before the fifth week of Hilary Term.

1.13 *The Nature of Religion, consisting of Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion and Themes in the Interaction between Religions*

1.14 ~~This~~ The first part of this paper 'Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion' will require that students demonstrate an advanced understanding of the main classical and contemporary approaches to the study of religions. It will cover the work of some of the most important scholars in the field, and consider the history of the field of the study of religion, through its methods and theories, over the 20th century up to the present. The paper will also assess the work of these theoretical and methodological approaches as they influence our understanding of contemporary religious developments in the modern world.

The second part of this paper, 'Themes in the Interaction between Religions' will require that students demonstrate an advanced understanding of different ways in which religions interact with each other. The paper will explore various themes touching on interactions between religions including the role of inter-religious disputations in the way religions define themselves and the religious other.

1.15 (*a*) *Buddhism*

1.16 The paper will require that students investigate the fundamental aspects of Buddhist thought, mainly as reflected by early Buddhist teaching. It will also explore the ways in which Buddhism has changed during the course of its history, adapting to diverse cultural contexts in the pre-modern and modern world.

1.17 (*b*) *Christianity*

1.18 For this paper, students may study any aspect of Christian life or thought at any period of the Common Era and in any part of the world. Christianity is here understood to encompass groups and systems that are commonly deemed heterodox or heretical, together with those that are commonly regarded as offshoots of Christianity (e.g. Manichees, Latter-Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses). Topics may be historical, sociological or theological, but students taking theological texts as their principal subject are strongly encouraged to take account of the historical and social background.

1.19 (*c*) *Islam*

1.20 The paper is a broad investigation of the historical origins and development of the theology, law and mysticism of Islam, from the classical to the modern period. Specific topics will be established in consultation with students; possible subjects include: Prophethood of Muhammad; the Qur'an; the Hadith; Shi'ism; the theologies of the Mu'tazilis, Ash'aris, and Hanbalis; Islamic law (shari'a) and the Sunni schools of the Hanafis, Malikis, Shafi'is, and Hanbalis; Sufism (tasawwuf) and the major Sufi orders; Islam and other religions.

1.21 (*d*) *Judaism*

1.22 This paper will develop students' understanding of Judaism as the evolving religious expression of Jews, particularly examining how it has developed in the modern period. The core of the paper assumes that students develop a conceptual understanding of the thought and practice that underpin Judaism.

1.23 (*e*) *Hinduism*

1.24 This paper offers a thematic and historical approach to Hinduism. It will explore textual sources, categories, practices, and social institutions that formed Hindu traditions and consider seminal debates on caste, ritual, and politics. It will conclude with a consideration of Hinduism and modernity. The paper will approach the study of Hinduism through anthropological, Indological and theological methods.

Explanatory Notes

The date given for the first examination to which the change will be applicable was incorrect in the first publication of this notice.