Undergraduate Degrees 2020

The place for
Religious Studies

lancaster.ac.uk/religion
In today’s world the detailed study of religion and all its complexity is critical for us all. Religion has become increasingly visible in society, manifested in debates around, for example; the wearing of veils in Islam, the legitimacy of homosexuality in Christianity, the place of atheism in the West, the nature of religious violence and terrorism, the relation of religion to politics, and the role of the media in shaping the public’s view of religion.

Lancaster was the very first university in the United Kingdom to offer a degree in Religious Studies, as opposed to Theology. Innovative and controversial at the time, students on this degree scheme studied all the major religions of the world in equal depth. They also employed the perspective of multiple disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, anthropology, theology; and textual and linguistic studies; to develop as full and rounded an understanding as possible of those religions themselves.

The Lancaster method of studying religion became a model for Religious Studies programmes across Britain and all around the world. Many of the world’s leading scholars of religion trained at Lancaster and still look to Lancaster as their intellectual home. For all of us, teachers and students alike, it is a privilege to be a part of this prestigious heritage, and we hope that you too will be interested in joining us.
IS RELIGIOUS STUDIES?

Learning about beliefs, values, practices and worldviews from around the globe

Understanding the complexities of world events today

Challenging assumptions about how religion is portrayed in the media and by politicians

Examining the relationship between religion, conflict, and violence

Studying multicultural Britain

Experiencing different cultures

Reading closely and critically the original sources of the world’s major religious traditions

Assessing the philosophical dimensions of religious traditions

Developing sensitivity to different perspectives

Thinking critically

#1
for student to staff ratio
Guardian University Guide 2020

You’ll take a global approach to your studies in Religion, studying less well-knowns religions, alongside those more familiar to you.

For information on fees, scholarships and any additional costs you might need to consider, please see our website: lancaster.ac.uk/study

## DEGREES AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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### Placement year degrees

You can take a placement year with most of our degree programmes. With specialist support and dedicated modules, you will apply for a professional, paid work placement in Year 3 and return to Lancaster to complete your degree in Year 4. Find out more: lancaster.ac.uk/placement-year

### Study abroad degrees

You can apply for a study abroad year when you arrive at Lancaster. On our 3-year study abroad degrees you spend Year 2 studying at one of our international partner universities. Find out more: lancaster.ac.uk/study-abroad

Test your knowledge with a question from our site: lancaster.ac.uk/religion
TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

You will be taught by staff with national and international reputations for both teaching and research. We have a low staff to student ratio, meaning you will learn in a friendly and collegial atmosphere. This is important, in that it will help to make your university experience both more enjoyable and more successful.

You will learn through a combination of lectures, small group seminars and independent study. The hours you will spend on these three elements will be roughly equivalent to a full time job but you should expect peaks in your workload around assignments or when preparing for exams.

Gold standard teaching
Lancaster University has been awarded the highest possible score in the UK government’s 2017 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) ratings. Our TEF Gold rating is based on high quality teaching, excellent teaching facilities and the good careers our graduates attain.

Assessment
There is assessed coursework and exams throughout all three years. For most modules, exams count for 60% of your mark, coursework for 40%. First year marks do not contribute to your final degree classification.

Specialisation in your third year
You will focus closely on areas that have been of particular interest to you over the course of your studies. You may choose to complete a dissertation on a subject of your choice; if you choose this option you will work closely with one of your tutors over two terms to produce your 10,000 word dissertation. (It may sound a lot of words, but often students find that they struggle to fit in all that they have to say.) There are also “special subject” modules, where you will work in small groups and focus on specific topics, texts or issues in religion with a member of academic staff.
DEGREES IN DEPTH

BA (HONS) RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND JOINT DEGREES WITH RELIGIOUS STUDIES/RELIGION

You will engage with the major religious traditions from around the world and the major approaches to studying religion; you will study religion in a variety of different cultural contexts and from a number of different perspectives, including sociological, anthropological, historical, textual, philosophical, psychological and theological.

You will examine religious traditions in modern and contemporary contexts, considering key issues such as gender and religion, violence and religion, or the media and religion.

Please note that we keep our degree programmes under constant review, and also regularly introduce new modules.

In any academic year, the list of modules offered and course structure may therefore differ from that presented here.

