

Religions and Philosophies

The religions and the philosophical systems of the world's cultures have been powerful, dynamic and enduring forces throughout human history, exercising enormous influence on the formation, development and contemporary expressions of global political, economic, cultural and moral social systems.

Equally, the study of religions and philosophies has been an integral part of SOAS's 100 year history. Our programmes in the study of religions enable students to study a wider range of religious traditions in more depth than any other programme in the field anywhere in the world: Buddhism in nearly all its doctrinal and regional varieties; Christianity in Asia, Africa and the Middle East; Hinduism; Islam; Jainism; Judaism; Shinto; Taoism; and Zoroastrianism can all be studied here.

Our programmes in World Philosophies provide rigorous grounding in core philosophical themes, concepts, problems and approaches drawn from non-European, European, and Anglophone philosophical traditions with the ability to gain regional or thematic specialism or language capability.

A culture's religion and philosophical thought encapsulates its people's values and ideas, sets forward their role models and is integrally related to a sense of identity for many. So in studying religions and/or philosophies, one is studying how people reflect on and react to what they consider to be of ultimate significance and value.

At SOAS, we bring to light the most contemporary thought and understanding related to philosophical thought and religious beliefs and practices and how they have come to bear on all aspects of the world today.

Structure and assessment

Students take taught modules to the value of 120 credits per year – unless stated otherwise.

Minimum entry requirements

For applicants of Religions: AAB-ABB (from three A-levels excluding General Studies). Religions at A-Level not required. IB: 35 points with 6/6/5 at Higher level

For applicants of World Philosophies: AAB - ABB (from three A-levels excluding General Studies).

Students applying to the BA World Philosophies should preferably have studied Philosophy at A-Level. IB: 35 points with 6/6/5 at Higher level.

See p160 for more on entry requirements, application assessment, Widening Participation and joint degrees.

English language requirement

Overall IELTS grade of 6.5 with 6.5 in writing and speaking and 6.0 in reading and listening. Visit www.soas.ac.uk/english-requirements for alternative acceptable qualifications.

Duration

Three years, or four years when combined with a language.

Skills gained

A degree in Religions and Philosophies prepares you for a wide variety of stimulating careers at professional and management levels, as well as in business, public and charity sectors.

During study at SOAS, students gain an advanced understanding of different cultures, histories and beliefs. You will also develop a portfolio of widely transferable skills which employers seek. These include:

- the ability to research, amass and order information from a variety of sources – often both in the original or other relevant languages
- analytical skills to assess critically the materials relevant to a specific issue
- written and oral communication skills to present, discuss and debate opinions and conclusions
- understanding and adopting a sensitive approach to different cultures and beliefs



Taught Programmes

- BA Religion, Culture and Society
- BA Religions and...
- BA World Philosophies
- BA World Philosophies and...



More Information

www.soas.ac.uk/religions-and-philosophies

What do Religions and Philosophies graduates do?

Client Account Manager
 Conference Producer
 Freelance Writer
 Human Resources Talent Manager
 Interfaith Advisor
 Journalist
 Parliamentary Researcher
 Project Support Officer
 Research Assistant
 Sales Manager

Employers include

Department for Work and Pensions
 Edelman (PR firm)
 Indian Government
 King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
 Red Cross
 Reuters
 Shi'ah Institute
 St Luke's Hospice
 The Inter Faith Network for the UK
 The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea



I am very passionate about religions, as I would really like to teach the study of religions to university students one day. I have joined the Islamic Society, Christian Union and the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Society, to actively be involved with faiths and engage with them in a way that is not always possible within a curriculum. These societies also help me gain extra knowledge and different perspectives. I also have a non-academic side: I am a qualified Basic Archery Instructor, and I absolutely love it. In addition, I also love horses. I am hoping to do some voluntary work at a riding school. One day I'd like to combine the two activities and indulge in horseback archery in the countryside!

Afifa Hossain
 BA Study of Religions



BA Religion, Culture and Society

UCAS code: V627

At SOAS we study religions because they are powerful and enduring forces in all societies at all times. They give insight into human values, identities, and histories like no other aspect of culture. This degree is for students who seek to broaden their understanding of the world by studying the social, political, cultural and historical forces contained in religious traditions.

