

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

2026 REGISTRATION

Postgrad Registration:

2026 registration will take place **ONLINE** as follows:

- Registration for all programmes will take place online from **19 January – 13 February 2026** for new and returning students.
- **Online registration is open to the REL Honours and Coursework Masters programmes via the PeopleSoft Service Request.**
 - *Service request is a replication of what students would do if they were to register in person, it just happens on the system where the student is assigned an activity guide and a curriculum form, attached to a service request in PeopleSoft.*
 - *The student completes the activity guide, fills out the curriculum form and re-uploads it to PeopleSoft and it is then routed to the relevant signatory from there.*
- **Online Registration upon completion of MoU/PPA is available to Research Master's and PhDs** - Key to the entire process for Master's and PhD registration is that students should have completed the online MoU/PPA form before the commencement of registration.
 - *Online registration is configured for programmes that have fixed curricula, where the student receives a link to the task, signs into PeopleSoft, confirms their demographic information and confirms their curriculum.*
- If students are registering for the Minor Dissertation, they will also need to complete and sign an online MoU/PPA
- Masters by research, and PhD students, new and returning PG Diploma, Honours and Coursework Masters students – are encouraged to register early, between 19 January – 13 February 2026.
- **Course registration for Research Masters and PhD:**
 - Should research students want to take a course as an elective or in audit mode the following apply:
The following rules apply:
 - G11.1 *Senate may allow a postgraduate student registered for a degree or diploma to attend a course where a clear case has been made by the programme convenor, and supported by the Dean, that the course is additional to the curriculum but a pre-requisite for the student to complete the programme successfully.*
 - G11.2 *The fee for a used course will be 50% of the regular course fee.*
 - G11.3 *A student enrolled in audit mode will participate fully in the course but will not be examined. Students who audit a course will have this reflected as ATT on their academic record.*
 - 50% of regular fee may be waived for an audit course – you will need to complete a FEE07 form and it needs to be signed by the course convenor or HoD and returned to the Faculty Office for the Dean's signature before it is shared with the Fees Office for the 50% adjustment to be processed. (contact Tasneem Wise for details: Tasneem.Wise@uct.ac.za)
 - The Faculty will require confirmation from the Department (the programme convenor or your supervisor) that they have approved your auditing of this course. You should obtain written support from Dr Louis Blond (Louis.Blond@uct.ac.za) in this regard.
 - If approved, you can complete the ACA09 form to add the course and submit it to the HUM Faculty Office (Kerewin.Parfitt@uct.ac.za) for processing.

Curriculum Advice for Coursework Programmes in the Study of Religions:

Postgraduate curriculum advice will be provided via email and/or online meetings with prior arrangements.

- Curriculum advice in the Department for the Study of Religions will be provided by the Programme Convenor, Dr Louis Blond. Please contact him via email to book either an online meeting:
Louis.Blond@uct.ac.za
- **For curriculum advice** you may start to liaise with the department as follows:
 - PG students on our taught courses should email Dr Blond (Louis.Blond@uct.ac.za) directly with questions or to arrange an online meeting from 02nd February 2026 onward.
 - Students need to provide Dr Blond with all necessary documentation when contacting him for advice e.g. *student records, courses you are considering, research interest*.
- **For online PeopleSoft approval**, Dr Blond will be available from 02 - 13 February 2026.
Please alert him via email once you have submitted your registration documents online.
- While we can be flexible with anybody having difficulty, it must be noted that the registration to request curriculum advice and signed forms will take place between 02 – 05 February 2026 so that students have what is required and can register by the Faculty deadline of 13th February 2026.

Please note the following:

- **International and SADC students:** All new and returning international and SADC students must report to the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) via prereg@uct.ac.za and obtain pre-registration clearance by presenting their proof of payment of fees, passport, study visa and proof of medical insurance prior to registering.
- **Outstanding Fees:** Students with fee debts must produce a fee clearance letter prior to registration. These are obtainable from the Fees Office (fnd-feeeng@uct.ac.za)
- **Masters by research (100% dissertation) and PhD students – new and returning:** Master's and PhD students registering for a dissertation/thesis must complete their MoU/Progress and Planned Activity report prior to registering. Returning Students registering for **research degrees** must register **no later than end February 2026**.
- **New and returning PG Diploma, Honours and Coursework Masters students** – Students registering for coursework degrees must do so by the dates stipulated in the registration schedule. Masters students registering for a **minor dissertation** must complete their MoU/Progress and Planned Activity Report before registering, review the MOU/PPA guideline.
- **Late registration:** A late registration fee of R2000 will automatically be charged to your fee account if you register after the dates specified. Only the Dean can waive the late registration penalty and only in exceptional circumstances which must be fully motivated in writing.

Note: The University may make changes to schedules, students should therefore regularly check the UCT website, Faculty Vula site and emails for any updated information.

Staff contact list:

- **Department HOD:** Prof Elisabetta Porcu Elisabetta.Porcu@uct.ac.za
- **For general administration:** Tasneem Wise Tasneem.Wise@uct.ac.za
- **For general UG academic matters:** Dr Ala Alhourani Ala.Alhourani@uct.ac.za
- **For general PG academic matters:** Dr Louis Blond Louis.Blond@uct.ac.za
- **General staff contacts for course specific/supervision matters:**
 - Prof Elisabetta Porcu: Elisabetta.Porcu@uct.ac.za
 - Prof Asonzeh Ukah: Asonzeh.Ukah@uct.ac.za
 - Dr Louis Blond: Louis.Blond@uct.ac.za
 - Dr Ala Alhourani: Ala.Alhourani@uct.ac.za
 - Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh: Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za (on sabbatical during 2026)

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN | FACULTY OF HUMANITIES 2026 POSTGRADUATE
REGISTRATION SCHEDULE
(19 January 2026 – 13 February 2026)**

FINAL Timetable: *as of 6 January 2026 - DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Modes of Registration | BSC: Blank Shopping Cart PE: Programme Enrolment |
|-----------------------|---|

NEW AND RETURNING PG HONOURS AND COURSEWORK MASTERS STUDENTS

See specific details below.

| ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT | ACADEMIC PROGRAM | ACADEMIC PLAN | PROGRAMME CODE | PROGRAMME CONVENOR | DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATOR | REGISTRATION DATES | MODE OF REGISTRATION |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| REL: STUDY OF RELIGIONS | Honours (Full-Time) | Study of Religions and Contemporary Society | HH003REL03 HH001REL03 | Dr Louis Blond | Tasneem Wise | 02 - 05 February 2026 | BSC |
| | Honours (Part-Time) | Study of Religions and Contemporary Society | HH003REL04 HH001REL04 | Dr Louis Blond | Tasneem Wise | 02 - 05 February 2026 | BSC |
| | Masters by crsewrk & dissertation (Full-Time) | Study of Religions and Contemporary Society | HM008REL03 HM006REL03 | Dr Louis Blond | Tasneem Wise | 02 - 05 February 2026 | BSC |
| | Masters by crsewrk & dissertation (Part-Time) | Study of Religions and Contemporary Society | HM008REL04 HM006REL04 | Dr Louis Blond | Tasneem Wise | 02 - 05 February 2026 | BSC |

New and Returning Research Masters (by Dissertation/Research Only)

| Programme | Specialisation | Programme Code | Mode of Registration |
|-----------|---|----------------|---|
| MA | The Study of Religions and Contemporary Society | HM007REL03 | Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA |
| MSocSc | The Study of Religions and Contemporary Society | HM005REL03 | Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA |
| | | | |

New and Returning PhD

| Programme | Specialisation | Programme Code | Mode of Registration |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|
| PhD/ Doctoral | The Study of Religions and Contemporary Society | HD001REL03 | Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA |

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

POSTGRADUATE REGISTRATION 2026

OVERVIEW

Registration/enrolment for the 2026 academic term will be completed online via PeopleSoft. Different modes of registration have been assigned to specific programmes. It is therefore important to familiarise yourself with the mode of registration applicable to your programme.

