

Theology alumni profiles

Liz Malpass, BA History and Theology 2011

I really enjoyed studying History and Religious Studies at A-Level so being able to combine my two favourite subjects at the University of Birmingham for my undergraduate degree was a fantastic experience. I think History and Theology in combination really compliment one another. The different skills I developed and honed in each of my subjects informed the practice of the other. My favourite part of the course was probably my third year. In third year I was able to focus in more detail on areas I was particularly interested in with full support, advice and encouragement from both my History and Theology tutors.

Birmingham is an excellent place to study History and Theology. The choices of modules in both subjects are incredibly broad, which is something that also attracted me to Birmingham four years ago. The **high quality teaching and constant support and advice** provides an excellent foundation to develop your own interests and improve your practice. Birmingham is also the ideal place to study Theology as the city is so culturally and religiously diverse. The Theology Department has many links with the cities faith communities and other educational centres so you get the chance to gain first-hand experience, which is hugely beneficial.

Birmingham provides a fantastic, interesting and challenging working environment.

The beautiful campus is a major selling point of the University and everything being close by (including the Vale Village where I lived in first year!) is very convenient, but also the city centre being only a short train ride away is a major advantage and gives you a chance to experience city life.

The University of Birmingham also provides many opportunities for extra-curricular activities. For instance, I helped out on Applicant Visit Days and participated in Peer Assisted Study Support in my second and third year helping students in lower years with their studies in weekly classes. I have found that including these experiences enhances my current curriculum vitae.

I had a fantastic time at Birmingham and studying History and Theology was challenging, but incredibly enjoyable.

Julie Coombs, BA Theology and Religion 2007, PGCE in Religious Studies in 2008.

Julie completed a BA in Theology and Religion in 2007, before going on to complete a PGCE in Religious Studies in 2008. She is currently studying a Masters in Education and is currently a Head of Faculty at a school.

"The content of the Theology degree, along with the fact that you could choose the majority of your modules, meant that you could focus on key areas- either those of interest or those you knew you would need at a later date. This has helped in my teaching practise. Teaching is a fantastic job - every day is different as you never know what the students will come out with next. The fact that we're educating the next generation is amazing- inspiring a love of your subject in them is the most satisfying feeling.

Without doing Theology I would have found it very difficult to get accepted onto the RE PGCE and from there get an RE teaching job. The PGCE really prepared us for what working in a school would be like - it has just the right amount of independence and support to ensure that you flourish."

Anna Munro, BA Theology, 2001

Anna graduated in 2001 with a BA in Theology. She currently works as a Programme Manager for The Children's Society.

"I don't know if my degree in itself did [help to secure my first job] but I think what it taught me about people, relationships and tolerating difference has been fundamental to what I do now. After graduating, I went to work in the voluntary sector, with people from the UK and abroad who were volunteering, I was also saving up for my therapy training. I then moved to work for The Children's Society (TCS) to set up and run a Lottery funded project working with children missing from home in Birmingham. It was a lot of child protection and safeguarding work with some of the most vulnerable children in the city and my therapy training which I was continuing was instrumental.

During this time, I set up a private therapy practice. When my funding ended, I continued my work with TCS, moving to a project working with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children across the West Midlands. I now manage all of The Children's Society's refugee and new migrant work in the West Midlands with a particular interest in mental health and trauma. I never have two days the same and get to meet some of the most inspirational young people and workers in the City - we work with a lot of young people and families who can be incredibly hard to like sometimes and who are in unimaginably difficult situations and yet somehow survive. I am constantly reminded that there's always an explanation for challenging behaviour and that positive relationships with workers who really care and go the extra mile can be transformative."