

Humanities Divisional Board

Approved 10/723

Title of Programme/ Name of Regulation [if general]

Master of Studies in the Study of Religions

Brief note about nature of change: minor amendments to wording for clarity regarding gender neutrality, declaration of authorship, and about viva voce examination. Taking out description of the course's papers as they are in the course handbook.

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations 2022/23*

<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=molistudofreli&srchYear=2022&srchTerm=1&year=2022&term=1>

Effective date

For students starting from MT23

And

For first examination in 2023/24

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

1.2. A 10,000-15,000 word dissertation must be offered. The dissertation must be uploaded to the University approved online assessment platform by Friday of 8th week in Trinity Term in the year of examination. Each submission will require the candidate to make a declaration indicating that this is their own work.

1.3 Each essay must be uploaded to the University approved online assessment platform by the Friday of 0th week 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 Course Coordinator for that year. Each submission will require the candidate to make a declaration indicating that this is their own work.

1.43. Each candidate will be required to present himself or herself for an oral (viva voce) examination unless individually dispensed by the examiners. This may include discussion of both the examination paper and any pre-submitted work. Each candidate should be

prepared to present themselves for an oral (viva voce) examination. This may include discussions both of the examination papers and pre-submitted work.

(...)

^{1.8}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 only. Essays and dissertations on the interactions, relations or comparisons between the two religions, or approaches taken from one view towards others, are also encouraged, with the proviso that there is no overlap between essays and dissertation. ~~Decisions on the suitability of titles for both dissertation and essays will be taken in consultation with the Course Coordinator for that year.~~

^{1.9}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~~ they have 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.

~~^{1.10}*The Nature of Religion, consisting of Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion and Themes in the Interaction between Religions*~~

~~^{1.11}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.~~

~~^{1.12}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.~~

● ~~^{1.13}(a) *Buddhism*~~

~~^{1.14}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.~~

• ⁺¹⁵(b) *Christianity*

⁺¹⁶For 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.

• ⁺¹⁷(c) *Islam*

• ⁺¹⁸This paper offers students the opportunity either to gain a broad grounding in the historical origins and development of Islam, or to specialise in a chosen area of Islamic intellectual and socio-political history. On the classical period, topics may include: the Prophethood of Muhammad; the Qur'an; the Hadith; Shi'ism; Islamic theology (*kalam*); Islamic law (*shari'a*) and the Sunni schools; Sufism (*tasawwuf*) and the major Sufi orders; Islam and other religions. On developments in the modern period, topics may include: Islamic reformism (*al Nahda*); Wahhabism; Hadith controversies; Sufism and anti-Sufism; Jihad; Sunni-Shi'i sectarianism; Muslim majority-minority relations; Muslim discourse on feminism; and Muslim discourse on politics, state and democracy.

⁺¹⁹(d) *Judaism*

• ⁺²⁰This paper will develop students' understanding of Judaism as the evolving religious expression of Jews, providing scope for the study of the developments in different periods reflecting the range of expertise in the University. The core of the paper assumes that students develop a conceptual understanding of the thought and practice that underpin Judaism.

• ⁺²¹(e) *Hinduism*

• ⁺²²This 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

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