Structure

(Typical course content)

Each year, the programme consists of the following components:

- one core module (30 credits)
- modules selected from set of guided options (60 credits)
- an open option (30 credits)

Year 1

Core modules

- Introduction to the Study of Religions (30 credits)

Guided options

Choose 60 credits from introductions to religious traditions:

- Introduction to Buddhism (15 credits)
- Introduction to Hinduism (15 credits)
- Introduction to Islam (15 credits)
- Introduction to Jainism (15 credits)
- Introduction to Judaism (15 credits)
- Introduction to the Religions of Africa (15 credits)
- Introduction to the Religions of East and Central Asia (15 credits)
- Introduction to World Christianity (15 credits)
- Introduction to Zoroastrianism (15 credits)

Open Options

Each year, students choose 30 credits consisting of:

- a language, OR
- a module from another department, OR a module from Religions and Philosophies if not already taken

Year 2

Core modules

- Approaches and Methods in the Study of Religions (30 credits)

Guided options

Choose 30 credits from Religions in Cultural and Historical Contexts:

- Religion, Power, and Society in Modern Africa (30 credits)
- Religions of the Near and Middle East (30 credits)
- The Politics of Spirituality in South Asia (30 credits)

Choose 15 credits from Thematic Study:

- Death and the Meaning of Life (30 credits)
- Mysticism in the Great Traditions (30 credits)
- Metaphysics in Comparative Perspective (15 credits)
- Comparative Ethics (15 credits)

Choose 15 credits from Specialised Study:

- Islamic Reform Movements in Modern Africa (15 credits)
- Islam in Britain (30 credits)
- The Role and Representation of Women in Judaism (15 credits)
- Jaina Philosophy (15 credits)
- Jewish Identity (15 credits)
- Themes in Japanese Religions (15 credits)
- Taoism: the Great Tradition (15 credits)
- Classical Chinese Thought (15 credits)
- Orthodox Christianity (15 credits)
- Eastern Christianity (15 credits)
- Zoroastrianism in the Ancient and Modern Worlds (30 credits)

Open options

Each year, students choose 30 credits consisting of:

- a language, OR
- a module from another department, OR
- a module from Religions and Philosophies if not already taken

Year 3

Core modules

- Independent Study Project (30 credits)

Guided options

Choose 30 credits from Religions in Cultural and Historical Contexts:

- Religion, Power, and Society in Modern Africa (30 credits)
- Religions of the Near and Middle East (30 credits)
- The Politics of Spirituality in South Asia (30 credits)

Choose 15 credits from Thematic Study:

- Death and the Meaning of Life (30 credits)
- Mysticism in the Great Traditions (30 credits)
- Metaphysics in Comparative Perspective (15 credits)
- Comparative Ethics (15 credits)

Choose 15 credits from Specialised Study:

- Islamic Reform Movements in Modern Africa (15 credits)
- Islam in Britain (30 credits)
- The Role and Representation of Women in Judaism (15 credits)
- Jaina Philosophy (15 credits)
- Jewish Identity (15 credits)
- Themes in Japanese Religions (15 credits)
- Taoism: the Great Tradition (15 credits)
- Classical Chinese Thought (15 credits)

- Orthodox Christianity (15 credits)
- Eastern Christianity (15 credits)
- Zoroastrianism in the Ancient and Modern Worlds (30 credits)

Open options

Each year, students choose 30 credits consisting of:

- a language, OR
- a module from another department, OR
- a module from Religions and Philosophies if not already taken

BA Religions and...

May be combined with

African Studies +	VT65
Arabic +++	TV66
Chinese +++	TV16
Development Studies +	LV96
English	
History +	VV16
History of Art/Archaeology +	VV36
International Relations +	LVF6
Japanese +++	TV26
Japanese Studies +	TV2P
Korean +++	TVLP
Korean Studies	
Middle Eastern Studies +	TV6P
Music +	VW63
Politics +	LV26
Social Anthropology +	LV66
South Asian Studies ++	VTQ3
South Asian Studies (Year Abroad)	
South East Asian Studies +	VTPJ
World Philosophies +	V620

+ 3 years

++ 3 or 4 years (including an optional year abroad)

+++ 4 years (including an optional year abroad)

Structure

(Typical course content)

Year 1

- Introduction to the Study of Religions (30 credits)
- Introduction to Religious Traditions (30 credits)
- Second subject (60 credits)

Year 2

- Approaches and Methods in the Study of Religions (30 credits)
- Religions in Cultural & Historical Contexts (30 credits)
- Second subject (60 credits)

Year 3

- Thematic Study optional modules (30 credits)

- Specialised Study optional modules (30 credits)
- Second subject (60 credits)

Optional modules

- Thematic Study
- Death and the Meaning of Life (30 credits)
- Mysticism in the Great Traditions (30 credits)

Specialised study

- Islamic Reform Movements in Modern Africa
- Islam in Britain
- The Role and Representation of Women in Judaism
- Jaina Philosophy
- Jewish Identity
- Themes in Japanese Religions¹
- Taoism: the Great Tradition
- Classical Chinese Thought
- Orthodox Christianity
- Eastern Christianity
- Zoroastrianism in the Ancient and Modern Worlds)

BA World Philosophies

UCAS code: V590

A degree in philosophy from SOAS, with its focus on the philosophical traditions of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe, offers you the opportunity to become conversant with the formal epistemological systems and traditions of argumentation, political and ethical systems of thought, and analysis from a wider range of societies and historical contexts than those of the traditional philosophy graduate. Not only do we have a range of unparalleled expertise in the philosophical traditions of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, many of the School's lecturers are trained in and conversant with European philosophical traditions.

