

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS



2025 REGISTRATION

Postgrad Registration:

2025 registration will take place [ONLINE](#) as follows:

- Registration for all programmes will take place online from **22 January – 12 February 2025** 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 22 January – 09 February 2024.

Curriculum Advice for Coursework Programmes in the Study of Religions:

Postgraduate curriculum advice will be provided in-person in the REL department and 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, Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh. Please contact her via email to book either an in-person or online meeting: Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za
- **For curriculum advice** you may start to liaise with the department as follows:
 - PG students on our taught courses should email Prof Shaikh (Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za) directly with questions or to arrange an online meeting from **1st February 2025 onward**.
 - Students need to provide Prof Shaikh with all necessary documentation when contacting her for advice e.g. *student records, degrees, cv, acceptance letter etc.*
- **For Signatures**, Prof Shaikh will be available for a signature from **03 - 06 February 2025**, between 10.00am - 04.00pm. She won't respond to overnight emails until the following day, so deadline for feedback is end of working day on the **06th of February 2025**.
- 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 **03 – 06 February 2025** so that students have what is required and can register by the Faculty deadline of 12th February 2025.

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 2024.**
- **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:** A/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:** A/Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh: (Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za)
- **General staff contacts for course specific/supervision matters:**
 - o Prof Asonzeh Ukah: Asonzeh.Ukah@uct.ac.za
 - o Prof Abdulkader Tayob: Abdulkader.Tayob@uct.ac.za
 - o Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh: Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za
 - o A/Prof Elisabetta Porcu: Elisabetta.Porcu@uct.ac.za
 - o Dr Louis Blond: Louis.Blond@uct.ac.za
 - o Dr Ala Alhourani: Ala.Alhourani@uct.ac.za

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
2025 POSTGRADUATE REGISTRATION SCHEDULE
(22 January – 12 February 2025)**

FINAL Timetable: * as at 07 August 2025 DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

MODES OF REGISTRATION KEY	PROGRAMME ENROLMENT: PE BLANK CURRICULUM CART: BCC
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NEW AND RETURNING PG DIPLOMA, 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	Study of Religions and Contemporary Society [REL02]	HH003REL02 HH001REL02	Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh	Tasneem Wise	03 - 06 February 2025	BCC
	Masters by crsewrk & dissertation	Study of Religions and Contemporary Society [REL02]	HM008REL02 HM006REL02				BCC

New and Returning PhD and Research Masters Student

Programme	Specialisation	Programme Code	Mode of Registration
PhD/ Doctoral	Study of Religions and Contemporary Society [REL02]	HD001REL02	Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA

New and Returning Masters by Dissertation/Research Only

Programme	Specialisation	Programme Code	Mode of Registration
MA	Study of Religions and Contemporary Society [REL02]	HM007REL02	Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA
MPhil	Study of Religions and Contemporary Society [REL02]	HM003REL02	Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA
MSocSc	Study of Religions and Contemporary Society [REL02]	HM005REL02	Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA
MA	Theatre	HM007TDP02	Programme Enrolment Following Completion of MOU/PPA

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES POSTGRADUATE REGISTRATION 2025

OVERVIEW

Registration/enrolment for the 2025 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 22 January 2025. The detailed schedule may be reviewed via:

[HUMANITIES PG REGISTRATION SCHEDULE 2025](#)

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 2025](#)

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. You may start to liaise with your department about this from the [17 January 2025](#) onwards.

*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.



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 **28th February 2025**.
- **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

*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.



