

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in Study of Religions



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

This course offers an intensive training in research in the study of religions. It enables students to study two major religions, and to explore the nature of religion itself, at an advanced level.

Course structure

The Oxford tutorial system applies to postgraduate study in this course, so you are encouraged to develop your particular interests in conversation with your tutors.

Core course

You will take one core course which comprises the following two elements:

- Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion: An introduction to the core theoretical approaches in religious studies, delivered via eight weekly 1.5-2 hour seminars throughout Michaelmas term.
- Themes in the Interaction between Religions: This element explores various themes touching on interactions between religions including inter-religious disputations. The schedule of classes and tutorials will be published nearer to the start of the course.

All seminars will require student preparation and will be led by academic staff.

Two courses in world religions

You will select the two religions that you wish to focus on from the following five religious traditions currently covered by the faculty:

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism

You will study your selected two religions from perspectives of your choice, as worked out with specialist tutors to whom you are assigned. You may study the early doctrines and practices of religious traditions or opt to study the modern variations of a particular religion, or a set of religious practices or institutions in the contemporary world.

Students will normally be assigned a tutor (or tutors) for each religion, who will guide them through study over one of each of the first two terms of the academic year (ie you can normally expect to study one religion in each term, though arrangements are subject to tutor availability).

Each of these traditions has an internationally-recognised research centre, institute or outstanding cluster of scholars in Oxford. This typically means that you are not only taught by specialists in your chosen tradition, but also have access to a variety of specialist libraries and collections.

Research seminars

In addition there is a fortnightly Inter-disciplinary Graduate Research Seminar on the Study of Religions, on topics directly relevant to the course, which all MSt students are expected to attend.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements.

Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of world-class resources including libraries, museums, galleries, digital resources and IT services.

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest library system in the UK. It includes the main Bodleian Library and libraries across Oxford, including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, provide access to e-journals, and contain outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera.

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students, to support with learning and research.

The Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities

The Faculty of Theology and Religion will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford due to open in 2025, which will accommodate seven faculties, two institutes, a new library, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and performance and arts venues. The faculty will have its own centre and social hub within the building which will also facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building will be a large atrium – called the Great Hall – which will be a beautiful space, bringing light into the building, and serving as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks, having refreshments – and much more.

The library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, will house lending collections for Theology. There will be 340 general reader seats, and around 80 graduate study seats – with a further 320 formal and informal study seats throughout the building outside the library.

Open-shelf lending collections will be complemented by access to electronic resources, scan on demand, and material requested from the Bodleian's Collections Storage Facility. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours. Subject support is provided by a team of subject librarians.

Further libraries

The Philosophy and Theology Faculties Library (PTFL) is located in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter on the same site as the Schwarzman Centre.

The PTFL is a lending library primarily for staff and students of the two faculties, in support of research, teaching and learning. It has a collection of c. 30,000 books for loan on open access, with a further 20,000 available by request from remote store. It is also a delivery location for books from the Bodleian stacks for reference use in the library. Many books are now also available in electronic format; some are downloadable for 24-hour loan.

Languages

The Oxford University Language Centre offers free or discounted courses to members of the University who wish to learn or improve a foreign language relevant to their academic work – or indeed for their general interest and education. If a course is required for study or research, there is a priority enrolment scheme.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Theology and Religion and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Faculty of Theology and Religion.

Assessment

You will take an exam on the core course, in the final month of the course duration.

Your two chosen religions will be examined by two papers, of which one will consist of two essays and one will consist of a dissertation. The choice of essay and dissertation topics will be decided by you, subject to advice from your supervisor and final approval.

Between them, essays and dissertations must deal with the two chosen religions only. You may devote an equal quantity of assessment to each religion (the two essays in one religion, and the dissertation in another), or may devote more attention to one religion (for instance, the dissertation and one essay in one religion), so long as your two papers clearly demand the study of two religions. Essays and dissertations on the interactions, relations or comparisons between the two religions, or approaches taken from one view towards the other, are also encouraged, with the proviso that there is no overlap between essays and dissertation.

You will submit your essays at the beginning of Trinity term, which means that they must be researched and written during Michaelmas and Hilary terms, according to a writing schedule worked out with your assigned supervisors. The dissertation is submitted at the end of Trinity term, so you may work on the dissertation throughout the year, and particularly in the third term.

You will be encouraged to use the work on your essays as building blocks towards your dissertation.

Additional supervisions are offered in the third term to aid students in the writing of their dissertation, as well as a number of revision classes.

Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after you commence your course. These might include significant changes made necessary by any pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2025-26

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£16,900
Overseas	£41,250

Information about course fees

Course fees are payable each year, for the duration of your fee liability (your fee liability is the length of time for which you are required to pay course fees). For courses lasting longer than one year, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>).

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (below), course fees do not cover your accommodation, residential costs or other living costs. They also don't cover any additional costs and charges that are outlined in the additional cost information.

Additional cost information

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, as part of your course requirements, you may need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. Please note that, depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your department and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

Living costs

In addition to your course fees and any additional course-specific costs, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

The likely living costs for the 2025-26 academic year are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£330	£515
Accommodation	£790	£955
Personal items	£200	£335
Social activities	£45	£100
Study costs	£40	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,425	£2,035

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,970	£4,635
Accommodation	£7,110	£8,595
Personal items	£1,800	£3,015
Social activities	£405	£900
Study costs	£360	£810
Other	£180	£360
Total	£12,825	£18,315

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,960	£6,180
Accommodation	£9,480	£11,460
Personal items	£2,400	£4,020
Social activities	£540	£1,200
Study costs	£480	£1,080
Other	£240	£480
Total	£17,100	£24,420

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond the 2025-26 academic year, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this document please contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email (graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask/form>).