YEAR 1

Religions of the Modern World

Studying four of the world’s major religious traditions: Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam; you will explore the way they address life’s fundamental questions. This module will inform your choices about the direction you want to take in your second and third years.

Ethics, Philosophy and Religion

You will examine a range of core themes and perspectives, including western and Asian philosophical and religious ethics, the authorities upon which ethical standpoints are grounded, and the implications of evolution for religion and ethics.

Flexible Subject Option

You will be able to choose from a selection of recommended modules in other disciplines to complement your degree in Religious Studies. This could be one of the following departmental modules:

Introduction to Philosophy

Introduces you to a range of philosophical topics. You will consider knowledge and reality, freedom of the will, critical thinking, political philosophy and ethics.

Politics in the Modern World

You’ll explore key themes in the study of modern politics, and gain critical insight into the nature and use of political power in the contemporary world.

International Relations: Theory and Practice

Introduces you to central aspects of the discipline of international relations, providing a firm grounding in the major concepts and debates necessary to understand the modern world of international politics.

Joint degrees students will take a combination of modules covering both subjects.

YEAR 2

In your second year, you will study 6 - 8 Religious Studies modules. You may choose to complement your studies with two modules from Politics, International Relations, or Philosophy.

Religious Studies optional modules (90 credits)

Optional modules in Politics, International Relations, Philosophy or Religious Studies (30 credits)

Year 2 Optional Modules (15 credits)

Buddhism and Modernity in Asian Societies

You will develop knowledge and understanding of the important issues, concepts, debates, and approaches regarding Buddhism and modernity in Asian countries. You will consider the historical, social, political, and economic factors that have influenced the development of Buddhism in respective societies.

Christianity in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations

You will survey and critically examine the main themes, concepts, debates and approaches to the study of Christianity. You will develop an analytical and interpretive framework to understand competing Christian traditions and theologies in a historical context.

Religion in Society: Theories and Methods

You will critically examine the main themes, concepts, debates and approaches to the study of religion; you will study religion in a variety of different cultural contexts and from a number of different perspectives, including sociological, anthropological, historical, textual, philosophical, psychological and theological.

You will critically examine the theoretical frameworks, methods, and approaches used to study religion sociologically. You will develop sociologically informed questions about religion that can serve as a basis for further enquiry; this will be particularly helpful if you choose to conduct your own field research in a dissertation module in Year 3.

Islam: Tradition, Community and Contemporary Challenges

You will examine the historical formation of Islam; its renewal movements past and present; and modern reform discourses on gender, politics, and law. You will gain an understanding of continuities and discontinuities in the Islamic tradition in relation to religious authority, theology, politics, and contemporary practice.

Constructing Christian Ethics and Politics

You will explore the emergence and construction of ethics within the context of two world religions: Christianity and Islam. You will examine the ways in which religious attitudes to ethical concern and practice are influenced by traditional, textual and cultural factors.

Hinduism in the Modern World

You will critically examine the main themes, key concepts, debates and approaches to the study of Hinduism, paying particular attention to Hinduism in the modern world and to Hinduism’s relationship with other religions of South Asia since the 19th century.

Indian Philosophical and Religious Thought

This module is a study of fundamental ideas and texts of the classical philosophical and religious traditions of India. The topics covered will include the origins and nature of inquiry and the evolution of a tradition of epistemology, debates about the nature and existence of the self, questions about the nature of ethics and ethical dilemmas, competing theories of the nature of reality, and the existence and nature of the divine.

Gender and Religion

This module looks at the textual traditions of Hinduism and Islam (together with some aspects of Christianity) and their intersection with social, political and ideological conditions today. Questions about the nature, salience and consequences of gender have now become central to social debates. The politics of gender, however, is deeply influenced by cultural forms and the religious sources that inform them even in apparently secular contexts.

The Politics of Race

In this module, we critically examine the notion of race, and its connection to the politics of ethnicity, religious identity, and class. We examine the role race has played, and continues to play, in the determination of domestic and international politics.
YOU WILL SELECT RELIGIOUS STUDIES OPTIONAL MODULES AND COMBINE THESE WITH A DISSERTATION, SECOND YEAR MODULES NOT PREVIOUSLY TAKEN, OR MODULES IN ANOTHER SUBJECT.

