# **Department of Theology & Religion**

# **Module Descriptions 2024/25**

# **Level C (i.e. 1st Yr.) Modules**

Please be aware that all modules are subject to availability.

For many of these modules, some experience of studying Theology may be required, and you should remember this when choosing your modules. If there is another module that you need to have studied before taking this, it will be stated in the module description.

Please note that at the time this document has been prepared (February 2024) the following information is provisional, and there may be minor changes between now and the beginning of 2024/25 academic year.

**Please note: Forms of assessment are currently undergoing review for 2024/25, and as a result the assessment information listed within this handbook may be subject to change.**

## **Truth, Deception and Ethics in Philosophy and Film**

***MODULE CODE:*** 35157

***CREDIT VALUE:*** 20

***ASSESSMENT METHOD***: 1000-1500 word draft written review or 5-10min video review of one of the set films (25%), 2500 word written review or 10-15min video review of one of the set films (75%)

***SEMESTER:*** 1

***DESCRIPTION***

This module addresses central issues at the intersection of philosophy, religion and ethics (the name of the programme into which it is introduced). These include the impact of faith and trust on action, the problem of being deceived (by religious and governmental institutions or by oneself), the possibility of ethics under conditions of radically incomplete knowledge, and the role of revelation in moral choices. The class is structured around three philosophical texts and four films. These will vary from year to year. Indicative texts are excerpts from Plato *Republic*, Descartes *Meditations*, Kierkegaard *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Indicative films include *Twelve* Monkeys, *Dark City,* *The Matrix, Memento.* The themes explored may include illusion, appearance and reality, perception, deception, memory, trust, faith, however these may vary from year to year. The themes in the philosophical classic texts will be analysed in the films. Students will produce film reviews that correlate the texts and the films through the themes. The module will incorporate an ‘essay skills’ component, which will include exercises in précis, referencing, structure, first and second drafts, among others. Students will have an opportunity present drafts or rough cuts for class discussion. This will be neither compulsory nor summatively assessed.

## **Lived Religions in Birmingham and Beyond A**

***MODULE CODE:*** 33825

***CREDIT VALUE:*** 10

***ASSESSMENT METHOD:*** 1500 word blog post (100% of the final module mark)

***SEMESTER:*** 1

***DESCRIPTION***

In this module, students will explore the lived dimensions of religion in Birmingham and the wider region. They will examine the links between Birmingham’s complex vibrant, urban, religious and secular landscape and how this relates to the UK and world as a whole, by following growth and changes in the diverse range of religious communities of Birmingham. Through lectures, site visits, seminars, and workshops students will develop key skills for the study of lived religions.

## **Introduction to Study of Religion A**

***MODULE CODE:*** 34017

***CREDIT VALUE:*** 10

***ASSESSMENT METHOD:*** 2500 word Essay (100% of the final module mark)

***SEMESTER:*** 1

***DESCRIPTION***

This module seeks to introduce students to a range of questions, theories and methods in the inter-disciplinary study of religion, focusing especially on the social and cultural analysis of religion. A range of contemporary topics will be used to explore how different aspects of religion can be explored as forms of social and cultural experience and practice. Examples of this might include debates about faith schools, women’s leadership in religious institutions, sectarian violence in football, belief in the supernatural. The topics are used to introduce wider theories and debates in sociology, cultural studies and anthropology as a basis for the study of religion.

## **LC The Bible and Global Challenges**

***MODULE CODE:*** 31964

***CREDIT VALUE:*** 20

***ASSESSMENT METHOD:*** 1 x Poster (50%)

1 x 1,500 word essay (50%)

***SEMESTER:*** 1

***DESCRIPTION***

Bibles have been foundational texts for western civilization and continue to be influential, not only as read faithfully in religious communities, but as literary and cultural resources that inform how we think about gender, sexuality, death, immigration and inter-racial relations, religious violence, poverty and wealth, human/divine relations and so forth. In this module students explore the relevance of biblical texts to a range of contemporary global challenges while being given a grounding in the field of biblical studies: its methodologies, interests, and critical tools. The module provides a vital foundation for students who wish to explore biblical studies in greater depth during their degree programme.

## **Lived Religions in Birmingham and Beyond B**

***MODULE CODE:*** 33829

***CREDIT VALUE:*** 10

***ASSESSMENT METHOD:*** Field notebook (100% of the final module mark)

***SEMESTER:*** 2

***PRE-REQUISITE:*** Students must have taken LC 33825 Lived Religions in Birmingham and Beyond A

***DESCRIPTION***

In this module, students will explore the lived dimensions of religion in Birmingham and the wider region. They will examine the links between Birmingham’s complex vibrant, urban, religious and secular landscape and how this relates to the UK and world as a whole, by following growth and changes in the diverse range of religious communities of Birmingham. Through lectures, site visits, seminars, and workshops students will develop key skills for the study of lived religions.

## **Introduction to the Study of Religion B**

***MODULE CODE:*** 34018

***CREDIT VALUE:*** 10

***ASSESSMENT METHOD:*** 1 x Poster (A1 size, maximum 750 words alongside visual elements, 100% of the final module mark)

***SEMESTER:*** 2

***PRE-REQUISITE:*** Students must have taken LC 34017 Introduction to the Study of Religion A

***DESCRIPTION***

This module seeks to further introduce students to a range of questions, theories and methods in the inter-disciplinary study of religion, focusing especially on the social and cultural analysis of religion. A range of case studies will be used to explore how different aspects of religion can be explored as forms of social and cultural experience and practice. Examples of this would include the ways in which religion and media interact, the place of visual and material culture in religion, the relationship between religion and popular culture, and the nature of religious experience, ritual and sacred space as lived phenomena. An introduction is also offered to wider theories and debates in sociology, cultural studies and anthropology as a basis for the study of religion.

## **LC Life After Death: What Happens When We Die?**

***MODULE CODE:*** 39777

***CREDIT VALUE:*** 20

***ASSESSMENT METHOD:*** 1 x 2,000 word essay (50%)

1 x 2,000 word critical reflection (50%)

***SEMESTER:*** 2

***PRE-REQUISITE:*** None

***DESCRIPTION***

Life after death is a perennial interest but especially for religious communities. Who doesn’t want to know what happens when they die? And, for many, the whole point of being religious is in order to gain access to heaven. This class will look at the development of ideas about the afterlife in a variety of ancient and modern religions. It will look at how what people think about immortality is reflective of their social and cultural values, legislative and ethical systems, and social hierarchies. Examining what people say about life after death can tell us a great deal about how people respond to crisis and process grief; it reflects how various groups value (or not) gender, disability and race; and can tell us about our own anxieties about who we are and who we want to be.