Structure

(Typical course content)

Core modules

Year 1

- Introduction to World Philosophies (30 credits)
- Introduction to Logic, Critical Reasoning, and Argumentation (15 credits)
- Metaphysics in Comparative Perspective (15 credits)

Year 2

- Anglo-European Philosophies and Critical Dialogue: Hermeneutics and Beyond (30 credits)
- Comparative Ethics (15 credits)
- Philosophies of Language (15 credits)

Year 3

- The Margins of Philosophy': Postcolonial, Gender and Queer Epistemologies (30 credits)
- Independent Study Project in World Philosophies (30 credits)



Optional modules

Year 1

Students choose two options in 'Traditions of Philosophy' (totalling 30 credits)

- Introduction to Buddhism (15 credits)
- Introduction to Hinduism (15 credits)
- Introduction to Islam (15 credits)
- Introduction to Judaism (15 credits)

Open options (30 credits) - students are encouraged to choose a relevant language.

Year 2

Students choose options in 'Traditions of Philosophy' (30–60 credits, see List I for available options)

Extra-Departmental or language options (up to 30 credits - for options, see List II and available language options above)

Year 3

Students choose options in 'Traditions of Philosophy' (30–60 credits, see List I for available options)

Extra-Departmental or language options (up to 30 credits - for options, see List II and available language options above)

List I: Traditions of Philosophy

- African Philosophy (15 credits)
- Afrophone Philosophies (15 credits)
- Buddhist Philosophy (30 credits)
- Classical Chinese Thought (15 credits)
- Developments in Muslim Religious Thought (15 credits)
- Islamic Intellectual Tradition (30 credits)
- Jewish Identity (15 credits)
- Medieval Arabic Thought (30 credits)
- Modern Indian Philosophy (30 credits)
- Philosophies of the Vedic Traditions: Mimamsa, Vedanta and Vyakarana (15 credits)

List II: Thematic options

- Introduction to Political Theory (30 credits)
- Islamic Law (30 credits)
- Modern Jewish Thought (30 credits)
- Readings in Japanese Intellectual History (15 credits)

History of Art/Archaeology	V352
International Relations	L251
Japanese+	T202
Japanese Studies	T201
Korean+	T431
Korean Studies	TV54
Middle Eastern Studies	T602
Music	W302
Politics	L200
Social Anthropology	L610
South Asian Studies++ (3 years)	T303
South Asian Studies++ (4 years)	T305
South East Asian Studies	T434
Religions	V620

+ 4-year degree with (compulsory) 1 year abroad
+ + 3- or 4-year degree with option of 1 year abroad

Structure

(Typical course content)

Core modules

Year 1

- Introduction to World Philosophies (30 credits)
- Introduction to Logic, Critical Thinking and Argumentation (15 Credits)
- Metaphysics in Comparative Perspective (15 credits)

Year 2

- Philosophy of Language (15 credits)
- Comparative Ethics (15 credits)
- The Margins of Philosophy: Postcolonial, Gender and Queer Epistemologies (30 credits)
- Independent Study Project in World Philosophies (30 credits)

Optional modules

Year 1

Students take up to 30 credits from compulsory options (see List I – students must complete at least 30 credits/two modules from this list in the course of their degree)

Students take up to 30 credits from Traditions of Philosophy (see List II – students may select up to 30 credits from this list in the course of their degree)

Year 2

Students take up to 30 credits from compulsory options (see List I – students must complete at least 30 credits/two modules from this list in the course of their degree)

Students take up to 30 credits from Traditions of Philosophy (see List II – students may select up to 30 credits from this list in the course of their degree)

List I: Traditions of Philosophy

- African Philosophy (15 credits)
- Afrophone Philosophies (15 credits)
- Buddhist Philosophy (30 credits)

BA World Philosophies and...