Religious Studies  
Optional modules in Politics, Philosophy, International Relations, or Religious Studies

**Year 3 Optional Modules (15 credits)**

- **New Religions and Alternative Spiritualities**
  This module examines the emergence of new religions and spiritualities that have significantly changed the religious landscape in the West over the last hundred years. You will analyse established organisations (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses) or contemporary developments (e.g., UFO religions), and be introduced to a number of theoretical perspectives and issues, such as violence, millennialism, gender, and charismatic leadership.

- **Modern Religious and Atheistic Thought**
  You will evaluate some of the central issues in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment Western religious and atheistic philosophical debates. You will study the philosophy of G W F Hegel, post-Hegelian 'masters of suspicion': Feuerbach, Marx, Freud and Nietzsche, 'Christian atheism' and postmodern critiques of modern atheism and the 'return of religion'.

- **Religion and Violence**
  This module explores theories and perspectives on the relationship between religion and violence. You will refer to empirical data and case studies, in which religious movements and individuals have been involved in violent activities, as well as examining cases where acts of immense violence (including genocide) have occurred in what appear to be political contexts, but where religious rhetoric may have been used by the perpetrators of violence.

- **Indian Politics, Society and Religion**
  You will learn about the interplay between politics, society and religion in the world’s largest democracy, India. At a time when India is emerging as a global power and economic powerhouse despite persistent poverty and various socio-political fissures, a critical balance must be struck in our understanding between its potential and its problems.

- **Media, Religion and Politics**
  This module takes a case study approach to contemporary issues in media, religion and politics from around the globe. Media will be broadly defined to include Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, tabloids, feature films, documentaries, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc. You will study topics, such as: US President Trump’s evangelical council; Brazilian President Bolsonaro’s campaign; Boko Haram and ‘the Chibok girls’; ISIS on Twitter; witchcraft and the ‘Thames torso boy’; Ugandan anti-homosexuality campaigns; zombies; Nollywood.

- **Reading Buddhism**
  You will examine the Buddhist scriptures in the Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions. You will read extracts of the Buddhist texts in English, gaining an understanding of the key concepts alongside changes in doctrinal emphasis, and variations in interpretation in the historical development of Buddhism.

- **Special Subject: Constructing Ethics in Islam: Shari’a, Society and Contemporary Challenges**
  This module offers an in-depth introduction to Islamic law (Shari’a), a central component of the Islamic tradition. It will explore the Islamic legal tradition past and present by looking at its history, theory and contemporary practice in light of key themes such as Jihad and War; Sex and Marriage; Rights and Law; and Politics and Governance.

- **Religion and Politics**
  This module will take a historical and cross-cultural approach to examining the relationship between religion and politics. Firstly, we will look at primary sources from the ancient world, such as Plato’s Republic, the Analects of Confucius, the inscription of Ashoka, and the Laws of Manu. Then, we will look at contemporary debates about secularism, multiculturalism, and pluralism taking place throughout the world today.
BA (HONS) ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

You will develop the knowledge, academic techniques, and skills to approach the fundamental questions about the meaning of life and the human condition with confidence and consider what is at stake in ethical reasoning. You will assess practical ethical standpoints, offer criticism of them and develop your own independent views.

YEAR 1

- Ethics, Philosophy and Religion
- Religions of the Modern World
- Introduction to Philosophy

YEAR 2

- Moral Philosophy
- Constructing Ethics in Christianity and Islam
- Ethics, Philosophy and Religion optional modules (Year 2)

YEAR 3

- Ethics, Philosophy and Religion optional modules (Year 3)
- Aesthetics
- Darwinism and Philosophy
- New Religions and Alternative Spiritualities
- Religion and Violence
- Media, Religion and Politics
- The Ethics of Belief and Ignorance
- The Imagination
- Constructing Ethics in Islam: Shari’a, Society and Contemporary Challenges
- Islamic Politics
- Feminist Philosophy
- Continental Philosophy
- Logic and Language
- Modern Religious and Atheistic Thought
- Indian Politics, Society and Religion
- Reading Buddhism
- Religion and Politics

lancaster.ac.uk/religion
GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

Lancaster is a truly international university, with students and staff from over 100 different countries and 144 partner institutions around the world. Your global experience is about living and learning with people from different cultures whether through your course, your college or your Students’ Union.