KEY DATES

Registration will formally commence on the 19 January 2026. The detailed schedule may be reviewed via:

[HUMANITIES PG REGISTRATION SCHEDULE 2026](#)

CURRICULUM ADVICE

You must review the Humanities Postgraduate Handbook to determine your curriculum structure and course requirements prior to reaching out to your programme convenor for curriculum advice. This may be accessed via:

[Humanities Postgraduate Handbook 2026](#)

Postgraduate curriculum advice can generally be sought via email, telephonically via online meetings, or in person. It is best to contact your programme convenor/department via email first to establish their availability and preferred mode of communication. The email address of your programme convenor and departmental administrator is hyperlinked in the registration guideline.



IMPORTANT NOTICES

- **Masters by research (100% dissertation) and PhD students – new and returning:** Master's and PhD students registering for a dissertation/thesis must complete their MoU/Progress and Planned Activity report prior to registering. Returning Students registering for research degrees must register no later than **27 February 2026**.
- **International and SADC students:** All new and returning international and SADC students must report to the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) via prereg@uct.ac.za and obtain pre-registration clearance by presenting their proof of payment of fees, passport, study visa and proof of medical insurance prior to registering.
- **Outstanding Fees:** Students with fee debts must produce a fee clearance letter prior to registration. These are obtainable from the Fees Office (fnd-feeenq@uct.ac.za).
- **New and returning PG Diploma, Honours and Coursework Masters students registering for coursework degrees** must do so by the dates stipulated in in the registration schedule.
- **Late registration:** A late registration fee of R2000 will automatically be charged to your fee account if you register after the dates specified. Only the Dean can waive the late registration penalty which is done only in exceptional circumstances that are motivated for in writing.
- **General queries: You may direct general registration related queries to** hum-postgrad@uct.ac.za.



MODE OF REGISTRATION

The mode of registration for your specific programme is indicated in the registration schedule.

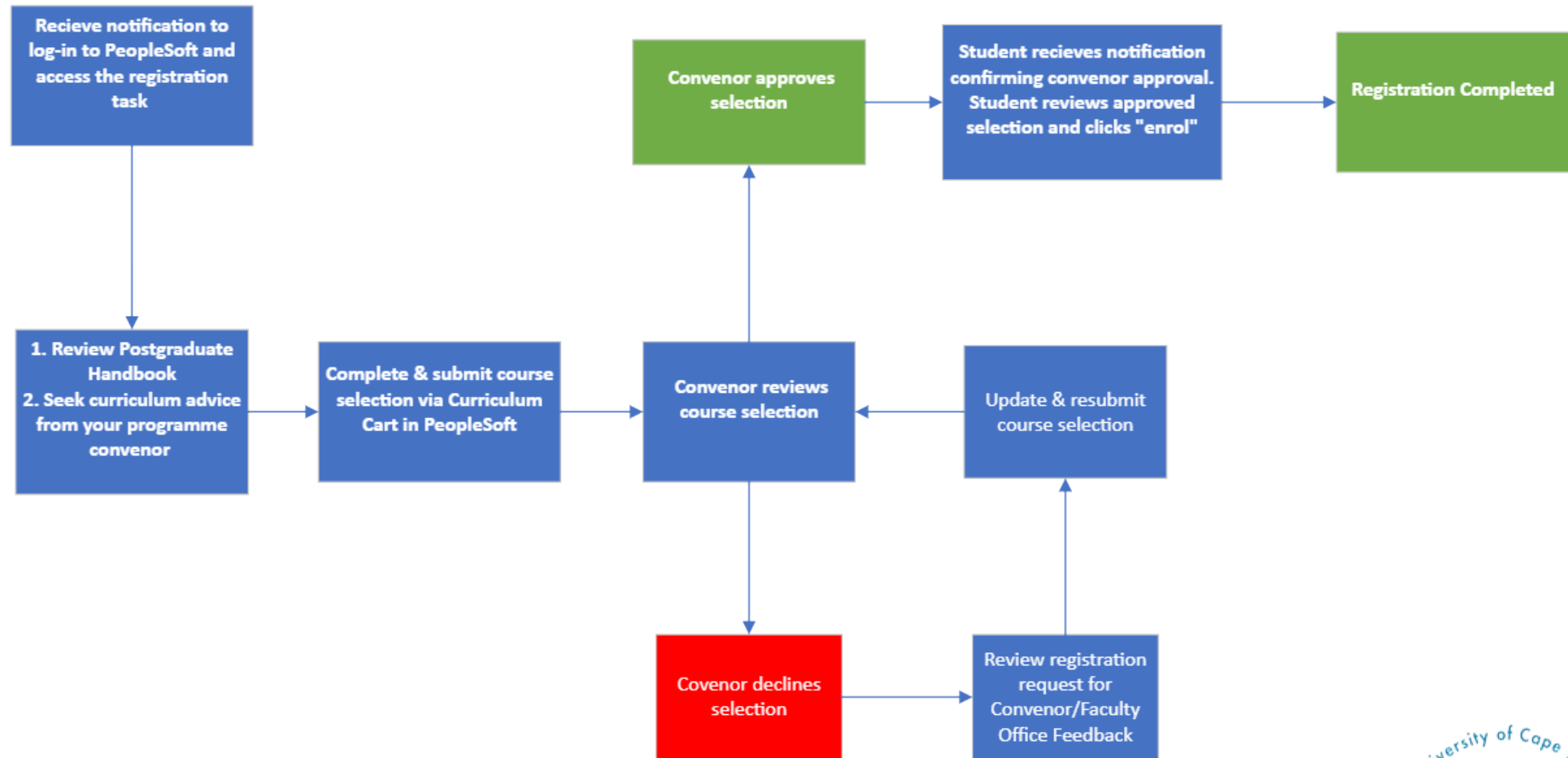
- **Blank Shopping Cart (BSC):** You will receive a system generated activity guide which replaces the need for a registration form. Once the activity guide is complete it will be possible for you to complete your course selection via your registration task (in consultation with your convenor) and submit it via Peoplesoft. Your curriculum selection will be routed to the relevant approver and redirected to you to confirm your enrolment.
- **Programme Enrolment (PE):** These functions are assigned to all PhD, MA by dissertation only, and structured Masters, Honours, and PGDip programmes. Given that the course selections are strictly defined for these programmes; the specific courses you required to register for are automatically configured into your registration task.

*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.



THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

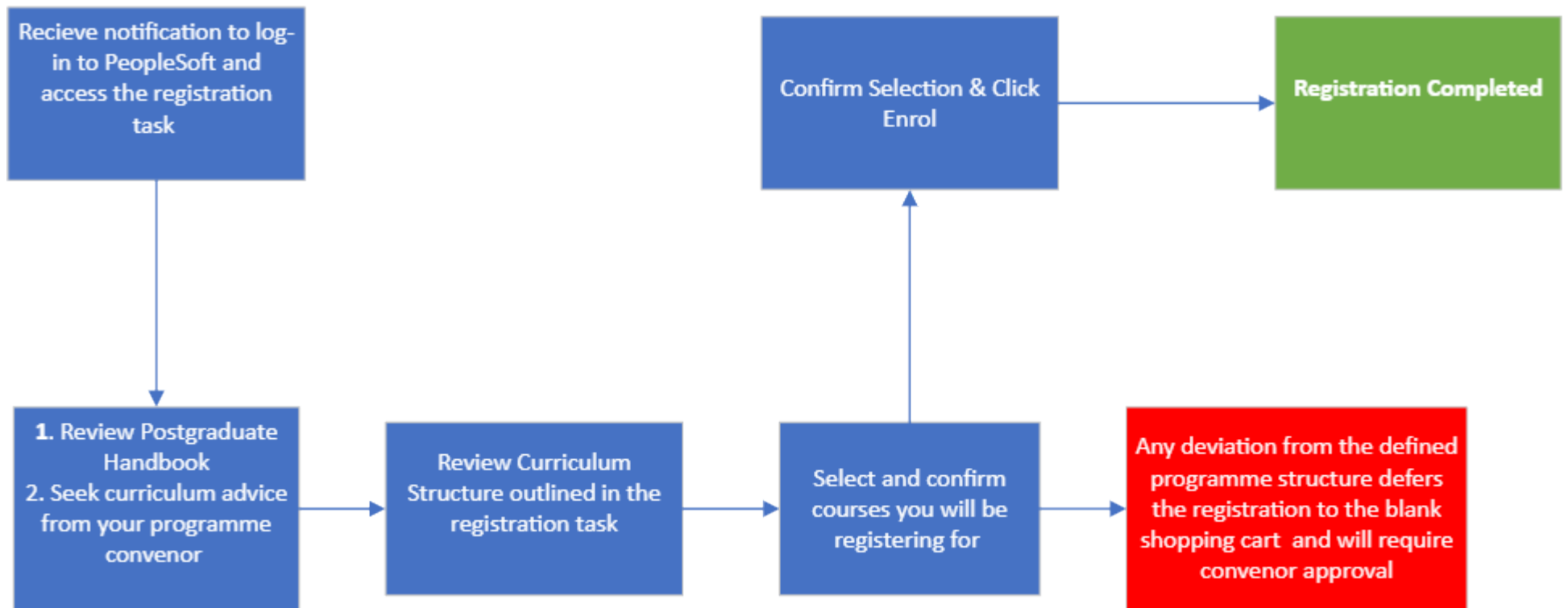
The below process will apply if you are registering using the **Blank Shopping Cart**:



*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.



The below process will apply if you are registering using the **Programme Enrolment**:

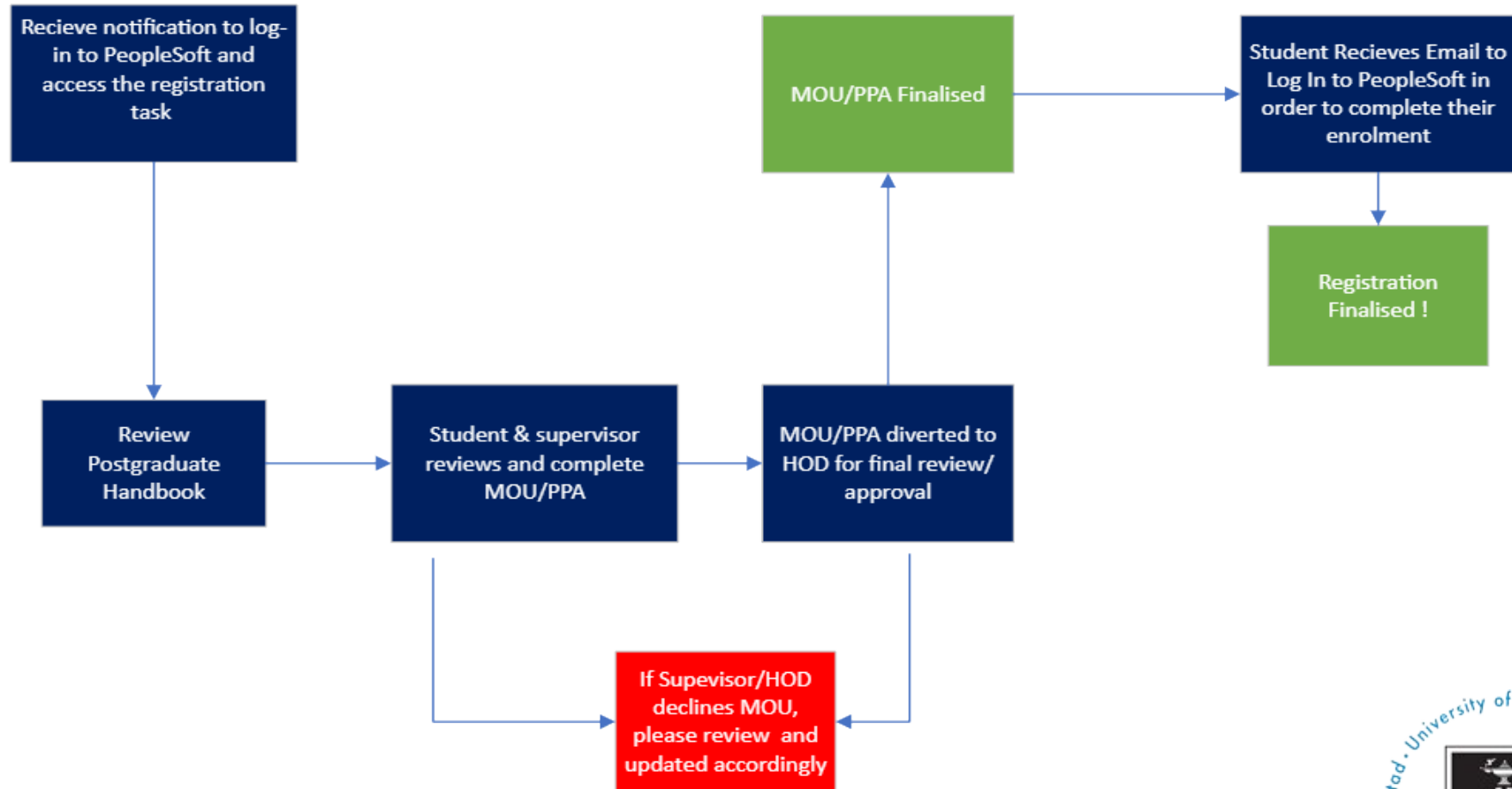


*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.



PhD and Masters Students Registering for the Dissertation

All returning PhD and Masters students registering for the dissertation are required to complete their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Planned Progress & Activity (PPA) with their supervisor and obtain HOD approval prior to completing their enrolment.



*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.





STUDY OF RELIGIONS POSTGRAD PROGRAMMES

2026

WHY STUDY RELIGION?

- Religions is the foundation of Society, Politics, Culture and Ethics.
- Religion is a powerful force in society, politically and in the lives of the majority of people in the world.
- Find out more about.... the tradition you grew up in, about other religions, about the role of religion in today's society, its interplay with politics, the media, gender, and much more.
- Be at the forefront of solving problems and developing a better South Africa and the world.

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

We offer Honours, Masters and PhD in the Study of Religions

Honours Specialising in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society

Duration: 1 Year (Full-Time) / 2 Years (Part-Time)

MA / MSocSc Specialising in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society

(Offered by coursework & dissertation or by dissertation only)

Duration: 2 - 3 Years (Coursework Masters offered both Full-time and Part-Time)

MPhil Specialising in Islam, Gender and Sexuality (not offered in 2027)

Duration: 2 Years

PhD Specialising in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society

Duration: Minimum registration 2 years

Contact Us

- Email: religions@uct.ac.za
- Call: 021 650 5818
- Website: <https://humanities.uct.ac.za/departments-study-religions>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ReligionsUCT>

Apply online here

<http://applyonline.uct.ac.za>

Department for the Study of Religions



Honours, Masters & PhD in the Study of Religions

We offer an Honours, Masters by coursework, Research Masters and PhD in the in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society, as well as an MPhil specialising in Islam, Gender & Sexuality

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

An **Honours full-time programme** takes one year. Students complete four semester courses and write a short dissertation (15,000 words). Students are admitted into an Honours programme if they achieve an average of approximately 65% in the final year of their UG degree

An **Honours part-time programme** takes two years. Students complete the compulsory core courses in year 1 and the remaining electives are completed in year 2. Students are also required to write a short dissertation (15,000 words). Students are admitted into an Honours programme if they achieve an average of approximately 65% in the final year of their UG degree

Honours courses:

- ❖ Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1 (Compulsory)
- ❖ Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2 (Compulsory)
- ❖ Honours Project/Essay (Compulsory)
- ❖ Buddhism in Contemporary Society
- ❖ Islamic Studies
- ❖ Religion and Culture in Africa
- ❖ Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories
- ❖ Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought
- ❖ African Religious Movements
- ❖ Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism
- ❖ Philosophers on Religion
- ❖ Embodiment, Religion and Ethics

****Please contact the Department to confirm which courses will be offered*

The department offers two types of **Masters Degrees**.

