



STUDY OF RELIGIONS APPLY NOW

2027

Explore Meaning. Understand the World.
Study how religion shapes society, identity, ethics, politics,
gender, education, and global change.

**JOIN OUR CUTTING-EDGE PROGRAMMES
THAT EXPLORES THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN
TODAY'S RAPIDLY EVOLVING GLOBAL
LANDSCAPE.**

DESIGNED FOR THINKERS, STUDENTS,
RESEARCHERS, EDUCATORS AND
PROFESSIONALS WHO SEEK TO MAKE
SENSE OF THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN
DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS,
CULTURE, AND SOCIETY.

IDEAL FOR CAREERS IN ACADEMIA, POLICY,
INTERFAITH
WORK, MEDIA AND NGO'S

Who Should Apply?

Students from all faculties are welcome
Ideal for majors, electives, or broadening
courses

Why Choose Us?

Expert Faculty:

- Learn from leading scholars and researchers across disciplines.
- Experienced educators.

Real-World Applications:

- Enhance your critical thinking, communication, and cultural fluency.
- Engage in hands-on projects and case studies.
- Explore religion in politics, education, psychology, philosophy, sociology, gender and media spaces.
- Engage with diverse traditions and contemporary debates.

Flexible Options:

- Thought-Provoking Lectures: Big Ideas, Maximum Impact, Small Time Commitment & Maximum Flexibility
- Stay on Track with consistent support and real results
- No lectures on Mondays and Fridays
- 100% coursework assessment — NO EXAMS!

**Take your curiosity further — join the conversation that shapes
the world!**



APPLY NOW

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

Applications for 2027 intake open in April 2026
Application Deadline: 31 October 2026

Contact Us

- Email: religions@uct.ac.za
- Call: 021 650 3452
- Website: <https://humanities.uct.ac.za/department-study-religions>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ReligionsUCT>

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

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.

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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

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Postgraduate information:

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