

MA/Diploma/Certificate Religion, Politics and Society



This new programme examines the major themes around the role of religion in politics and international relations in the contemporary world and allows you to research the role of religion in society and politics, looking at both domestic and transnational contexts. It explores the theoretical, conceptual and methodological approaches to the subject by focusing on the relationship between organised religions and the nation-state, as well as the global processes that promote religious conflict and conflict resolution.

This programme is ideal for current and aspiring policymakers and analysts in international, national and regional institutions engaged in management of conflict, diversity, inter-religious relations and community development.

[Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)
[\(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Taught

Study Options: Full time, part time

Duration: MA: 12 months full-time, 24 months part-time; Diploma: 8 months full-time; Certificate: 4 months full-time

Start date: September

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[School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion \(/schools/ptr/index.aspx\)](/schools/ptr/index.aspx)

[Department of Theology and Religion \(/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/index.aspx\)](/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/index.aspx)

Details

Since the 1990s, religious issues have assumed a growing importance in global, national and regional institutions and policy processes, a development dramatically highlighted by the attacks on the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and the abortive attack that crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania (possibly heading for the White House) on September 11, 2001, and the events that have followed since.

The programme allows you to research the role of religion in society and politics, and its important role in public policy dimensions and significant potential for impact and intervention in the public sphere. It will also focus on the public roles of religious communities and individuals, particularly in liberal pluralist societies, and considers theoretical issues such as:

- The relationship of religion and religious bodies to public spaces, institutions and events
- Theological responses to public issues
- The place of religion in public policy

There will be particular attention paid to the UK and European contexts, as well as offering the opportunity for exploring these issues in other national contexts and transnationally.

All students will take two core modules:

- Religion in Contemporary Global Politics I
- Religion in Contemporary Global Politics II

MA and Diploma students will also study a core module in Research Methods.

If you are studying for the Certificate, you will choose one optional module, while MA and Diploma students will choose three optional modules. MA students will complete their programme with a 15,000-word dissertation, or a placement-based dissertation.

Modules

You will study two core modules:

Religion in Contemporary Global Politics I

This module focuses on theoretical and conceptual debates about the role of religion in contemporary global politics. Traditionally, the study of political science and international relations has framed the understanding of religion within the context of secularisation and the nation-state. This interpretation is being increasingly contested by the impact of globalisation and the rise of anti-secular movements. The module will critically examine the secularisation thesis as applied to the 'West' (developed countries) and the 'East' (underdeveloped countries) and evaluate the impact of globalisation on collective religious identities. Following an introduction to the theoretical perspectives the course will focus on three particular themes: religious nationalism; religious identities and mobilisation; and religious transnationalism. The module concludes by reflecting on the wider implications for the study of politics and international relations of organised religious movements today.

Religion in Contemporary Global Politics II

This module examines the public policy responses to the global religious revival since 1989. Although traditionally organised religions have been viewed as the source of intractable political conflicts, in the last decade there has been an increasing recognition of the need to manage religious differences and to utilise religious resources for conflict resolution. Theoretically and conceptually this departure is anchored in the inter-related debates on multiculturalism, pluralism and the need for religious dialogue among the world's great religions. Following an examination of these debates and the assumptions underpinning them, the module will evaluate policy response in three contexts: the United Nations system; transnational organisations; and national and local public policy agendas. The module concludes by reflecting critically on the achievements and the limitations of integrating organised religions into public policy implementation.

MA and Diploma students will also study a core module in Research Methods:

Research Methods

This module consists of ten discipline-specific sessions taught by members of the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion. Topics that will be addressed include some or all of the following: conducting empirical research; reading in theology; research skills; dissertation planning; textual studies; and historical research.

Certificate students will choose one optional module, while MA and Diploma students will choose three optional modules.

Options available within Theology and Religion include -

Feminism in the Muslim World

This module explores the historical development of feminism in the Muslim world, in particular the feminist movements in such countries as Turkey, Egypt, and Iran. It considers feminist aims and objectives and their impact on Muslim societies. Also, it evaluates the different views and strands of feminism and the forces which hinder or aid the progress of feminism in the Muslim region.

Islam in Britain

This module will study contemporary Muslim communities in Britain with a view to understanding the key sociological and theological dynamics of these communities in terms of how they interact and relate to each other and wider British society within the context of Europe. The module will explore the historical establishment and settlement of British Muslims, from the nineteenth century onwards; the cultural and theological dimensions to religious identity and engagement of British Muslims; issues relating to education, social provision and political involvement; the development of community services such as halal food and halal regulation, mosques and funeral services. The module will also explore particular issues relating to popular perceptions and media portrayal of Islam and the social, psychological and theological impacts on Muslim communities post 9/11. There will be a series of fieldtrips to mosques and Muslim organisations within Birmingham to help facilitate student engagement in discussion of issues raised on the module, with Muslims in the city.

