|  |
| --- |
| **Degree and Programme Title** PG Cert/MA in Theory and Method in the Study of Religion |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Awarding Institution/Body**
 | University of Kent |
| 1. **Teaching Institution**
 | University of Kent  |
| 1. **Teaching Site**
 | Canterbury |
| 1. **Programme accredited by**
 | *N/A* |
| 1. **Final Award**
 | PG Cert, PG Dip, MA |
| 1. **Programme**
 | Theory and Method in Study of Religion |
| 1. **UCAS Code (or other code)**
 | N/A |
| 1. **Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)**
 | Theology and Religious Studies |
| 1. **Date of production/revision**
 | 16 November 2010 |
| 1. **Applicable cohort(s)**
 | From September 2011 |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Educational Aims of the Programme**

The programme aims to: |
| 1. provide students with a strong grounding in current theoretical and methodological debates in the study of contemporary religion, drawing both on wider theories and debates in social research, as well as issues and approaches specific to the study of religion
2. enable students to understand key elements and processes in research design, such that they are able both to evaluate the design of other projects and construct their own theoretically and methodologically-coherent projects
3. provide a nationally-excellent training which would enable students, as appropriate, to develop proposals for further study at doctoral level or to undertake research in other contexts (e.g. applied policy settings)
4. enable students to engage with other specialist debates in the study of religion and contemporary society, and other relevant debates in social and cultural research, in order to help them understand a wider context for their particular research interests or to help them to develop research projects from existing fields of literature
 |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Programme Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. All learning outcomes are applicable to both the PG Cert and MA awards (unless marked ‘MA only’) |
| **Knowledge and Understanding** | **Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated** |
| **A. Knowledge and Understanding of:** |  |
| 1. current theoretical debates in the study of contemporary religion
 | ***Teaching/Learning methods and strategies***:Mini-lectures, seminars based around set readings, student panel presentations on set topics and debates, and individual and group exercises (including short written exercises in class). Workshops on preparing research proposals and studentship applications. Individual tutorials and one-to-one dissertation supervision.The two core modules will each be delivered in an intensive week-long block of teaching, for which students will be expected to work through a reading and exercise pack in advance. Throughout the learning process, students will be encouraged to think about course material in relation to their own research interests***Assessment***Formative feedback will be provided to students through discussion of class exercises. Summative assessment and feedback through essays, and a 12-15,000 word dissertation. |
| 1. debates about the ontologies and epistemologies of social research
 |
| 1. key elements of the process of research design
 |
| 1. the role of quantitative data-sets for supporting research on contemporary religion
 |
| 1. the nature and role of a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods
 |
| 1. broader debates in the study of religion, sociology, anthropology, political science, media and cultural studies, as appropriate, which frame the student’s particular areas of interest in contemporary religion (MA only)
 |
| **Skills and Other Attributes****B. Intellectual Skills:** |  |
| 1. ability to understand, analyse and evaluate relevant theoretical and methodological literature, appropriate to study at Masters level
 | ***Teaching/Learning methods and strategies***:Mini-lectures, seminars based around set readings, student panel presentations on set topics and debates, and individual and group exercises (including short written exercises in class). Workshops on preparing research proposals and studentship applications. Individual tutorials and one-to-one dissertation supervision.***Assessment***Formative feedback will be provided to students through discussion of class exercises. Summative assessment and feedback through essays, and a 12-15,000 word dissertation. |
| 1. articulate clearly verbally and in writing one’s position in the context of broader theoretical and methodological debates
 |
| 1. ability to understand and evaluate the research design and knowledge-claims of other projects
 |
| 1. ability to develop a coherent research design and to undertake a Masters’ level dissertation on the basis of this project design (MA only)
 |
| **C. Subject-specific Skills:**  |  |
| 1. ability to make basic use of quantitative data-sets to contextualise research projects or to answer particular research questions
 | ***Teaching/Learning methods and strategies***:Mini-lectures, seminars, class discussions, computer-based teaching and exercises.***Assessment***Formative feedback will be provided to students through discussion of class exercises. Summative assessment and feedback through essays, and a 12-15,000 word dissertation. |
| 1. ability to identify relevant ethical issues in relation to a particular research project, and reflect appropriate on how these might be addressed (MA only)
 |
| 1. make effective use of electronic databases and other relevant resources to conduct effective literature searches
 |
| 1. reflect on the extent, and ways in which, the study of contemporary religion and the sacred is distinctive in relation to other forms of social and cultural research
 |
| **D. Transferable Skills:** |  |
| 1. ability to manage time and to produce work of a high standard to fixed deadlines
 | ***Teaching/Learning methods and strategies***:Transferable skills are embedded in all learning and teaching activities, including class interaction, written exercises, student preparation for class presentations and use of study packs.***Assessment***Formative feedback will be provided to students through discussion of class exercises. Summative assessment and feedback through essays, and a 12-15,000 word dissertation. |
| 1. ability to engage in independent study and research, supported by appropriate resources
 |
| 1. ability to articulate ideas and arguments clearly in writing and verbally
 |
| For more information on which modules provide which skills, see the module mapping | Module map attached as separate document |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Programme Structures and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards**