MODE OF REGISTRATION

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

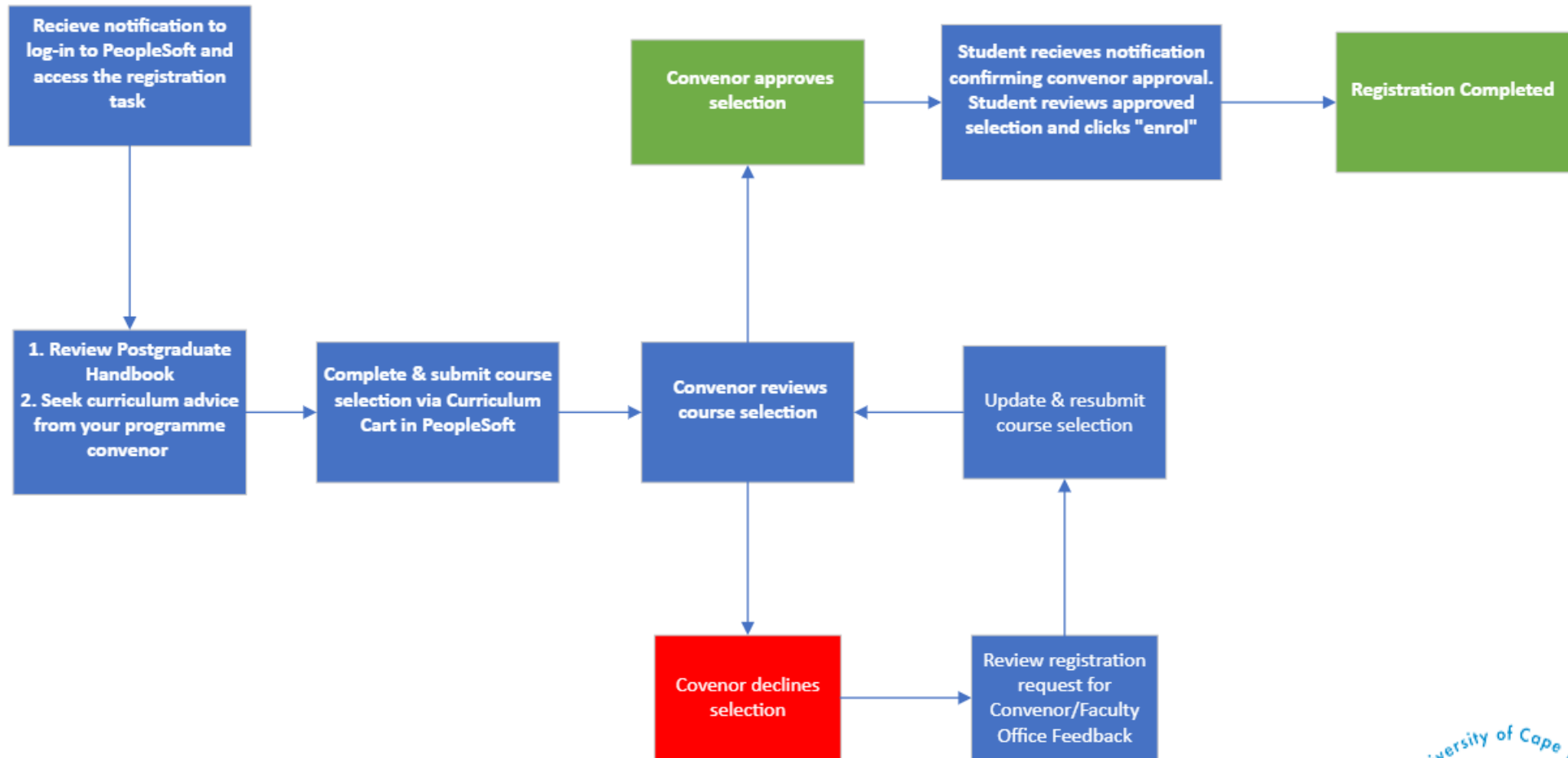
- **Blank Curriculum Cart:** You will receive a system generated activity guide which replaces the need for a registration form. Once the activity guide is complete it will be possible for you to complete your course selection via your registration task (in consultation with your convenor) and submit 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