May be combined with

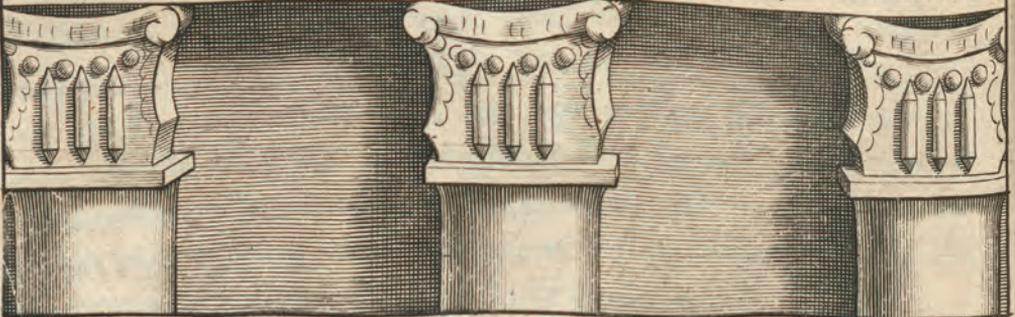
African Studies	T501
Arabic+	T631
Chinese+	T103
Development Studies	L800
English+ (not 4 year)	Q301
History	V101

TAB. VI.
pag. 305.

Icuncula dextra indigitat Solem, dum sinistra Circulum Zodiacalem tenet.



Ex Mausoleo Persepolitano Rex coram Igne et Sole quasi adoraturus
stans, cuius Anima ceu Icuncula in nube ad caelum ascensura cernitur.



Honoratissimo et Illustrissimo Viro IOHANNI DOMINO SOMMERS Baroni
de Evesham, omnium bonarum Literarum Possessori et Patrono hanc Tabulam
summæ Gratitude ergo lubens meritoq̃ humiliter DDD. Autor T. H.
MS. et. 1046.



- Classical Chinese Thought (15 credits)
- Developments in Muslim Religious Thought (15 credits)
- Islamic Intellectual Tradition (30 credits)
- Jewish Identity (15 credits)
- Medieval Arabic Thought (30 credits)
- Modern Indian Philosophy (30 credits)
- Modern Jewish Thought (30 credits)
- Non-Violence in Jain Literature, Philosophy and Law (30 credits)
- Philosophies of the Vedic Traditions: Mimamsa, Vedanta and Vyakarana (15 credits)

List II: Thematic options

- Introduction to Political Theory (30 credits)
- Islamic Law (30 credits)
- Modern Jewish Thought (30 credits)
- Readings in Japanese Intellectual History (15 credits)

Certificate in the Study of Religions

Duration

One year (full time) or two or three years (part time)

Minimum entry requirements

The minimum entry requirement is the ability to demonstrate the potential to study at undergraduate level. However, programmes may have their own specific requirements, such as, in the case of language-based studies, a proven ability to learn a language.

More information

www.soas.ac.uk/certificates

How to apply

Applications for undergraduate certificates and diplomas should be made directly to SOAS. Complete the online application at www.soas.ac.uk/certificates

Structure

(Typical course content)

The Certificate in the Study of Religions consists of 120 credits from the BA Religion, Culture and Society list of undergraduate modules, chosen in consultation with the student's Personal Tutor, and approved by the Head of Department. Up to 30 credits, not from BA Religion, Culture and Society but related, may be included.

The Certificate serves various purposes. A number of overseas students, coming to this country for one year's study, often as part of their degree work at home, have taken the Certificate. They have thus acquired a SOAS qualification at the same time as

completing another year towards their degree at home. Some home students have also taken it, whether to follow up some particular interest, or (as in the case, for example, of a qualified BA Religion, Culture and Society teacher trained chiefly in the Judaeo-Christian tradition) to broaden horizons.

A number of students, including some from overseas, who began in this way with the Certificate, have eventually studied for a full BA programme. Other students, contemplating a BA but uncertain of their own abilities or of the work involved, or about whom the School itself has had hesitations, may embark on a Certificate as a probationary period. Admission standards for the Certificate may be a little lower than those for the BA. Patterns of transition from Certificate to BA include the following, depending upon the circumstances of each individual student.

A full Certificate may be completed, after which the student may then apply, through UCAS, to begin a BA from the beginning. (This arrangement has been adopted, for example, in cases where the School has faith in a student's capacity, but where, perhaps because of unsuitable schooling, or the unavailability of suitable A-level subjects on offer, the chances of satisfactory A-level results are slight.

A student, having completed one year of part-time Certificate work satisfactorily, and finding it rewarding, may then transfer from the Certificate and apply to begin a BA from the beginning.

A student may complete a Certificate and then apply, through UCAS, for second-year entry to a BA.