- 1) A **Masters by coursework** full-time takes two years. Students take four courses in year 1 and write a 25,000 word dissertation in year 2. A **Masters by coursework** part-time, students take four courses where the coursework is completed over 2 years and write a 25,000 word dissertation.

Masters courses:

- ❖ Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1
- ❖ Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2
- ❖ African Religious Movements
- ❖ Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism
- ❖ Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories
- ❖ Philosophers on Religion
- ❖ African Religious Movements
- ❖ Reading Religious Texts
- ❖ Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought
- ❖ Islamic Studies
- ❖ Buddhism in Contemporary Society
- ❖ Embodiment, Religion and Ethics
- ❖ IGS: Research Methods

****Please contact the Department to confirm which courses will be offered*

- 2) A **Masters by research** does not involve coursework. Students write a substantial 50,000 word dissertation

Phd: The PhD is by dissertation only, and involves original research. The thesis should be in the region of 80,000 words and takes at least 3 years to complete.

If you are interested in a research masters or PhD, it would be best to contact one of the staff below to discuss possible thesis topic and supervision.

Due Dates for applications:

Application for postgraduate programmes open in April and closes end October each year.

Registration takes place from January – February

For more information speak to Tasneem Wise

Tasneem.Wise@uct.ac.za

Staff research areas and possibilities available for postgraduate research:

Dr Louis Blond

Jewish Thought

Louis Blond is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town since 2010. He completed a PhD (2006) at the

University of Edinburgh with a dissertation, *The Relationship Between Metaphysics and Nihilism in the Work Of Martin Heidegger*.

While my teaching focus often encompasses Jewish religion and contemporary political spaces, my research interests are grounded in European philosophy, Critical Theory, Jewish Philosophy and their intersection with Post/Decolonial Theory.

After researching Emmanuel Levinas's attempt to escape the framework provided by Heidegger's ontological turn, I have come to a fruitful impasse when engaging a postcolonial critique of Levinas's ethical landscape. The failure of the ethics of otherness to establish a working social theory has led me to contemporary Critical Theory and its attempt to resurrect and modify Marx's philosophical anthropology and alienation diagnostic in the search for a socially-embedded emancipatory force. However, when some of these theories are applied to or thought in a racialised society such as South Africa, the assumptions and possibilities of the struggle for recognition and an alienation diagnostic are seriously challenged. I am currently asking, what manner of philosophical anthropology and alienation diagnostic can fruitfully engage postcolonial space without falling into the familiar traps of a Eurocentric project.

Email: Louis.Blond@uct.ac.za

Assoc. Prof. Elisabetta Porcu (Head of Department)

Asian Religions, Japanese Religions, Religion and Society

Elisabetta Porcu is an Associate Professor of Asian religions and Head of the Department for the Study of Religions at the University of Cape Town. She is a South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF) B2-rated researcher.

Before moving to South Africa, she worked at various universities in Japan (2004-2010) and taught Japanese religions at the University of Leipzig (2010-2014). She has been Visiting Research Scholar at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto (2013-2014), Numata Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Hawaii (2013), and Visiting Professor at Kyushu University (2016-2017). Among her publications are the monograph *Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Japanese Culture* (Brill, 2008), the volume *Matsuri and Religion: Complexity, Continuity, and Creativity in Japanese Festivals* (co-edited with Michael D. Foster, Brill 2020, 2021); and various articles and book chapters, including "Gion Matsuri in Kyoto: A Multilayered Religious Phenomenon" (2020); "Religion, Second Modernity and Individualization in Japan" (2018); "Contemporary Japanese Buddhist Traditions" (2017); and "Pop Religion in Japan: Buddhist Temples, Icons and Branding" (2014).

Elisabetta is the founding director of the Center for the Study of Asian Religions (CSAR) at the University of Cape Town; the founding editor of the Journal of Religion in Japan (Brill); and has served on the executive committee of the Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa (2017-2023, ASRSA President 2021-2023).

Email: Elisabetta.Porcu@uct.ac.za

Prof. Sa'diyya Shaikh

Islamic Studies, Feminist Theory

Sa'diyya Shaikh (PhD Temple University, 2004) is Professor in the Study of Religions at the University of Cape Town. She specialises in the study of Islam, gender ethics, and feminist theory. She has published on gender-sensitive readings of Muslim textual traditions, including Qur'an, hadith and Sufi texts; theoretical and political debates on Islam and feminism, religion and gender-based violence; Sufism and Islamic Law; contemporary Muslim women's embodied, experiential and everyday modes of understanding Islam and negotiating religious teachings; and marriage, sexuality and reproductive choices amongst South African Muslim women. Her current work is focussed on developing constructive research and artistic projects around egalitarian ethics, spirituality and imagining inclusive, justice-based Muslim futures.

Sa'diyya is active on a number of community fora for the empowerment of Muslim women, and contributes to feminist knowledge building projects of Musawah, a global movement for justice and equality in the Muslim family, and has presented talks at the Claremont Main Road mosque regularly.

Email: Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za

Dr Ala Alhourani

Islam, Religion and Ethics

Dr Ala Alhourani is a senior lecturer in the Department for Study of Religions. His PhD research is on the aesthetics of Islam and Muslim performances of citizenship, conviviality, and differences in South Africa's post-apartheid secular state. His post-doctorate research explores the aesthetic of religion and everyday ethics in public life. His research foregrounds aesthetic experiences of religion as embodied ethics, knowledge, power, and traditions. His research interests are Islam in Africa, Sufism, anthropology of religion, Islamic Studies, secularisation, art and aesthetics. He is a writer and a filmmaker.

Email: Ala.Alhourani@uct.ac.za

Prof. Asonzeh Ukah

Christianity in Africa, African Religions

Professor Asonzeh Ukah is a renowned scholar specializing in Christianity and African Religions, holding a position in the Department for the Study of

Religions at the University of Cape Town. Since 2021, Prof. Ukah has served as the director of the African Centre for Religions, Ethics, and Society (A.C.R.E.S) and previously directed the Research Institute for Christianity and Society in Africa (RICSA) between 2014 and 2022. With nearly thirty years of experience, Prof. Ukah has been instrumental in researching and documenting the dynamics of socio-religious change in Africa, with a particular emphasis on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and emerging religions. Fieldwork has taken him to various African and European countries, including England, Germany, Nigeria, Ghana, Lesotho, South Africa, Uganda, and Cameroon. Prof. Ukah boasts an extensive publication record, encompassing 50 book chapters, 24 peer-reviewed articles, and other contributions, covering diverse fields such as the sociology of Pentecostalism, the history of African indigenous religious traditions, the intersection of religion and media, sacred urbanism, and African new religious movements. From 2014 to 2020, Prof. Ukah served as an editor of Brill's Studies of Religion in Africa series and, since 2019, as a co-editor of Africa: Journal of the International Africa Institute. Trained as a historian of religion and sociologist of religion, Prof. Ukah's multidisciplinary approach informs their ongoing research on "Miracle Cities" or Prayer Camps across Africa, exploring the intersection of Pentecostal urbanism and religious market competition in evolving cityscapes. Teaching African Religions and Pentecostalism at the University of Bayreuth, Germany, from 2005 to 2013, Prof. Ukah has been affiliated with the University of Cape Town since 2013, offering instruction and guidance to graduate students in areas such as African Religions, the History of Christianity, Sociology of Pentecostalism and the media, and Theory and Research Methods in the Study of Religions.

Email: Asonzeh.Ukah@uct.ac.za

The **Department for the Study of Religions** is on the 5th floor of the Leslie Social Sciences Building, Upper Campus

Check us out online:

Website: www.religion.uct.ac.za

Email: religions@uct.ac.za

Find us on Facebook: Religious Studies at UCT.