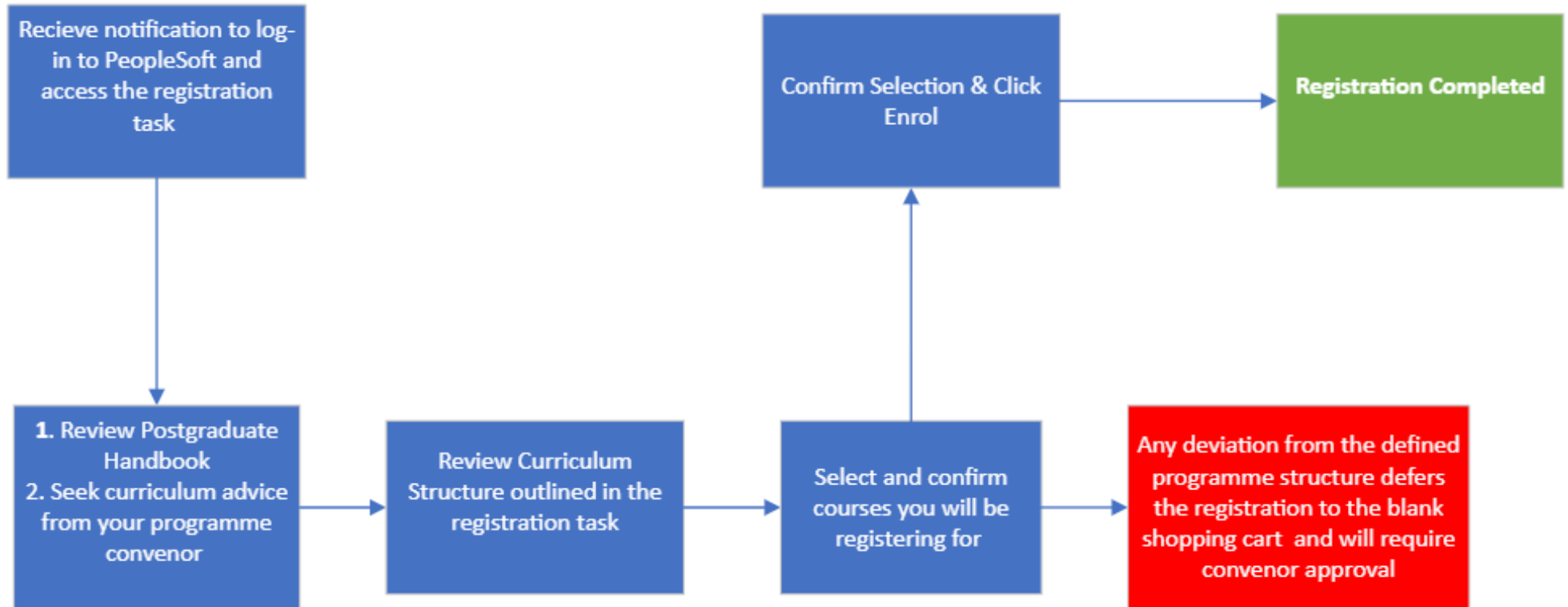
The below process will apply if you are registering using the **Blank Curriculum Cart**:



*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.



