

## Professor Heather Widdows introduces the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion

Title: **Professor Heather Widdows introduces the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion** (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urhGzu4RfiQ>)

Duration: 3.45 mins

Hello I'm Heather Widdows, I'm Professor of Global Ethics, and currently deputy director of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, and I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the post-graduate programmes offered by the the School of Philosophy Theology and Religion. We run a large suite of Post-Graduate programmes – both taught masters and doctoral programmes as well as more unusual programmes which have elements of both (such as the MRes programmes and the doctorate in practical theology). We offer both standard programmes such as the MA in Philosophy, as well as programmes which are unique to Birmingham, such as the masters programmes in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, in Pentecostal and Charismatic studies, in Health and Happiness and in global ethics.

Our masters programmes, especially those which are unique to Birmingham, have been tailored to make the most of the substantive expertise of the academics in the School and to meet emerging and important current areas of interest and development. For instance the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics programme is designed to appeal to those who have vocational commitments – for instance to teaching or policy work – as well as to those who wish to simply expand and deepen their academic knowledge. Likewise the Health and Happiness programme appeals to those who have an interest in health (for instance, health practitioners) as well as policy makers and, particularly given the current emphasis being placed by the government on measuring happiness, on those in governance circles.

These examples show the exciting and timely nature of the programmes we are running at Birmingham and this dynamism is echoed in our student body. We have an exceptionally vibrant research community – and our post graduate students are integrated into the wider research community of the School. Our programmes are multi-disciplinary intake and students come from all kinds of backgrounds - from the humanities, the social sciences and the sciences – and they have different work and life histories, for instance, we have students who have just finished their undergraduate degrees, students who have worked in policy making or activist fields and are returning to study after a long break, as well as those who are studying part time as professional development and continuing to work (particularly teachers and medical professionals). As well as being part of the cohort of a specific programme as a Post graduate student in the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion you will also be part of our wider research community – you will be able to participate in both staff and post-graduate seminars and therefore will present your own work as well as meeting world class scholars. You will also be part of the wider community of post graduates at Birmingham University and able to draw on the vast resources of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.

We also have a vibrant community of Doctoral Researchers who span the spectrum of research in philosophy, theology and religion. We have leading international scholars in the School who are fully involved in supervising students, for instance, students work on metaphysical topics with Helen Beebee, on philosophy of language and meta-ethics with Alex Miller, and in my own areas of Applied ethics, global ethics, and bioethics with myself and the rest of the ethics team at Birmingham (which includes Iain Law and Lisa Bortolotti). There are also key research clusters in Philosophy of Religion (where key thinkers are Yujin Nagasawa and David Chetham) as well as Pentecostal studies (with Alan Anderson and Mark Cartledge), in addition we also have important expertise in Islamic Studies, Textual Studies, Feminist Theology and Philosophy, Inter-religious and Cross-Cultural Dialogue, as well as practical theology. There is not time to name all of the well known and important scholars which the School boasts – you can find more details on our website – suffice to say that the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion is an exciting place to do Post-Graduate Study where you as contributors to the research community will be important and valued.