Political Islam

The course is a detailed study and critique of the rise and development of political Islam or Islamism in the Muslim world and beyond. As such, it critically examines and evaluates the origins, roots, theory and history of Islamism. The course assesses the impact and effects of this trend on contemporary Muslim thought. Also, it investigates the causes that have led to the emergence of political Islam, its nature, agendas and role in domestic, regional and international politics. Special emphasis will be placed on the distinction between the worldviews of political Islam and moderate Islam. The course will be approached from three angles: governments and their Islamic oppositions, Islamism in power, and the global aspect of political Islam.

Problems of Religious Diversity

This module aims to focus on a range of key perspectives and models on inter-religious engagement taken from selected theologians/philosophers, thinkers from different world religions and some non-religious perspectives. There will be an evaluative overview of the structure of the presuppositions and worldviews underlying the various responses to religious diversity. Attention will be given to discussing the theology and philosophy of religions, models of dialogue, and contemporary issues facing the future of religion and dialogue.

Religion and Peacebuilding

This module provides students with an understanding of contemporary theories and practices in the area of religion and peacebuilding. A wide range of education programmes, non-governmental organisations, new forms of diplomacy, conflict resolution efforts and post-conflict reconstruction engage with religious actors, responding to the increased relevance of religious factors in national and international conflicts. Examples of leading scholars (e.g. John Paul Lederach, R. Scott Appleby, Volker Rittberger) will be analysed and case studies of diverse localities as well as of institutional settings (e.g. political institutions) will provide the contemporary background.

Sikh Perspectives on Interreligious Relations

This module will begin by looking at key concepts within Sikhism: God, Guru, Gender Equality, Salvation and Liberation. These concepts will be considered in relation to attitudes to other religions and, what might be called 'alien contexts'. There will be a special concentration on Sikhism in diasporic contexts, particularly in the British context.

You can also choose up to two of your options from modules available in other Departments:

Department of History -

America as a World Power

This module reviews the emergence of the United States onto the world stage and the impact it has exerted through case studies of crises such as the American Civil War, the world wars, the Cold War and the War on Terror. The underpinning causes of American intervention, the foundations of American power, the beliefs associated with intervention abroad and the nature of American power will also be discussed

Globalisation Since 1945

This module examines various aspects of global history in the second half of the twentieth century. It takes its cue from a growing literature which sees 'globalisation' as a key feature of global history over the last half century. It will explore key areas in the process of globalisation: the creation of international institutions of truly global reach after the Second World War, in particular those connected to the United Nations and Bretton Woods; decolonisation, and the subsequent globalisation of the nation-state as the standard state form within a new world order, and of new conceptions of state 'technopolitics' to go with it; the global political, military, and cultural confrontation of the Cold War; the international political economy of oil; the global politics of the environment and of population control; and the global spread of a universalising discourse of human rights.

Making Sense of the World: Themes in Global History

This module will be split into two parts: 'Understanding the Past' and 'Past Understandings'. The former deals with key issues in global history, such as: the formation of the world's geography at the macro-level of continents; periodisation and the issues of how to distinguish between historical periods on such a grand scale; the creation of border regions; and the importance of the environment in human history. The second section will explore different ways in which past peoples have understood the global world. This will examine the importance of religion, debates about the status of indigenous knowledge and finish with an in-depth look at a key text bringing together many of the themes of the course, Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land*.

Department of Philosophy -

Bioethics

This module introduces you to the increasing number of dilemmas in bioethics that cross national boundaries and transcend domestic regulation. Bioethical dilemmas, whether arising from scientific and technological developments or from the research practices of pharmaceutical companies, raise issues which cannot be effectively addressed at national or regional levels. Bioethics clearly calls for global solutions to what are global dilemmas and you will be introduced to some of the key bioethical issues which arise in the contemporary global context.

Global Ethics I

This module aims to introduce you to key concepts and debates in global ethics. First, we will explore several prominent traditions in ethical theory; next we will apply these normative ethical theories to concrete ethical questions. In investigating these theories and applications, you will be encouraged to question your presumptions about the nature of ethics and moral values. The module also develops critical reasoning and argumentative skills through philosophical discussion and writing. The theoretical tools of analysis and argument can be applied in all aspects of global ethics.