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

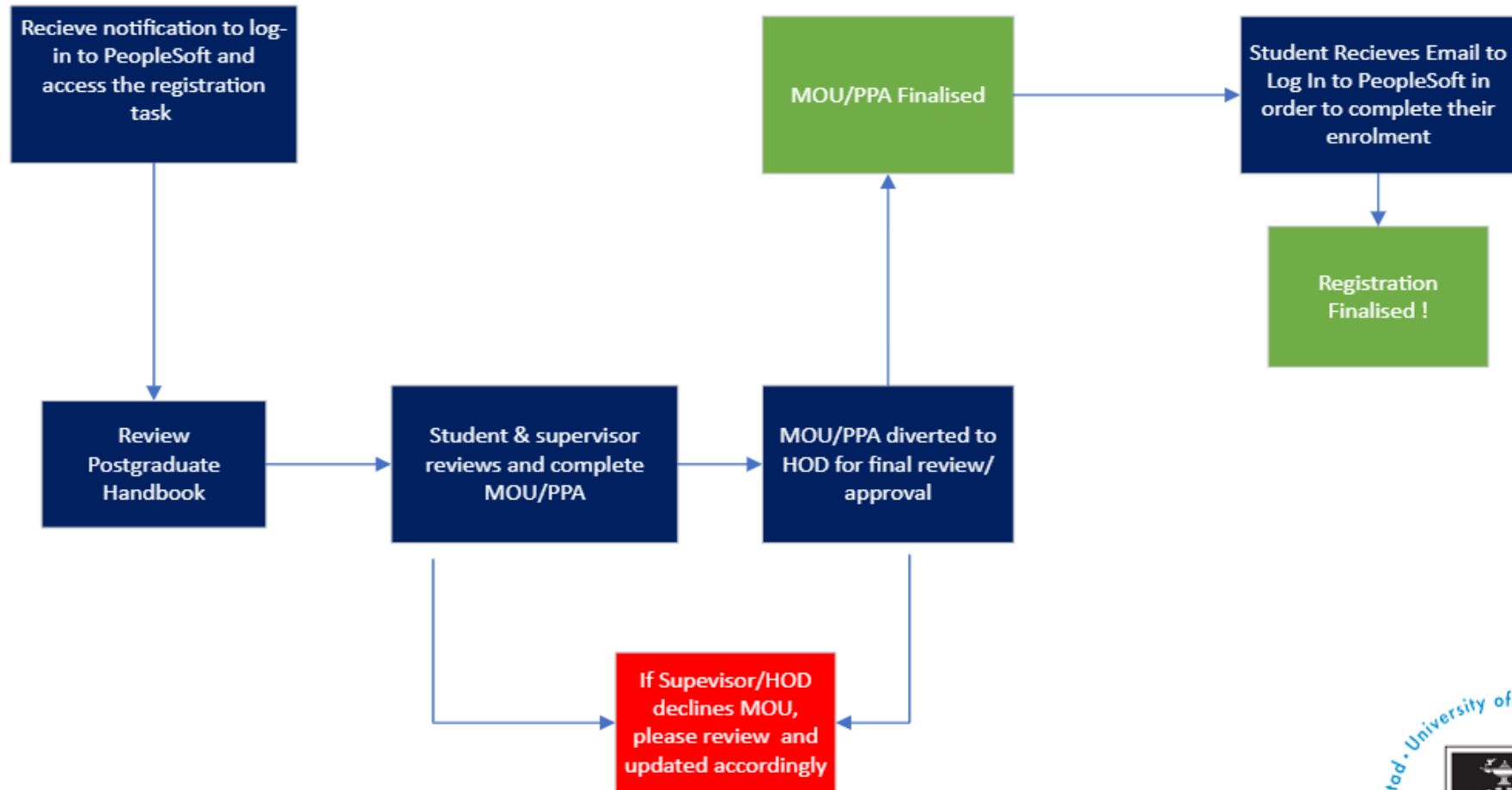


*Unless specified otherwise in the registration schedule.



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.



POSTGRAD PROGRAMMES IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

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

Duration: 1 Year

MA / MSocSc Specialising in the Study of Religions

Duration: 2 Years

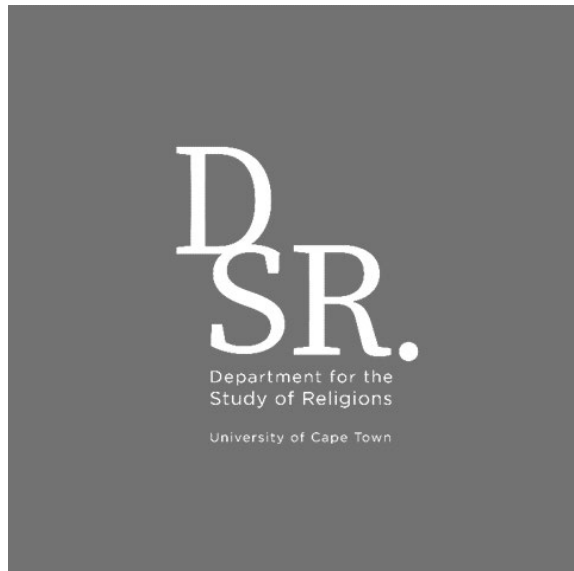
MPhil Specialising in Islam, Gender and Sexuality (*not offered in 2025*)

Duration: 2 Years

PhD Specialising in the Study of Religions

Duration: Minimum registration 2 years

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 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

The Department also offers the **Honours programme** on a part-time basis over 2 years. As per the below excerpt from the Handbook 9b Faculty Rules for Postgraduate Qualifications, the part-time honours is completed over 2 years and fees are charged per course.