The programme can be studied on a one year full-time or two year part-time basis. Students undertaking the MA programme will be required to take two 30-credit core modules, ‘Theory and the study of religion’ and ‘Methodological approaches to the study of religion’. In addition to this, students would need to take a further two optional 30-credit modules either from a range of modules on religion, culture and society offered within the School of European Culture and Languages or from other Schools in the University (at least 30 credits of which should be at Level M). A recommended list of optional modules available in each year will be publicised in advance of the September start of the programme, which will also contain other relevant modules on social and cultural theory, or social research, that would give greater depth and context to students’ particular interests but which may not directly address religion. Students may also ask to undertake optional modules not on the recommended list by consultation with the Programme Director.To make the core theoretical and methodological training in the programme available to a wide range of people (including those undertaking the related award of the PG Cert in Theory and Method in the Study of Religion), the teaching of the two core modules will take place in the form of a block teaching week for each core module. For those undertaking the programme on a part-time basis, it would normally be recommended that students undertake these two core modules in their first year of registration and then their optional modules in their second-year, however this may be varied with the agreement of the Programme Director.For students wishing to undertake a substantial literature review, or who are unable to attend weekly teaching sessions for their optional modules, a 30-credit Independent Study Module is available in which students would be given tutorial support to produce a critical review of literature relevant to their particular research interests.In addition to the 120 credits of taught modules, students will also be required to undertake a 15,000 word dissertation involving either an extended theoretical discussion, a critical review of a body of literature, or a small-scale piece of original empirical research. For students planning to use the MA as a preparation for future doctoral level research, the dissertation can provide an opportunity for a pilot study for a larger scale project that might be developed at doctoral level.Students who withdraw from the programme following successful completion of the two core modules will be eligible for the award of a PG Cert in Theory and Method in the Study of Religion, and students withdrawing following successful completion of 120 credits of taught modules will be eligible for a PG Dip in Theory and Method in the Study of Religion. |
| **Code** | **Title** | **Level** | **Credits** | **Term(s)** |
|  |
| ***Required Modules*** |
| tbc | Theory and the Study of Religion | M | 30 | Autumn |
| tbc | Methodological Approaches to the Study of Religion | M | 30  | Spring |
| tbc | Dissertation | M | 60 | Spring/Summer |
| ***Optional Modules*** |
|  | A list of relevant optional modules from Religious Studies, the School of European Culture and Languages, and other relevant Schools (e.g. SPSSR) will be publicised each year. In addition to these, the following optional module is being proposed along with this programme: |  |  |  |
| tbc | Independent Study Module: Critical Literature Review | M | 30 | Autumn (part-time students only) or Spring |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Work-Based Learning**

Where relevant to the programme of study, provide details of any work-based learning element, inclusive of employer details, delivery, assessment and support for students. |
| N/A |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Support for Students and their Learning**
 |
| * The MA convenor, the Director of Graduate Studies for Religious Studies, and finally the Director of Graduate Studies for the School are available for consultation about academic or non-academic matters.
* All staff have regular published office hours and are contactable by e-mail. Appointments may be made outside of office hours.
* All students are encouraged to seek advice from any member of staff to discuss any matters of academic or non-academic concern.

In addition to support with the department the following services are available within the University. * University Medical Centre for health related issues..
* Counselling Service
* Careers Advisory Service
* Disability Support Unit
* The Student Learning Advisory Support Service on campus offers advice on many learning activities: revision, essay writing, making presentations, effective learning in lectures and seminars, time management.
* The Library runs induction courses in how to use its facilities
* The Students’ Union particularly offers advice on welfare.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Entry Profile**

