

HEYTHROP COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Programme Specification

1. Title: MA Psychology of Religion	
2. Awarding institution	University of London
3. Teaching institution	Heythrop College, University of London
4. Final Award	MA Psychology of Religion
5. Interim Awards (if applicable)	Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology of Religion Postgraduate Certificate in Psychology of Religion
6. Mode(s) of study	Full time and part-time
7. Normal duration of Programme	One year full-time, two years part-time
8.	
9. External reference points used to develop this programme	The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2008
10. Date of production or revision of this specification	Updated May 2013
11. Programme Convenor	Prof Rachel Blass
<p>12. Brief description of this programme</p> <p>The programme introduces the major areas, approaches and methods of study and research in the field of psychology of religion, enriches the understanding of the relationship between theological and psychological considerations (theoretically, practically, and personally) and provides firm foundations for future work and development in the field.</p> <p>The programme facilitates the development of conceptual tools and investigative skills necessary for psychological insight into the processes and meanings of religious experience, belief and behaviour in the lives of individuals and groups;</p> <p>While there may be variation, it is usually based on four main modules. Students may develop specialization in specific topics of interest within the context of these modules, the written assignments and the dissertation.</p> <p>The four modules are:</p> <p>(1) Psychology and Religion: Here the students explore the major historical and theoretical approaches to the understanding of belief and practice (e.g. Freudian, Jungian, humanistic, phenomenological, behaviourist approaches). The students read original texts and are helped to analyze them, develop critical reflection on them and understand how they influence contemporary thinking</p> <p>(2) Psychological Perspectives on Religious Development critically examines psychological and religious approaches to the evolution of religious faith and practice in the course of the life-cycle, (e.g. in childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age).</p> <p>(3) Scientific Study of Religion looks at main areas of research (e.g. mystical experience, conversion, fundamentalism, and the effects of faith on well-being), as well as main methods of research (e.g. various forms of empirical and hermeneutical inquiry). Students are taught how to read research articles, apply a research approach to the topics that interest them and to think critically about what is and can be known from experience,</p> <p>(4) Mental Health, Religion and Culture considers the cultural context of religious beliefs and the implications of culture and behaviour on mental health and illness.</p> <p>In the context of these studies one often encounters questions regarding the role of nature vs nurture, the impact of specific religious traditions, the role of theory vs clinical or other empirical findings, the value and limits of psychological understanding, and the possibilities of applying psychological understanding to clinical and personal contexts having to do with religious belief and practice..</p> <p>The programme is intended to be of interest to a wide group of people: psychologists, teachers of religious education, nurses and mental health professionals, palliative and pastoral care workers, parish counsellors, pastoral assistants, priests and ministers of religion. An academic background in psychology, religion or theology is useful, but not necessary and prior knowledge in these areas is not</p>	

assumed.

13. Relationship to staff research

The staff are active researchers within the disciplines in which they teach and the modules reflect their research interests.

14. Programme Aims

The programmes aim to:

1. To provide a foundation in Psychology of Religion by introducing students to a range of different psychological approaches to the study of religion;
2. To appreciate some aspects of the history of the field and how that history has influenced contemporary approaches to research;
3. To provide the conceptual tools necessary for psychological insight into the processes and meanings of religious experience, belief and behaviour in the lives of individuals and groups;
4. To enable students to develop a critical and evaluative understanding of different approaches to the psychological study of religion;
5. To develop a capacity to present a detailed study of particular topics within the field;
6. To develop a perspective on issues within the field of psychology of religion and to undertake research at an appropriate level.

15. Learning outcomes

The **MA Psychology of Religion (Level 7)** 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	An appreciation of some aspects of the history of the discipline and how that history has influenced contemporary approaches in research;
LO2	A critical and evaluative grasp of a representative range of contemporary approaches and issues in the psychology of religion;
LO3	A demonstrably competent knowledge of critical areas/issues in psychology of religion;
LO4	A clear understanding of the relevance and contribution of psychology of religion in contemporary society;
LO5	The capacity to undertake research in the psychology of religion, to develop an argument within the discipline at a mature level and produce formal written work within the subject area.