Come and talk to any of the teaching staff or contact:

Undergraduate information:

Megan Moen (Senior Secretary)

LS 5.40

T: (021) 650 3452

M: Megan.Moen@uct.ac.za

Postgraduate information:

Tasneem Wise (Admin Assistant)

LS 5.36

T: (021) 650 5818

M: Tasneem.Wise@uct.ac.za

REL POSTGRAD COURSES

| HONOURS COURSES | MASTERS COURSES | PHD COURSES |
|---|---|---|
| *4 Courses plus research project | <p><i>*Masters by Coursework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st year (4 courses) and • 2nd year Minor Dissertation <p><i>*Research Masters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissertation only | *Dissertation only |
| Research / Dissertation Courses | | |
| REL4011H: Research Project/Essay | REL5003W (Minor Dissertation) REL5000W (Research Masters) | REL6000W (PhD in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society) |
| Lecture Courses | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REL4010F: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1 (compulsory) • REL4012S: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2 (compulsory) • REL4110S: African Religious Movements • REL4053F: Religion and Culture in Africa • REL4113F: Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought • REL4112F: Philosophers on Religion • REL4049F: Islamic Studies • REL4046S: Buddhism in Contemporary Society • REL4091S: Spirituality and Ethics in Islam -Explorations in Sufism • REL4054S: Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories • REL4119S: Embodiment, Religion and Ethics | <p>REL5117F: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1</p> <p>REL5118S: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2</p> <p>REL5110S: African Religious Movements</p> <p>REL5116F: Religion and Culture in Africa</p> <p>REL5113F: Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought</p> <p>REL5112F: Philosophers on Religion</p> <p>REL5115F: Islamic Studies</p> <p>REL5114S: Buddhism in Contemporary Society</p> <p>REL5091S: Spirituality and Ethics in Islam - Explorations in Sufism</p> <p>REL5018S: Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories</p> <p>REL5119S: Embodiment, Religion and Ethics</p> <p>DOH5100S: IGS Research Methods A</p> <p>DOH5101F: IGS Islam, Gender, Sexuality: Research Method and Design B</p> | <p>Access our website here</p> <p>https://religion.uct.ac.za</p> <p>Apply online here</p> <p>http://applyonline.uct.ac.za/</p> |



REL POSTGRAD PROGRAMME INFORMATION 2026

HONOURS: REL4011H

*HONOURS PRPGRAMME TAKES 1 YEAR (FULL-TIME) & 2 YEARS (PART-TIME)
ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE 4 TAUGHT COURSES & A
RESEARCH ESSAY (15000 WORD DISSERTATION)*

HONOURS MODULES AVAILABLE FOR 2026:

- REL4010F: METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 1
- REL4053F: RELIGION AND CULTURE IN AFRICA
- REL4112F: PHILOSOPHERS ON RELIGION
- REL4012S: METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 2
- REL4119S: EMBODIMENT, RELIGION AND ETHICS
- REL4046S: BUDDHISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

MASTERS BY COURSEWORK: REL5003W

MASTERS BY COURSEWORK TAKES 2-3 YEARS. WE OFFER A FULL-TIME & PART-TIME PROGRAMME. ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A MINOR DISSERTATION (25000 WORD) AND 4 TAUGHT COURSES AT 5000 LEVEL

MASTERS MODULES AVAILABLE FOR 2026:

- REL5111F/S: READING RELIGIOUS TEXTS
- REL5117F: METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 1
- REL5116F: RELIGION AND CULTURE IN AFRICA
- REL5112F: PHILOSOPHERS ON RELIGION
- REL5118S: METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 2
- REL5119S: EMBODIMENT, RELIGION AND ETHICS
- REL5114S: BUDDHISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

MASTERS BY RESEARCH: 50 000 WORD DISSERTATION (REL5000W)

PHD: 80 000 WORD DISSERTATION (REL6000W)



REL POSTGRAD LECTURE TIMETABLE

SEMESTER 1

2026

| Course Code | Course Title | Time | Schedule | Venue | Convener |
|----------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| REL4010F REL5117F | Methods & Theory in the Study of Religions 1 | 09h00-10h30 | 18 February - 20 May Every Wednesday - 1.5 hrs per week | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Dr Louis Blond Dr Ala Alhourani |
| REL4053F REL5116F | Religion and Culture in Africa | 11h00-12h30 | 18 February - 20 May Every Wednesday - 1.5 hrs per week | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Prof Asonzeh Ukah |
| REL SEMINAR SERIES | POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES | 13H00 - 14H00 | AS PER SEMINAR SCHEDULE ADVERTISED | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Dr Louis Blond |
| REL4112F REL5112F | Philosophers on Religion | 14h15 - 15h45 | 18 February - 20 May Every Wednesday - 1.5 hrs per week | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Dr Louis Blond |
| REL5111F | Reading Religious Texts | WILL ONLY BE OFFERED AS A READING GROUP AND TO MA STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL CREDITS – SCHEDULE CONFIRMED WITH SUPERVISOR | | | Dr Ala Alhourani |

Access our website here

<https://religion.uct.ac.za>

REL POSTGRAD LECTURE TIMETABLE

SEMESTER 2

2026

| Course Code | Course Title | Time | Schedule | Venue | Convener |
|----------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------------|--|
| REL4012S REL5118S | Methods & Theory in the Study of Religions 2 | 09h00-10h30 | 29 July - 21 October Every Wednesday - 1.5 hrs per week | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Prof Elisabetta Porcu Prof Asonzeh Ukah |
| REL4046S REL5114S | Buddhism in Contemporary Society | 11h00-12h30 | 29 July - 21 October Every Wednesday - 1.5 hrs per week | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Prof Elisabetta Porcu |
| REL SEMINAR SERIES | POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES | 13H00 - 14H00 | AS PER SEMINAR SCHEDULE ADVERTISED | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Dr Louis Blond |
| REL4119S REL5119S | Embodiment, Religion and Ethics | 14h15 - 15h45 | 29 July - 21 October Every Wednesday - 1.5 hrs per week | REL Seminar Room LS 5.67 | Dr Ala Alhourani |
| REL5111S | Reading Religious Texts | WILL ONLY BE OFFERED AS A READING GROUP AND TO MA STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL CREDITS – SCHEDULE CONFIRMED WITH SUPERVISOR | | | Dr Ala Alhourani |

Access our website here

<https://religion.uct.ac.za>

Department for the Study of Religions Programme Curriculum

The Study of Religions Honours and Masters degrees [REL]

Admission requirements:

- a. Faculty requirements as set out under Rules FH3 and FM3 apply.
- b. Specialisation requirements:
 - A major in the discipline or a cognate discipline.
 - Applicants with an initial qualification in another discipline may be required to complete certain courses to achieve equivalence with the requirements for a major in the Study of Religions.

Acceptance is on the recommendation of the Head of Department.

BA/BSocScHons specialising in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society (126 NQF credits) – FULL-TIME PROGRAMME (1 year) [REL03]

Programme Convener:

Dr P L Blond

Prescribed curriculum:

Honours students are required to complete four taught courses at HEQSF level 8 (4000 level) and a research essay:

Compulsory (core) courses:

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|----------|--|-------------|-----------|
| REL4010F | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 124 | 8 | |
| REL4012S | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 224 | 8 | |
| REL4011H | Research Essay/Project..... | 30 | 8 |

Elective courses: The remaining HEQSF level 8 courses may be selected from the list of electives set out below.

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|-----------|---|-------------|-----------|
| REL4046FS | Buddhism in Contemporary Society..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4049FS | Islamic Studies (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4053FS | Religion and Culture in Africa..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4054FS | Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 8 |
| REL4091FS | Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4110FS | African Religious Movements (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 8 |
| REL4112FS | Philosophers on Religion..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4113FS | Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 8 |

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| REL4119FS | Embodiment, Religion and Ethics..... | 24 | 8 |

To progress to Master's level an overall average result of not less than 60% must be achieved.

