

Programme Specification

HEYTHROP COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Programme Specification

1. Title: MA in Abrahamic Religions	
2. Awarding institution	University of London
3. Teaching institution	Heythrop College University of London
4. Final Award	MA
5. Interim Awards (if applicable)	PG Diploma – To receive a postgraduate diploma students must complete four taught modules.
6. Mode(s) of study	Part-time and full-time
7. Normal duration of Programme	12-24 months
8.	
9. External reference points used to develop this programme	QAA documents: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, <i>Master's degree characteristics</i> (Sep. 2009), <i>Higher education credit framework for England: guidance on higher education credit arrangements in England</i> , and <i>qualifications and Guidelines for preparing programme specifications</i> At present there is no benchmark statement for level 7 (theology and religious studies)
10. Date of production or revision of this specification	June 2013
11. Programme Convenor	Ahmad Achtar
12. Brief description of this programme	
<p>The programme is distinguished by its focus on the contemporary religious thought of the three Abrahamic Religions especially their theological responses to the challenge of modernity and their engagement with each other. It examines the theoretical encounter with modernity and the various issues - political, philosophical and theological - which arise for these religions as a result of such an encounter. Among the issues that will be examined are: philosophical and theological discourses, contemporary interpretation of scripture & scriptural reasoning, morality and law, contemporary spirituality, politics and secularisation, gender relations, fundamentalism, interfaith engagement & related documents (such as <i>Nostra Aetate</i> and Common word) and religious pluralism. Thus, the programme will enable the participants to acquire a solid academic background in the contemporary trends within the three religions and will prepare them to engage in inter-faith dialogue. Furthermore, the degree will be taught by members of the three faiths, thus giving an insider account of each faith. Academic rigour will be central but this degree will also foster a sense of empathy and understanding of the traditions and the extent to which closer dialogue between them is possible.</p> <p>Another distinctive feature of the programme is the first core module on "Religion and the Religions in the Modern World". This module will deepen students' understanding of the basic challenges facing religions in the modern world. It will uncover the religious origins of modernity that have profoundly shaped the modern world and it will also consider issues arising out of the modernity/post-modernity/multiple-modernities debates that touch upon how religions can understand their presence in the modern world; outline the challenges at epistemological, hermeneutical, and sociological levels to religious belief and practice; provide students with the capacity of identifying different intellectual approaches</p>	

to religion and the challenges that religion faces in the contemporary world, thus preparing the ground for other modules which examine how individual Abrahamic religions respond to the challenges of modernity, and the theological discourses and practices about selected issues that emerge in the contemporary period such as interpretation of scripture, God, revelation, religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue, feminism, atheism, secularisation and scriptural reasoning.

The Programme is suitable for teachers, religious ministers, Imams, Rabbis, community leaders, civil servants and all those who are interested in Abrahamic religions and inter-faith dialogue.

13. Relationship to staff research

The programme is deeply informed by staff research. Indeed, those who contributed to the development of this programme are actively engaged in research activities on one or more area of studies of the contemporary theological thought. This can be seen from their research outputs in the college website. Furthermore, the role of religion especially Abrahamic religions in the modern world is a very active research area and this can be demonstrated by the amount of monographs and journal papers written on the subject.

14. Programme Aims

The programme aims to

- To provide an opportunity for students to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of the various challenges facing religion in the modern world and the theological discourses of the three Abrahamic religions in their encounter with modernity and each other
- To foster critical awareness of contemporary thought in the three Abrahamic religions in the areas of theology and scriptural interpretation, focusing on current issues and developments in the subject, and informed by current scholarship and research.
- To provide training in research in an appropriate field of the student's own choice thus preparing them for the next stage in their careers, whether that is further academic study (MPhil/PhD) or entering employment in either subject related or generalist environments
- To help students develop a wide range of intellectual abilities and skills which will enable them to make a significant contribution in their chosen careers and walks of life

15. Learning outcomes

The Programme provides opportunities for students to achieve and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the programme, competent and diligent students can expect to attain the following:

LO1	A deep understanding of the various challenges facing Abrahamic religions in the modern world and in their interactions with each other.		
LO2	Skilful handling of a wide range of concepts, theories and methods in the contemporary discourse of modernity.		
LO3	A critical awareness of the various ways in which religion have contributed to the shaping of the modern world.		
LO4	A deep understanding of the contemporary trends in Abrahamic religions		
LO5	Advanced and specialised knowledge of some fundamental issues in Abrahamic religions (especially in the areas of theology and contemporary interpretation of scripture) and literatures at the forefront of research on these issues.		
LO6	An ability to apply, with insight, general principles of theory and method in particular situations		
LO7	An ability to carry out personal research and produce formal written work within the subject area		
Cognitive Skills			
The <i>cognitive skills</i> which are fostered are:			
LO8	The ability to analyse and synthesise complex key concepts and theories		
LO9	The ability to identify, gather and analyse material from a wide range of sources to inform research.		
LO10	The ability to make sound judgments in the absence of complete data.		
Practical and transferable skills			
LO11	Effective use of Communication and Information Technology (CIT).		
LO12	The ability to work collaboratively with others, both learning from them and contributing to their learning		
LO13	The ability to use clear and cogent language in various kinds of written and oral presentations.		
LO14	The ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks autonomously with an appreciation of the range of strategies available.		
LO15	The ability to reflect critically upon the student's own experiences of learning.		
16. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE			
Module Title	Code	Level	Credit tariff
Compulsory Core Module:			
Understanding Religion in the Age of Modernity (Year 1)	CIR403	7	30
Contemporary Judaism (Year 2)	ABR 402	7	30
Central Themes in Modern Christian Theology	CTH412	7	30
Unity and Diversity in Contemporary Islamic Thought	ABR 404	7	30
Dissertation	ABR 599	7	60
The topic of the Dissertation is chosen by the student, subject to approval by the supervisor.			
<i>Click on the module title for more detail of the module</i>			

17. Admissions requirements

An honours degree (normally 2.1 or above) or equivalent, in an appropriate subject. Applicants whose first language is not English should have an IELTS score of 7.

18. Indicative Learning and Teaching activities

- Lectures
- Seminars enabling group work and group discussions around topics or scriptural texts
- Individual or small group academic tutorial
- Individual learning
- Group activity
- Scriptural reasoning sessions
- Guest speakers and visits to places of worship
- Interfaith engagement: workshops, seminars...,etc.
- Use of audio-visual materials.
- Directed and increasingly independent reading and investigation for seminars, presentations, essays and other written work.

19. Skills development opportunities

In addition to subject related skills and personal skills such as organization and time management, the following transferable skills are addressed in the programme.

20. Assessment activities

Each module is assessed by a combination of coursework tasks completed during or shortly after the period of module teaching, and an end-of-year essay. The pass mark for each module is 50%.

Coursework assessment tasks (essays, book review, projects, group work, oral presentations) and dissertation

Each taught module is assessed by

Coursework (40%) Two tasks each one worth 20%

and

End of year essay (60%)

Generally speaking essay titles and assessment activities will, where appropriate, require topics to be addressed across more than one faith. In taught modules one of the coursework assessments will be based around an experiential topic relating to interfaith activities and the dissertation will have to address a question with reference to at least two of the Abrahamic religions.

21. Support for students and their learning

- Tutorials contribute to deepening and widening understanding.
- Supervision sessions based on work in progress
- Tutorial and supervision discussion of how arguments are presented and sources used.
- Seminars foster links between different areas of study and experience, and application of theoretical principles to particular situations.

22. Student evaluation opportunities

- Formal module evaluation
- Informal feedback to tutors
- College wide evaluations
- External surveys

23. Indicative time commitments

Each module usually involves a weekly 2-hour seminar for one term, with the exception of a reading week in the middle of the term. There are therefore normally 11x2 class hours.

Student effort hours which are not spent in classes or tutorials are used for directed personal study – e.g. preparing for seminars, and some coursework tasks – and self-directed work – e.g. wider reading, some coursework tasks, the dissertation, and preparing for examinations.

24. Opportunities for graduates of this programme

MA graduates go into a wide range of careers, including academic research (MPhil/PhD) and teaching, the civil service, the public sector, personnel work, media, business and management.