Intellectual and Cognitive Skills

A student will be able to:

LO6	Analyse and synthesise complex key concepts and theories
LO7	Apply, with insight, general principles of theory and method in particular situations;
LO8	Identify, gather and analyse material from a wide range of sources to inform research.
LO9	Make sound judgements on the basis of material arising from research.

Practical and transferable skills

The *practical and transferable skills* which are fostered are:

LO10	The capacity for independent thought and the ability to present ideas verbally and in writing;
LO11	The ability to use bibliographical resources and conduct research, including 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 act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with an understanding and appreciation of the range of strategies and resources available;
LO14	The ability to reflect critically upon one's own experiences of learning.

16. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Module Title	Code	Level	Credit tariff
Psychology and Religion (core module)	PSY410	7	30
Psychological Perspectives on Religious Development	PSY502	7	30
Mental Health, Religion and Culture	PSY503	7	30
Scientific Study of Religion	PSY511	7	30
Dissertation	PSY599	7	60
<i>The topic of the dissertation is chosen by the student, subject to approval by the supervisor.</i>			

17. Admissions requirements

An honours degree, (normally 2.1 or above) or equivalent, references, interview and writing sample

For mature students, academic ability to undertake the programme may be considered on the basis of other evidence, including evidence of prior study or work at an appropriate level.

Applicants whose first language is not English should have an IELTS score of 7.0 or equivalent.

18. Indicative Learning and Teaching activities

May include:

Lectures, seminars (which may involve group work and discussion), individual or small group academic tutorials, individual learning, research and study, use of film or other audio visual aids, guest speakers.

19. Assessment strategy and indicative activities

Assessment applies to two courseworks and one essay for each module and an MA dissertation.

The coursework assignments usually are essays, but on occasion are class presentations. The assignments may include book and article reviews, research plans and reports, weekly commentary on readings or brief expositions of selected topics. They are structured to allow students to demonstrate that they have acquired appropriate knowledge and understanding. Transferable and organizational skills are assessed by examining the way that students pursue original thoughts and ideas, question opinions, and structure arguments. There are learning outcomes for each level of the programme, and assessment criteria at each level indicate the level at which these skills have been achieved.

The end of year essays and dissertation involve longer and more comprehensive scholarly study and research.

Students submit all written work through the Virtual Learning Environment (Helios) and receive detailed on-line feedback and may also receive oral feedback in a tutorial.

All coursework is moderated in accordance with College published procedures. All end-of-year essays and dissertations are blind double marked and a selection of essays/script is sent to the external examiner.

20. Support for students and their learning

Students can access a range of support mechanisms that the college offers. The Student Development Manager can provide personal and academic support, including help with study skills and access to a range of student welfare provision, either in College or through the University of London. Support and guidance on academic matters is available from module convenors and programme convenors and also from the Heythrop Students' Union. For the dissertations the students are assigned supervisors who offer guidance throughout the year on relevant aspects of this task.

21. Student evaluation opportunities

Students have a range of opportunities, both formal and informal, to evaluate their learning experiences. Informal means includes consulting individual members of staff, including their module leader, programme convenor or staff in the Student Services Centre. It is possible to turn for help to the Heythrop Students' Union who can also raise issues with the College on behalf of individuals or groups of students. Formal module evaluations are carried out. Taught postgraduate and research students have termly meetings to provide feedback to staff. Occasional consultations and evaluation

exercises provide insights on aspects of the student experience, and the College participates in external surveys such as the NSS, PRES and PTES.

22. 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 11 x 2 class hours.

Student effort hours which are not spent in classes include tutorials and directed personal study (e.g. preparing for seminars, and coursework tasks) and long term study (e.g. wider reading, preparing for dissertation and end of year essays).

23. Opportunities for graduates of this programme

Some graduates go on to doctoral studies in the field or related ones. Others use the skills and knowledge gained in the programme in their present professional work or take on new professional roles (e.g. in the areas of health or education) .

The degree does not provide qualifications to practice psychology, but can enrich the work of those already qualified.