FH5 Period of Registration:

5.2 *Part-time study*

- (a) A two-year programme may be offered for *bona fide* part-time students by any department in the Faculty which offers an Honours course, at the discretion of the Head of Department concerned. Applications from students for a two-year programme shall be submitted, together with the evidence that the applicant is a *bona fide* part-time student, by the Head of the Department concerned to the Faculty for approval.
- (b) A part-time candidate shall attend and complete the prescribed work for the degree within two years of part-time study.

Honours courses:

- ❖ Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1 (Compulsory)
- ❖ Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2 (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

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

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

- 1) A **Masters by coursework** takes two years. Students take four courses 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
- ❖ 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 2025

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 (RICSAs) 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

Find us on Facebook: Religious Studies at UCT.

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

Undergraduate information:

Abdulkhikim Nsobya (Senior Secretary)

LS 5.40

T: (021) 650 3452

M: Abdulkhikim.Nsobya@uct.ac.za

Postgraduate information:

Tasneem Wise (Admin Assistant)


LS 5.36

T: (021) 650 5818

M: Tasneem.Wise@uct.ac.za

Department for the Study of Religions

Postgraduate Courses (2025)

<u>Honours Courses</u>	<u>Masters Courses</u>	<u>PhD Courses</u>
*4 courses plus research project (REL4011H)	*Masters by Coursework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st year (4 courses) and • 2nd year Minor Dissertation (REL5003W) *Research Masters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissertation only (REL5000W) 	*Dissertation only (REL6000W)
<u>Research / Dissertation Courses</u>		
REL4011H: Research Project/Essay	REL5003W (Minor Dissertation) REL5000W (Research Masters)	REL6000W (PhD in the Study of Religions and Contemporary Society)
<u>Lecture Courses</u>		
<u>Honours Courses</u>	<u>Masters Courses</u>	<i>*Note:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. REL4010F: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1 (compulsory) 2. REL4012S: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2 (compulsory) 3. REL4110S: African Religious Movements 4. REL4053F: Religion and Culture in Africa 5. REL4113F: Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought 6. REL4112F: Philosophers on Religion 7. REL4049F: Islamic Studies 8. REL4046S: Buddhism in Contemporary Society 9. REL4091S: Spirituality and Ethics in Islam - Explorations in Sufism 10. REL4054S: Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories 11. REL4119S: Embodiment, Religion and Ethics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. REL5117F: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1 2. REL5118S: Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2 3. REL5110S: African Religious Movements 4. REL5116F: Religion and Culture in Africa 5. REL5113F: Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought 6. REL5112F: Philosophers on Religion 7. REL5115F: Islamic Studies 8. REL5114S: Buddhism in Contemporary Society 9. REL5091S: Spirituality and Ethics in Islam -Explorations in Sufism 10. REL5018S: Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories 11. REL5119S: Embodiment, Religion and Ethics 12. DOH5100S: IGS Research Methods A 13. DOH5101F: IGS Islam, Gender, Sexuality: Research Method and Design B 	<p><i>Courses in bold will be offered in 2025</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS



*POSTGRADUATE LECTURE TIMETABLE
FIRST SEMESTER 2025*

COURSE CODE	COURSE	TIME	SCHEDULE	VENUE
REL4010F REL5117F	Critical Terms in the Study of Religions 1 Dr Ala Alhourani Dr Louis Blond	09H00 - 10H30	19 February - 14 May 2025 Every Wednesday - 1.5hrs per week	in-person REL Seminar Room LS5.67
REL4049F REL5115F	Islamic Studies Dr Ala Alhourani	11H00 - 12H30	19 February - 14 May 2025 Every Wednesday - 1.5hrs per week	in-person REL Seminar Room LS5.67
ALL WELCOME	POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR	13H00 - 14H00	Takes place every alternate Wednesday	LS5.67 & Online via MS Teams
REL4113F REL5113F	Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought Dr Louis Blond	14H15 - 15H45	19 February - 14 May 2025 Every Wednesday - 1.5hrs per week	in-person REL Seminar Room LS5.67
REL5111F	Reading Religious Texts Dr Ala Alhourani	WILL ONLY BE OFFERED AS A READING GROUP AND TO MA STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL CREDITS - SCHEDULE CONFIRMED WITH SUPERVISOR		