BA/BSocScHons specialising in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society (126 NQF credits) – PART-TIME PROGRAMME (2 years)

[REL04]

Programme Convener:

Dr P L Blond

Prescribed curriculum:

Honours students are required to complete four taught courses at HEQSF level 8 (4000 level) and a research essay:

Compulsory (core) courses – Year 1:

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|-----------------|--|-------------|-----------|
| REL4010F | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions | 124 | 8 |
| REL4012S | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions | 224 | 8 |
| REL4011H | Research Essay/Project..... | 30 | 8 |

Elective courses - Year 2: The remaining HEQSF level 8 courses may be selected from the list of electives set out below.

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|------------------|---|-------------|-----------|
| REL4046FS | Buddhism in Contemporary Society..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4049FS | Islamic Studies (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4053FS | Religion and Culture in Africa..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4054FS | Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 8 |
| REL4091FS | Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4110FS | African Religious Movements (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 8 |
| REL4112FS | Philosophers on Religion | 24 | 8 |
| REL4113FS | Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 8 |
| REL4119FS | Embodiment, Religion and Ethics..... | 24 | 8 |

To progress to Master's level an overall average result of not less than 60% must be achieved.

MA/MSocSc specialising in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society (192 NQF credits) - FULL-TIME PROGRAMME

[REL03]

Programme Convener:

Dr P L Blond

Prescribed curriculum:

Master's students are required to complete a minor dissertation and four taught courses of which no more than two can be at HEQSF level 8 (4000 level).

Compulsory (core) course:

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| REL5003W | Minor Dissertation..... | 96 | 9 |

The remaining courses may be selected from the list of electives set out below. The courses are subject to the approval of the supervisor and should be in the area of specialisation.

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|-----------|---|-------------|-----------|
| REL5018FS | Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 9 |
| REL5091FS | Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5110FS | African Religious Movements (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 9 |
| REL5111FS | Reading Religious Texts (May not be offered in 2026) | 24 | 9 |
| REL5112FS | Philosophers on Religion | 24 | 9 |
| REL5113FS | Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5114FS | Buddhism in Contemporary Society..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5115FS | Islamic Studies (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5116FS | Religion and Culture in Africa..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5117FS | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions | 124 | 9 |
| REL5118FS | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions | 224 | 9 |
| REL5119FS | Embodiment, Religion and Ethics..... | 24 | 9 |

Subject to approval by the Head of Department, an elective offered by a cognate department may replace one or more of the listed electives. Please consult the supplementary elective handbook for descriptions of elective courses offered.

MA/MSocSc specialising in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society (192 NQF credits) - PART-TIME PROGRAMME (2 years)

[REL04]

Programme Convener:

Dr P L Blond

Prescribed curriculum:

Master's students are required to complete a minor dissertation and four taught courses of which no more than two can be at HEQSF level 8 (4000 level).

Elective courses – Year 1:

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|------|---|-------------|-----------|
| | 2 x electives from the list below | (2x24) 48 | 9 |

Compulsory (core) course – Year 2:

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|----------|--|-------------|-----------|
| REL5003W | Minor Dissertation..... | 96 | 9 |
| | AND..... | | |
| | 2 x electives from the list below..... | (2x24) 48 | 9 |

The remaining courses may be selected from the list of electives set out below. The courses are subject to the approval of the supervisor and should be in the area of specialisation.

| Code | Course | NQF Credits | NQF Level |
|-----------|---|-------------|-----------|
| REL5018FS | Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 9 |
| REL5091FS | Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5110FS | African Religious Movements (Not offered in 2026) | 24 | 9 |
| REL5111FS | Reading Religious Texts (May not be offered in 2026) | 24 | 9 |
| REL5112FS | Philosophers on Religion | 24 | 9 |
| REL5113FS | Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5114FS | Buddhism in Contemporary Society..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5115FS | Islamic Studies (Not offered in 2026)..... | 24 | 9 |
| REL5116FS | Religion and Culture in Africa | 24 | 9 |
| REL5117FS | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions | 124 | 9 |
| REL5118FS | Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions | 224 | 9 |
| REL5119FS | Embodiment, Religion and Ethics..... | 24 | 9 |

Subject to approval by the Head of Department, an elective offered by a cognate department may replace one or more of the listed electives. Please consult the supplementary elective handbook for descriptions of elective courses offered.

Master's by dissertation (180 NQF credits) (HEQSF level 9)

[REL03]

REL5000W THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

PhD (360 NQF credits)

REL6000W THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Course Outlines:

REL4010F METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 1

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Dr L P Blond and Dr A Alhourani

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course introduces students to the field and discipline of The Study of Religions as it has developed in the West and imposed itself in this and other departments for The Study of Religions. The main part of this course will be a critical reading of core texts describing and analysing the making of the discipline of The Study of Religions, focusing on laying bare the foundations, theoretical frameworks, disciplinary questions and central concerns of The Study of Religions that has dominated the academy. The course will critically interrogate some of the defining parameters, epistemological and political assumptions that have historically defined the discipline. Selected postcolonial and decolonial readings will be used to read against the dominant narratives to enable a creative rethinking of current possibilities in the field of The Study of Religions.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance and participation in class.

Assessment: Response papers (50%). Final essay of 4000 words (50%).

REL4011H RESEARCH PROJECT / ESSAY

30 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Dr L Blond

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

An appropriate research paper, on a topic chosen in negotiation with the Head of Department and written under the supervision of a staff member. The paper needs to be of approximately 15,000 words in length, and it must demonstrate the student's ability to engage with the theory and methodology of religious studies.

DP requirements: Submission of essay.

Assessment: Research essay 100%.

REL4012S METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 2

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Associate Professor E Porcu and Professor A Ukah

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course focuses on applying the theoretical frameworks and methodologies introduced in Methods and Theories 1 to the honours research project in the Study of Religions in terms of research proposal, selection of methodological and theoretical frameworks, literature review, thesis development and data analysis.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance and participation in class.

Assessment: Response papers (50%). Research project of 4000 words (50%).

REL4046FS BUDDHISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Associate Professor E Porcu

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course will examine Buddhism as a living tradition in its relation to society and culture. Students will be exposed to different Buddhist traditions both in their historical and contemporary developments, their teachings and practices. We will, for example, explore issues of orientalism and hegemonic power in the construction of Buddhism, Buddhism and gender, Buddhism and popular culture, Buddhism, art and the media, and the transmission of Buddhism to the West and Africa, as well as Buddhism-based new religious movements. Particular emphasis will be placed on East Asian Buddhism.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance and participation in class.

Assessment: Class presentations (10%). 4 weekly response papers (40%). Final essay of 4000 words (50%).

REL4049FS ISLAMIC STUDIES

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Dr A Alhourani

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course provides postgraduate students with tools to study Islam as a religious tradition-spanning through changing historical context(s). Using the tools of the phenomenological and historical study of religion, the course enables the students to analyse the beliefs, practices and institutions of Islam in their variety, historical development and various contexts. Themes explored include the life of the Prophet Muhammad; the transmission of the foundational sacred texts of Islam (Quran and Hadith); the development of Islamic law and jurisprudence, the formation of

schools of theology and philosophy; Islamic mysticism (Sufism). Each of the above themes is addressed through a combination of phenomenological and critical historical method.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance of weekly seminars.

Assessment: Weekly response papers (50%) and one 4000-word essay (50%).

REL4053FS RELIGION & CULTURE IN AFRICA

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Professor A Ukah

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course is an exploration of African religions and culture. It will provide in-depth discussions of principal and fundamental issues and themes concerning African culture and African Traditional Religions, beginning with issues revolving around the academic study of African religions. Some concepts and worldviews that are ordinarily considered to be uniquely African will be analysed. We will also examine a select set of issues and historical developments in the cultural thinking of Africans about Africa. Selected case studies of Islamic and Christian religious culture in Africa will also be explored during the course.