The minimum age to study a degree programme at the university is normally at least 17 years old by 20 September in the year the course begins. There is no upper age limit. |
| Candidates for admission to this programme of study will normally be expected to have an Honours degree in an appropriate subject and, for registration for the degree of Masters, will normally be expected to have been awarded such a degree with First Class or good Second Class honours. Holders of other qualifications will be considered individuallyFor fuller information, please refer to the University prospectus. |
| * **Minimum requirements:**
 | * An Honours degree (or equivalent) in a relevant subject and normally of at least 2:1 level.
 |
|  | * See the following for English requirements:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/studying/postgrad/apply/entry.html |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **What does this programme have to offer?** |
| * This programme is designed to provide a core theoretical and methodological training in the study of religion for students interested in developing future research in academic contexts or in other settings (e.g. applied or institutional research), and is one of very few programmes in the UK which gives students interested in religion with a strong grounding in both social theory and methodology.
* It builds on the experience of the programme team of managing national level methodology training in the study of religion, funded by both the Higher Education Academy and the AHRC, and who have also written extensively on theoretical and methodological issues in the study of religion.
* It will support students intending to undertake doctoral research by helping them work towards well-designed doctoral projects, and will offer workshops on how to write strong applications for doctoral studentship funding.
* Its teaching structure means that it can be taken both by people able to travel to Canterbury on a weekly basis during term, as well as those living further away for whom it is easier to attend intensive teaching blocks.
* It provides an opportunity to select from a range of option modules that can either extend students’ knowledge of the study of contemporary religion, or to take modules in other subject areas that will broaden and deepen students’ knowledge of social theory, contemporary society or specialist areas of research methodology such as quantitative methods and ethnography.
* It will give students interested in religion, but whose previous academic training has primarily been in the humanities, to develop their knowledge and confidence as social researchers.
 |
| **Personal Profile** |
| * interest in the study of religion, from a range of previous disciplinary backgrounds.
* commitment to developing as a researcher
* willingness to engage with theoretical debates.
* interest in undertaking empirical research.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Methods for Evaluating and Enhancing the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning**
 |
| **Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards** |
| * Student evaluations (see Mechanisms for gaining student feedback, below)
* Annual Monitoring Report
* External Examiner’s Report
* Periodic Programme Review
* Annual Staff Appraisal
* Peer Observation of Teaching
* Mentoring of new and part-time lecturers
 |
| **Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards** |
| * Religious Studies Board of Studies
* Staff/Student Consultative Committee
* School of European Culture and Languages Learning and Teaching Committee
* Humanities Learning and Teaching Committee
* University Learning and Teaching Board
* Board of Examiners
 |
| **Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience** |
| * *Student Feedback****.*** A number of discussions will be scheduled through the year to provide non-anonymous student feedback to the convenor of the MA who will feed this anonymously to the Board of Studies.
* Staff/Student Consultative Committee. There will be one representative from a ‘Taught MA’ on the staff/student consultative committee who will also be invited to attend Board of Studies meetings and consult on a regular basis with other graduate students.
* Student representation for SECL and Faculty. There may be an opportunity to represent postgraduate students from the School and from the Faculty.
 |
| **Staff development priorities include:** |
| * Research-led teaching
* All new members of staff are expected to have Ph.D. in Religious Studies or another relevant disciplineand a substantial list of publications
* All new members of staff are required to have/achieve a postgraduate certificate in higher education
* All staff are required to be appraised on a yearly basis
* All staff are required to attend staff development events related to teaching, research, and administration
* Support for research including supporting attendance at conferences and providing appropriately covered leave to support staff on research projects (often resulting in publication), thus enhancing their body of knowledge in the field, their teaching and their career.
* Many staff are members of the *Higher Education Academy* (formerly the *Institute for Learning and Teaching*); many are members of other relevant professional bodies such as the BSA Sociology of Religion study group, the British Association for the Study of Religion, and the American Academy of Religion
* All staff are required to attend Religious Studies and School awaydays
* There is a work in progress seminar that meets roughly every other week
* All staff are expected to attend/organise conferences, workshops, and other collaborative projects in Philosophy.
 |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Indicators of Quality and Standards**
 |
| * The programme builds on the programme convenor’s experience and contacts in managing a recent AHRC Collaborative Research Training grant on advanced methods in the study of religion. This was the first such award at a national level for religious studies, and has involved the creation of an on-line teaching resource for methodology training in the study of religion, drawing on contributions from leading researchers in the UK, which will form part of the teaching materials for this programme. The programme convenor has also previously managed an HEA funded project on methodology training for postgraduate students in religious studies.
* All core staff in the Department have completed a PG Cert in Higher Education, or equivalent, and have experience of teaching theory and methods in the study of religion, as well as supervising research students at postgraduate level.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| The following reference points were used in creating these specifications: |
| * QAA Honours benchmarking statement for Theology and Religious Studies (2007), suitably amended for Masters level provision
* AHRC training requirements for doctoral students in Religious Studies (note this programme could be eligible in the future for Research Preparation Masters awards in a future Block Grant Partnership application)
* Staff experience in designing national training in research methodologies for PG students in Religious Studies
 |