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS



*POSTGRADUATE LECTURE TIMETABLE
SECOND SEMESTER 2025*

COURSE CODE	COURSE	TIME	SCHEDULE	VENUE
REL4012S REL5118S	Critical Terms in the Study of Religions 2 A/Prof Elisabetta Porcu Prof Asonzeh Ukah	09H00 - 10H30	30 July - 22 October 2025 Every Wednesday - 1.5hrs per week	in-person REL Seminar Room LS5.67
REL4054S REL5018S	Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh	11H00 - 12H30	30 July - 22 October 2025 Every Wednesday - 1.5hrs per week	in-person REL Seminar Room LS5.67
ALL WELCOME	POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR	13H00 - 14H00	Takes place every alternate Wednesday	LS5.67 & Online via MS Teams / Zoom
REL4046S REL5114S	Buddhism in Contemporary Society A/Prof Elisabetta Porcu	14H15 - 15H45	30 July - 22 October 2025 Every Wednesday - 1.5hrs per week	in-person REL Seminar Room LS5.67
REL5111S	Reading Religious Texts Dr Ala Alhourani	WILL ONLY BE OFFERED AS A READING GROUP AND TO MA STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL CREDITS - SCHEDULE CONFIRMED WITH SUPERVISOR		

The Study of Religions [REL] - 2025

The Department for the Study of Religions is committed to the study of religions which will contribute to public life in our local, regional, national and continental contexts. It is dedicated to:

- an open, plural, intercultural, and interdisciplinary study of religion in all its forms;
- the in-depth study of African religious traditions;
- the creative and critical analysis of religion as a force in personal, social, economic and political life;
- the promotion of quality education and research in the study of religion as a vital contribution to the transformation and development of South Africa.

The mission statement is implemented through degree specialisations that focus on the broad theme of religion, culture and identity. The Department offers a systematic study of religion in public life, its meaning and significance in South Africa in particular and Africa in general. This broad theme is explored in core courses team-taught by faculty members and also reflected in various research projects and institutes presently housed in the Department.

Core courses provide the thematic, methodological and theoretical foundations for all students who choose to pursue degrees in this department. Additional courses continue this focus within the established areas of specialisation: African Studies, Christian Studies, Comparative Studies, Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, Buddhism and Critical Theory.

Courses in areas of specialisation

Hereunder follows a broad map of the courses offered in the areas of specialisation. Not all courses indicated below will be offered in any given year. However, they will follow the pattern outlined here.

African Studies

The courses in African studies explore the varieties of indigenous religious belief systems as well as the impact of global religions like Christianity (especially Pentecostalism) and Islam on the continent. Students will be prepared to do research on religion in Africa through different methodological and theoretical paradigms. A specialization in African studies can be pursued in combination with a focus on Christian and/or Islamic studies.

Buddhism

The department offers postgraduate study and supervision in Asian religious traditions with a special emphasis on Buddhism. Currently an Honours level course on Buddhism and Modernity and guided reading projects through Reading Religious Texts are offered. Research interests include the contemporary spread and transformations of Buddhism, Buddhism and Globalisation, conversion and socially and environmentally engaged Asian spiritualities, with a particular focus on Japan.

Christian Studies

The courses in Christian Studies focus mainly on the Sociology of Christianity and on the study of African Pentecostalism. The latter section debates the social impact and trajectories of Christian new religious movements and new forms of believing and being Christian as espoused by the Pentecostal-charismatic churches and ministries, their engagement with media (Internet use, religious broadcasting, production and reproduction of books, DVDs & podcasts, Pentecostal advertising: posters, billboards, handbills), fiscal and political practices.

Comparative Studies

The courses in Comparative Studies are divided into two categories: Issues in the Study of Religion and Religion in Contemporary Society. The first area includes courses in the Problem of Religion, Religion and Ritual, Sacred Space, Religion, Gender and Embodiment, and the History of Religions

in Southern Africa. The second area includes courses in Religion and Popular Culture, Religion and Urban Culture and Religion, Education and Society in South Africa.