Study Abroad
Grow in independence and confidence while immersing yourself in a new culture and way of learning. At Lancaster, you have the opportunity to study abroad for the whole of your second year, providing a unique experience to add to your CV. Our current partner universities are located in Canada and the USA. You register your interest and apply for your preferred destination once you arrive at Lancaster. Living in another country and studying your subjects from a different perspective offers considerable benefit both in terms of your understanding of the subject and your preparation for life after university.

Vacation Travel
Discover a new world during the Easter and Summer vacations. Travel with fellow Lancaster students to destinations such as China, India and Malaysia on trips that have elements of academic and cultural discovery. You may also be able to conduct dissertation research as part of your trip, giving you new perspectives on global religions.

Find out more: lancaster.ac.uk/your-global-experience

PLACEMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS

Throughout your degree, we will support you in developing skills and gaining experience that will give you a head start in your chosen career. You can also integrate work experience into your academic studies, with the Active Research dissertation module which involves an element of field studies or external collaboration.

Placements and internships are great ways to gain work experience, make professional contacts and help you decide your career path. A wide range of opportunities is available, and some (such as placement modules) provide credit towards your degree. There is a competitive process to apply for these opportunities so they are not guaranteed; however, we will help you to prepare for this process, which in itself is excellent experience to gain. Voluntary activities are another great way to build work experience and make a positive impact on the world around you.

Placement Year degrees
9 months to a year of paid, professional work experience which takes place in your third year, after which you return to the University in your fourth year, to complete your studies. Lancaster University students have worked with companies as diverse as Johnson + Johnson, Warner Bros, Microsoft, Marks & Spencer, and Walt Disney.

Faculty Internships
Faculty internships are typically four to six week placements, which are available in the summer vacation or on a part-time basis during term time. They provide work experience in small and medium sized businesses, as well as third sector and not-for-profit organisations. Past employers have included Carnegie Publishing, The Dukes Theatre, and the Ethical Consumer Research Association, with roles ranging from marketing and PR to specific research projects with heritage or humanitarian organisations.

The Richardson Institute Internships Programme
The Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion is home to the Richardson Institute, which undertakes cutting-edge research in peace and conflict. Each year the Institute offers over 60 internships to undergraduate and postgraduate students to undertake research projects for external organisations. Research themes include religion and borders, and religion and conflict situations.
CAREERS

The Department offers all students the opportunity to develop their skills and experience with a range of different employment paths in mind. You will be allocated an academic tutor, who will offer you regular one-to-one guidance on developing and recording the transferable skills and experience that will make you highly employable after your degree. We regularly hold career guidance workshops specifically geared to students of each of our core subjects.

Data from the most recent Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey from 2015-2016, shows that careers of our recent graduates include, teaching, further study, business, and hospital administration.

Lancaster Award

The Lancaster Award rewards you for taking part in extra-curricular activities that supplement the excellent education you receive at Lancaster University. Developed in partnership with employers, it is a certificate that recognises the new skills and experiences that you have developed outside your academic education during your time at Lancaster. The Lancaster Award enhances your future employment prospects by recognising the valued skills you have gained through work experience, volunteering and other extra-curricular engagement.

Lancaster University Careers Service

The University Careers Service has connections with some of the world’s top graduate recruiters, high growth businesses and employers across every sector, and organises careers fairs, workshops, and networking opportunities throughout the year. You can be matched with an employer or a previous graduate for one-to-one advice and take part in a range of workshops such as writing a brilliant CV, developing a LinkedIn profile or succeeding at psychometric testing. We have a vast range of online resources as well as an exclusive job search portal. With this array of options it can be confusing to know where to start, but our team of friendly, experienced careers professionals are always on hand to help and advise: www.lancaster.ac.uk/careers

“...The Richardson Institute internship was a challenging and stimulating project that gave me an opportunity to pursue an area of research that I wouldn’t have considered exploring as part of my undergraduate Religious Studies degree. It made me aware of new opportunities to work with NGOs and broadened my scope of interest when considering my options for careers and further study, as well as giving me the confidence to explore topics that I initially thought to be outside of my comfort zone."

Mackenzie Latham
BA (Hons) Religious Studies
The University makes all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information in this booklet is correct at the time of printing (June 2019). Please see www.lancaster.ac.uk/compliance/legalnotice for further information.

Theology and Religious Studies at Lancaster is joint 8th for Graduate Prospects (Complete University Guide 2020)

lancaster.ac.uk/religion