DP requirements: Participation in all classes and a reading assessment to be submitted at the end of each class based on readings for that section.

Assessment: Reading assessments (50%) and one 4000-word final essay (50%).

REL4054FS RELIGION, GENDER AND SEXUALITY: EXPLORING CONTESTED TERRITORIES

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Professor S Shaikh

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course explores the dynamic interplay between gender, sexuality and religion. Using diverse feminist theoretical lenses, we examine how social norms, ethics, and symbols intertwine with sexuality and gender across different religious landscapes. With sensitivity, we navigate through the evolving landscapes of contemporary religious practices, laws, spirituality, texts, and interpretations. The course investigates the rich tapestry of gender theorizations, the evolving concept of personhood and subjectivities, ethics and social dynamics, across selected religious landscapes. Immersing ourselves in vibrant and shifting religious imaginaries, the course invites us to be both critical and constructive in thinking through the boundaries and transformations of gender and sexuality perspectives emerging in the contemporary period.

DP requirements: Regular participation to weekly seminars; submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates.

Assessment: Response papers/short essays (40%), oral presentation (10%), and final research essay, 3500 words (50%).

REL4091FS SPIRITUALITY AND ETHICS IN ISLAM: EXPLORATIONS IN SUFISM

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Professor S Shaikh

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course explores Islamic spirituality and its relationship to ethics. A significant manifestation of spirituality in the Islamic tradition is embodied in the way of the Sufis. Sufism is the name given to the mystical path (al-tariqa) of Islam and remains one of the most influential interpretations and practices of Islam. In this course we trace core developments within Sufi doctrine and practices

including rituals, techniques for self-cultivation, music and poetry, as well as animating ideas of human subjectivity and diversity, and how these are embodied in communal life and social relations, both in the past and in the present. In its attentiveness to ethics, the course will also explore the implications and connections of Sufism to law and legal ethics.

DP requirements: Regular participation in weekly seminars; submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates.

Assessment: Attendance of, and preparation for, seminars; oral presentations (10%), seminar papers (45%) and a final essay of 4000 words (45%).

REL4110FS AFRICAN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Professor A Ukah

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

With the coming of Islam and Christianity in Africa, new religious movements blossomed in the continent. This course examines some major theories in the history and the sociology of religious movements, and provides a critical investigation of selected case-studies of major religious movements within the three major religious traditions of Africa, namely, African Indigenous religions, African Christianities and African Islams.

DP requirements: Regular attendance at all seminars and timeous completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Reading/essay assessments (30%) and a final essay of 4000 words (70%).

REL4112FS PHILOSOPHERS ON RELIGION

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Dr L P Blond

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course will explore a selection of philosophers who have placed religion at the centre of their work either in order to critique its worth or to transform religious concepts into different, often secular, forms. The philosophers selected will be major figures in Western thought who have challenged traditional forms of Jewish and Christian religious authority (for example, Spinoza and Nietzsche) or philosophers who have contributed to debates on the value of religious concepts and religious ethics (for example, Jacobi, Hegel, MacIntyre and Levinas) to demonstrate their continued relevance. The course will explore how value and meaning are contested on religious concepts and it will attempt to show that current debates extend and build on the significant contributions of earlier thinkers in the Western canon.

DP requirements: Regular attendance at all seminars and timeous completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Attendance of and preparation for seminar, seminar papers (50%) and a final essay of 4000 words (50%).

REL4113FS ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH THOUGHT

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Dr L P Blond

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course raises issues that affect much of 20th century and contemporary Jewish thought as they affect religious and secular life. The Jewish experience of the twentieth century is marked by emancipation, holocaust and the re-establishment of the State of Israel. We will explore a selection

of thinkers who have attempted to come to terms with the consequences of these events as they affect secular and religious life. The thinkers selected will be major figures in Jewish thought who have wrestled with the political, philosophical and religious questions raised in Jewish experience, such as Hannah Arendt, Emil Fackenheim, Richard Rubenstein, Theodor Adorno, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Yeshayahu Leibowitz. We will also address themes such as post-holocaust thought, religious freedom and the law, and the relationship of Jews to the European tradition and the concept of otherness.

DP requirements: Regular attendance at all seminars and timely completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Weekly response papers (50%) and a 4000-word essay (50%).

REL4119FS EMBODIMENT, RELIGION AND ETHICS

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Dr A Alhourani

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for an honours programme.

Course outline:

This course critically examines various theories of embodiment and aesthetics and relates them to questions of ethics, the human body, and religious experiences and traditions. The course initiates an exploration into how the material culture of religion and its associated sensational experiences condition the human body and the cultivation of social norms and virtue ethics. Through close analysis of both religious primary texts and ethnographic case studies from different religious cultures, including Islam and African traditions, this course provides a comparative insight into the values and meanings of embodiment and ethics and aims to unpack and better understand the complexity of the world we live in.

DP requirements: Regular attendance and participation in weekly seminars, and submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates

Assessment: Class participation (10%); Oral presentation (5%); Response papers (40%) and 4000-word Final Essay (45%)

REL5003W MINOR DISSERTATION

96 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr L Blond

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

A dissertation completed under supervision which shows thorough practical and/or academic knowledge of the approved subject and methods of research, and evidence of independent critical power in the handling and interpretation of material already known or newly discovered, may embody such original work of others as may be pertinent, may include the candidate's own published material on the same subject, if the prior permission of the Senate has been obtained. The dissertation must be the candidate's own work and any contributions to and quotations in the dissertation must be cited and referenced.

DP requirements: Regular consultation with supervisor.

Assessment: A dissertation of no more than 25,000 words in length.

REL5018FS RELIGION, GENDER AND SEXUALITY: EXPLORING CONTESTED TERRITORIES

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Professor S Shaikh

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course explores the dynamic interplay between gender, sexuality and religion. Using diverse feminist theoretical lenses, we examine how social norms, ethics, and symbols intertwine with

sexuality and gender across different religious landscapes. With sensitivity, we navigate through the evolving landscapes of contemporary religious practices, laws, spirituality, texts, and interpretations. The course investigates the rich tapestry of gender theorizations, the evolving concept of personhood and subjectivities, ethics and social dynamics, across selected religious landscapes. Immersing ourselves in vibrant and shifting religious imaginaries, the course invites us to be both critical and constructive in thinking through the boundaries and transformations of gender and sexuality perspectives emerging in the contemporary period.

DP requirements: Regular participation in weekly seminars; submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates.

Assessment: Response papers/short essays (40%), oral presentation (10%), and final research essay, 5000 words (50%).

REL5091FS SPIRITUALITY AND ETHICS IN ISLAM: EXPLORATIONS IN SUFISM

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Professor S Shaikh

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course explores Islamic spirituality and its relationship to ethics. A significant manifestation of spirituality in the Islamic tradition is embodied in the way of the Sufis. Sufism is the name given to the mystical path (al-tariqa) of Islam, and remains one of the most influential interpretations and practices of Islam. In this course we trace core developments within Sufi doctrine and practices including rituals, techniques for self-cultivation, music and poetry, as well as animating ideas of human subjectivity and diversity, and how these are embodied in communal life and social relations, both in the past and in the present. In its attentiveness to ethics, the course will also explore the implications and connections of Sufism to law and legal ethics.

DP requirements: Regular participation in weekly seminars; submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates.

Assessment: Attendance of and preparation for seminars; oral presentations (10%), seminar papers (45%) and a final essay of 6000 words (45%).

DOH5100S ISLAM, GENDER AND SEXUALITY: RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN A

(Not offered in 2026)

12 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr F Seedat and Professor S Shaikh

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course aims to provide critical engagement on epistemology and research methodology in the study of gender, sexuality and Islam. It seeks to provide students with the theoretical and methodological tools to develop a research proposal which is informed by the interdisciplinary insights at the convergence of the study of gender, sexuality and Islam. It aims to support Masters level researchers in the study of religion and gender studies in the design, and implementation of their individual research projects, as well to ensure a peer-based cohort of young scholars capable of critical and engaged discussion on research processes within local and global contexts.