Islamic Studies

The courses in Islamic Studies explore Islam as religion, culture and civilization in particular contexts and themes. An Honours level course covers fundamental concepts within Islam from phenomenological and socio-historical perspectives. This course is indispensable for any student embarking on research relating to Islam at a post-graduate level. At the Master's level, we offer specialized courses on Sufism, Islam in Africa, Gender, Islam and Feminism.

Philosophy of Religion/Critical Theory

The courses in Philosophy of Religion, Critical Theory and Post-Structuralist Thought address contemporary issues in European philosophy, philosophy of religion, modern Jewish thought and post-colonial theory. Courses such as Philosophers on Religion, Critical Theory, and Levinas, Derrida and the "Other" explore how reason, religion, ethics and subjectivity constitute meaning and value and how our social and historical conditions also contributes to life and meaning formation.

Weekly seminars

In addition to the normal course requirements, students are required to attend the seminars hosted during the course of the year. The intention of the seminars is to expose all postgraduates to seminars delivered by staff members and visitors to the Department. Attendance at all colloquia is compulsory and students will be required to reflect knowledge of their content in examinations. Details of these events will be advertised during the course of the year.

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)

[REL03]

Programme Convener:

Professor S Shaikh

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 1	24	8
REL4012S	Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2	24	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	24	8
REL4053FS	Religion and Culture in Africa (Not offered in 2025)	24	8
REL4054FS	Religion, Gender and Sexuality: Exploring contested territories..	24	8
REL4091FS	Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism (Not offered in 2025)	24	8
REL4110FS	African Religious Movements (Not offered in 2025).....	24	8
REL4112FS	Philosophers on Religion (Not offered in 2025).....	24	8
REL4113FS	Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought.....	24	8
REL4119FS	Embodiment, Religion and Ethics (Not offered in 2025).....	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)

[REL03]

Programme Convener:

Professor S Shaikh

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..	24	9
REL5091FS	Spirituality and Ethics in Islam: Explorations in Sufism (Not offered in 2025)	24	9
REL5110FS	African Religious Movements (Not offered in 2025).....	24	9
REL5111FS	Reading Religious Texts (May not be offered in 2025).....	24	9
REL5112FS	Philosophers on Religion (Not offered in 2025).....	24	9
REL5113FS	Issues in Contemporary Jewish Thought.....	24	9
REL5114FS	Buddhism in Contemporary Society	24	9
REL5115FS	Islamic Studies	24	9
REL5116FS	Religion and Culture in Africa (Not offered in 2025)	24	9
REL5117FS	Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 1	24	9
REL5118FS	Methods and Theory in the Study of Religions 2	24	9
REL5119FS	Embodiment, Religion and Ethics (Not offered in 2025).....	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)

[RELO3]

REL5000W THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

PhD

REL6000W PhD THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

POSTGRAD COURSE OUTLINES:

REL4010F METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 1

24 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: 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 4,000 words (50%).

REL4011H RESEARCH PROJECT / ESSAY

30 NQF credits at NQF level 8

Convener: Professor S Shaikh

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 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 4,000 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 4,000 words (50%).

REL4049FS ISLAMIC STUDIES

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 4,000-word essay (50%).

REL4054FS RELIGION, GENDER AND SEXUALITY: EXPLORING CONTESTED TERRITORIES

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, 3,500 words (50%).

REL4113FS ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH THOUGHT

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 4,000-word essay (50%).

REL5003W MINOR DISSERTATION

96 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: Professor S Shaikh

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

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, 5,000 words (50%).

REL5111FS READING RELIGIOUS TEXTS

(May not be offered in 2025)

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 6,000 words (50%).

REL5113FS ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH THOUGHT

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, 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 timeous completion of all assignments and essays.

Assessment: Attendance of, and preparation for, seminar; seminar papers (50%) and a final essay of 6,000 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 6,000 words (50%).

REL5115FS ISLAMIC STUDIES

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 6,000-word essay (50%).

REL5117FS METHODS AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS 1

24 NQF credits at NQF level 9

Convener: 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 6,000 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 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 6,000 words (50%).