Global Ethics II

This module develops your understanding of key global ethical issues, in particular human rights, poverty, distributive justice, cosmopolitan democracy, governance and humanitarian intervention.

Human Rights

This module introduces you to the contemporary philosophical debates about human rights. It focuses more on human rights understood as moral rights, rather than as legal rights written in international law. We will begin from the very basic question of what human rights are. We will also consider questions such as 'What kind of human rights are there?', 'Which beings can have human rights?', 'Are human rights inalienable?', and 'What happens when human rights conflict?'. The first half of the module focuses on exploring different philosophical justifications for human rights; we will cover justifications based on the dignity of human agency, international politics, and human flourishing. The second half of the module will focus on philosophical debates about the nature of specific human rights - looking first at some general rights, for autonomy, liberty and wellbeing, and then at more concrete rights to life and privacy. We will also consider objections to human rights based on relativist and utilitarian views in ethics.

Department of Political Science and International Studies -

- [Contemporary Themes and Issues in British Politics \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/contemporary-themes-issues-british-politics.aspx\)](#)
- [Diplomacy and Statecraft \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/diplomacy-statecraft.aspx\)](#)
- [Economic Diplomacy and Negotiations \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/economic-diplomacy-negotiations.aspx\)](#)
- [Ethical Dimensions of Terrorism, Political Violence and War \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/ethical-dimensions-terrorism-political-violence-war.aspx\)](#)
- [Foreign Policy Analysis \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/foreign-policy-analysis.aspx\)](#)
- [Gender and Global Governance \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/gender-global-governance.aspx\)](#)
- [Globalisation and Governance \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/globalisation-governance.aspx\)](#)
- [Multiculturalism and Religious Conflict \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/multiculturalsim-religious-conflict.aspx\)](#)
- [Politics and the State \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/politics-state.aspx\)](#)
- [Terrorism and Contemporary Conflict \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/terrorism-contemporary-conflict.aspx\)](#)
- [Terrorism and Political Violence \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/terrorism-political-violence.aspx\)](#)
- [The Theory and Ethics of Terrorism and Political Violence \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/theory-ethics-terrorism-political-violence.aspx\)](#)
- [US Foreign and Defence Policy \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/us-foreign-defence-policy.aspx\)](#)

As with most academic programmes, please remember that it is possible that a module may not be offered in any particular year.

Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

MA

- Home/EU: £6,210 full-time; £3,105 part-time
- Overseas: £14,140 full-time

Diploma

- Home/EU: £4,140 full-time; £2,070 part-time
- Overseas: £14,140 full-time

Certificate

- Home/EU: £2,070 full-time or part-time
- Overseas: £7,070 full-time

For part-time students studying an MA or Diploma, the above fee quoted is for year one only and tuition fees will also be payable in year two of your programme.

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about [fees for international students \(/International/students/finance/fees.aspx\)](#).

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments. Learn more about [postgraduate tuition fees and funding \(/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx\)](#).

Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's [Postgraduate Funding Database \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx\)](#).

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

Entry requirements

You will need an Honours degree, normally of an upper second class standard.

Learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)

International students

Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an [English language qualification \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx) to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our [English courses for international students \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx)

How to apply

Before you make your application

You may wish to [register your interest with us \(https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate\)](https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate) to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the [How to apply pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)

[Apply now \(https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL163.htm\)](https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL163.htm)

Learning and teaching

As well as the taught modules you take on this programme, the [Department of Theology and Religion \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/index.aspx) has a busy programme of research seminars, conferences and workshops which you can attend, so you'll be able to gain insight from a range of academics and peers from across the department.

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the [Academic Writing Advisory Service \(AWAS\) \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx) which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the [English for International Students Unit \(EISU\) \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/inseasonal/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/inseasonal/index.aspx).

Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

Birmingham's Theology graduates develop a broad range of transferable skills including: familiarity with research methods; the ability to manage large quantities of information from diverse sources; the ability to organise information in a logical and coherent manner; the expertise to write clearly and concisely and to tight deadlines; critical and analytical ability; the capacity for argument, debate and speculation; and the ability to base conclusions on statistical research.

Over the past five years, over 92% of our postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Many of our graduates go into careers in churches of various denominations. For those in further study, teacher training courses remain a popular choice. Other students use their transferable skills in a range of employment sectors, including local government, education and charities. Employers that our graduates have gone on to work for include: British Council; Church of England; Institute of Education; International Greek New Testament Project; Quaker Homeless Action; Queens Ecumenical Theological College; and University of Birmingham.

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