Assessment: Participation (30%); paper 1 (10%); paper 2 (10%); proposal (50%).

DOH5101F ISLAM, GENDER AND SEXUALITY: RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN B

(Not offered in 2026)

12 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Associate Professor F Seedat and Professor S Shaikh

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course aims to support and develop critical research skills in the study of Islam, gender, and sexuality initiated in Research Methods A. The course will support Masters students in their research process, by developing and refining core epistemological, theoretical, methodological skills in African feminist approaches to the study of Islam. Students are guided in the processes of data collection, data analysis and developing research findings through the course of dissertation writing. Following from Research Methods A, the course will ensure a peer-based cohort of young scholars capable of critical and engaged discussion on research processes within an African context.

Assessment: Participation (30%), Paper 1 (30%), Paper 2 and Presentation (40%)

REL5110FS AFRICAN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Professor A Ukah

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

With the coming of Islam and Christianity in Africa, new religious movements blossomed in the continent. This course examines some major theories in the history and the sociology of religious movements, and provides a critical investigation of selected case-studies of major religious movements within the three major religious traditions of Africa, namely, African Indigenous religions, African Christianities and African Islams.

DP requirements: Regular attendance at all seminars and timeous completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Reading/essay assessments (30%) and a final essay of 6000 words (70%).

REL5111FS READING RELIGIOUS TEXTS

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr A Alhourani

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course is designed to give students exposure to religious texts and their commentarial literature in the religious traditions studied in the department. It will introduce hermeneutical and analytical tools for reading these texts in translation or, skills permitting, in their original languages. With these tools, students will undertake a close reading of selected texts in light of their social and religious contexts. They will also develop the skills to address relevant issues about canon, authenticity, orality and writing, intertextuality and interpretation. This course will prepare masters students for the critical contextual reading essential to undertake new research in these traditions.

DP requirements: Regular attendance at all seminars and timeous completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Weekly seminar papers (50%). A final essay of 6000 words (50%).

REL5112FS PHILOSOPHERS ON RELIGION

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr L P Blond

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course will explore a selection of philosophers who have placed religion at the centre of their work either in order to critique its worth or to transform religious concepts into different, often secular, forms. The philosophers selected will be major figures in Western thought who have challenged traditional forms of Jewish and Christian religious authority (for example, Spinoza and Nietzsche) or philosophers who have contributed to debates on the value of religious concepts and religious ethics (for example, Jacobi, Hegel, MacIntyre and Levinas) to demonstrate their continued relevance. The course will explore how value and meaning are contested on religious concepts and it

will attempt to show that current debates extend and build on the significant contributions of earlier thinkers in the Western canon.

DP requirements: Regular attendance at all seminars and timeous completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Attendance of and preparation for seminar, seminar papers (50%) and a final essay of 6000 words (50%).

REL5113FS ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH THOUGHT

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr L P Blond

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course raises issues that affect much of 20th century and Contemporary Jewish Thought as they affect religious and secular life. The Jewish experience of the twentieth century is marked by emancipation, holocaust and the re-establishment of the State of Israel. We will explore a selection of thinkers who have attempted to come to terms with the consequences of these events as they affect secular and religious life. The thinkers selected will be major figures in Jewish thought who have wrestled with the political, philosophical and religious questions raised in Jewish experience, such as Hannah Arendt, Emil Fackenheim, Richard Rubenstein, Theodor Adorno, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacque Derrida, Yeshayahu Leibowitz. We will also address themes such as post-holocaust thought, religious freedom and the law, and the relationship of Jews to the European tradition and the concept of otherness.

DP requirements: Regular attendance at all seminars and timeous completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Attendance of, and preparation for, seminar; seminar papers (50%) and a final essay of 6000 words (50%).

REL5114FS BUDDHISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Associate Professor E Porcu

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course will examine Buddhism as a living tradition in its relation to society and culture. Students will be exposed to different Buddhist traditions both in their historical and contemporary developments, their teachings and practices. We will, for example, explore issues of orientalism and hegemonic power in the construction of Buddhism, Buddhism and gender, Buddhism and popular culture, Buddhism, art and the media, and the transmission of Buddhism to the West and Africa, as well as Buddhism-based new religious movements. Particular emphasis will be placed on East Asian Buddhism.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance and participation in class.

Assessment: Class presentations (10%). 4 weekly response papers (40%). A final essay of 6000 words (50%).

REL5115FS ISLAMIC STUDIES

(Not offered in 2026)

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr A Alhourani

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course provides postgraduate students with the tools to study Islam as a religious tradition spanning Using the tools of the phenomenological and historical study of religion, the course enables the students to analyse the beliefs, practices and institutions of Islam in their variety, Themes explored include the life of the Prophet Muhammad; the transmission of the foundational sacred texts of Islam (Quran and Hadith); the development of Islamic law and jurisprudence; the formation of schools of theology and philosophy; Islamic mysticism (Sufism). Each of the above themes is addressed through a combination of phenomenological and critical historical method.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance of weekly seminars.

Assessment: Weekly response papers (50%) and one 6000-word essay (50%).

REL5116FS RELIGION AND CULTURE IN AFRICA

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Professor A Ukah

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course is an exploration of African religions and culture. It will provide in-depth discussions of principal and fundamental issues and themes concerning African culture and African Traditional Religions, beginning with issues revolving around the academic study of African religions. Some concepts and worldviews that are ordinarily considered to be uniquely African will be analysed. We will also examine a select set of issues and historical developments in the cultural thinking of Africans about Africa. Selected case studies of Islamic and Christian religious culture in Africa will also be explored during the course.

DP requirements: Participation in all classes and a reading assessment to be submitted at the end of each class based on readings for that section.

Assessment: Reading assessments (50%) and one 6000-word final essay (50%).

REL5117FS METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 1

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr L P Blond and Dr A Alhourani

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course introduces students to the field and discipline of The Study of Religions as it has developed in the West and imposed itself in this and other departments for The Study of Religions. The main part of this course will be a critical reading of core texts describing and analysing the making of the discipline of The Study of Religions, focusing on laying bare the foundations, theoretical frameworks, disciplinary questions and central concerns of The Study of Religions that has dominated the academy. The course will critically interrogate some of the defining parameters, epistemological and political assumptions that have historically defined the discipline. Selected postcolonial and decolonial readings will be used to read against the dominant narratives to enable a creative rethinking of current possibilities in the field of The Study of Religions.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance and participation in class.

Assessment: Response papers (50%). Final essay of 6000 words (50%).

REL5118FS METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 2

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Associate Professor E Porcu and Professor A Ukah

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course focuses on applying the theoretical frameworks and methodologies introduced in Methods and Theories 1 to the honours research project in the Study of Religions in terms of research proposal, selection of methodological and theoretical frameworks, literature review, thesis development and data analysis.

DP requirements: Submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates. Regular attendance and participation in class.

Assessment: Response papers (50%). Research project of 6000 words (50%).

REL5119FS EMBODIMENT, RELIGION AND ETHICS

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Dr A Alhourani

Course entry requirements: Acceptance for a master's programme.

Course outline:

This course critically examines various theories of embodiment and aesthetics and relates them to questions of ethics, the human body, and religious experiences and traditions. The course initiates an exploration into how the material culture of religion and its associated sensational experiences condition the human body and the cultivation of social norms and virtue ethics. Through close analysis of both religious primary texts and ethnographic case studies from different religious cultures, including Islam and African traditions, this course provides a comparative insight into the values and meanings of embodiment and ethics and aims to unpack and better understand the complexity of the world we live in.

DP requirements: Regular attendance and participation in weekly seminars, and submission of all prescribed assignments by due dates

Assessment: Class participation (10%); Oral presentation (5%); Response papers (40%) and a 6000-word Final Essay (45%)
