MA Religion in Global Politics
Programme Handbook
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www.soas.ac.uk/religions/programmes/ma-religion-in-global-politics/

Programme Description

Religion has become a force to be reckoned with in the contemporary global geopolitical landscape and as such demands a reassessment of once predominant understandings of processes of secularisation, as well as the meanings of, and tensions inherent within, secular assumptions and secularist positions. The so-called ‘resurgence’ of religion in the public sphere in recent decades is now a significant area of interdisciplinary scholarship eliciting a complex array of responses, ranging from vehement opposition to the very idea that religious concepts and commitments have a right to expression in political debates, to a reassessment of the origins and implications of divisions between the secular and the religious and their relationship to the nation state. The notion that there is no singular secularism, but rather a plurality of secularisms, and of ‘religion’ as an invention of European modernity and colonial interests are two of many emerging efforts to reconceptualise the meanings of religion and the secular and the entangled relationship between them.

The MA Religion in Global Politics offers an opportunity to examine these questions and issues at an advanced level by studying the complex relationships between religion and politics in the histories and contemporary political contexts (both national and international) of the regions of the Asia, Africa and the Middle East. A core objective is to challenge the Eurocentrism of current debates around secularism, secularisation, the nature of the public sphere within modernity, by indicating the plurality and contested nature of conceptions of both religion and the secular when considered in a global framework.

The programme is unique: it has a regional focus and disciplinary breadth rarely addressed in similar programmes in the subject area, draws on a wealth of multi- and interdisciplinary perspectives (Law, International Relations and Politics, History, Philosophy, Development, Anthropology, Migration and Diaspora Studies, and Gender Studies, amongst others) and has a rigorous theoretical basis built in, such that students will be familiarised with the current state-of-the-art debates regarding religion in the public sphere, secularisms, postsecularism, and political theology and their relevance to issues of democracy, war, violence, human rights, humanitarianism and development, multiculturalism, nationalism, sectarianism, religious extremism, and free speech amongst others. The range of course options available on the programme is unparalleled, ensuring that students will benefit from a truly interdisciplinary, intellectually rigorous, and regionally focused programme.

Programme Aims

The programme’s inter-disciplinary focus aims to provide students with advanced training in the area of religion and politics through the study of a wide range of theoretical and regional perspectives. It will serve primarily as a platform for professional development and further (MPhil/PhD) graduate research. The programme offers students:

- Advanced knowledge and understanding of significant approaches, methods, debates, and theories in the field of religion and politics, with particular reference to the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East;
- Advanced skills in researching and writing about topics in and theorisations of religion and politics;
- Advanced skills in the presentation or communication of knowledge and understanding of topics in religion and politics as they pertain to regional, international, and transnational contexts.
Entry Requirements

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for a postgraduate taught degree. However, due consideration is given to the applicants’ individual profiles, and to the fact that great potential for the successful undertaking of the academic study of the field is not necessarily acknowledged or certified through the applicant’s academic qualifications. Interviews can be arranged for applicants who do not meet the minimum entrance requirements, and early contact with the programme convenor is advisable.

Programme Structure

You are required to take taught courses to the equivalent of three full units, and to submit a dissertation of 10,000 words. A full unit runs for the whole academic year; a half unit runs for one term. Students may select a combination of full and half units. The dissertation topic must be approved in advance by the Programme Convenor and must be on a topic connected with one of your taught courses. Dissertation training will be provided as part of the compulsory core course. Students may take other SOAS courses relevant to their studies that are not listed below but may do so only with the written approval of the Tutor of the relevant course, the Programme Convenor, and the Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

Compulsory Courses

- Dissertation in Religion in Global Politics (15PSRC987), 1 Unit (Full Year)
- Religion in Global Politics: Theories and Themes (15PSRC174), 1 Unit (Full Year)

Taught Option Courses

Note: not all courses will be offered every year due to course rotation and alternation. Courses not running for the 2014-15 academic session are indicated in bold type below.

**Full Units**

- Christianity and Social Change in Sub Saharan Africa (15PSRC157) Not Running 2014/2015
- Colonialism and Nationalism in South Asia (15PHIC071)
- Contemporary Islamism in South Asia: Readings in Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi (15PSRC170) Not Running 2014/2015
- Critical Theory and the Study of Religions (15PSRC037) Not Running 2014/2015
- Culture and Conflict in the Himalaya (15PSAC291)
- Death and Religion (15PSRC162) Not Running 2014/2015
- Eastern and Orthodox Christianity (15PSRC055)
- History and Doctrines of Indian Buddhism (15PSRC059)
- Human rights and Islamic law (15PLAC150)
- Islam in South Asia (15PHIC042)
- Israel, the Arab World and the Palestinians (15PNMC038)
- Jainism: History, Doctrine and the Contemporary World (15PSRC024)
- Modern Muslim Thinkers from South Asia (15PSRC169)
- Modern Trends in Islam (15PNMC228)
- Muslim Britain: Perspectives and Realities (15PSRC158)
- Mystical Traditions (15PSRC068)
- Non-Violence in Jain Scriptures, Philosophy and Law (15PSRC062) Not Running 2014/2015
- Origins and Development of Islam in the Middle East: Problems and Perspectives (15PHIC040)
- Religion in Britain: Faith Communities and Civil Society (15PSRC163) Not Running 2014/2015
- Religious Practice in Japan: Texts, Rituals and Believers (15PSRC071)
- Taiwan's politics and cross-strait relations (15PPOC252)
- The Politics of Culture in Contemporary South Asia (15PSAC314)
- Theory and Method in the Study of Religion (15PSRC010)
- World War II, Cold War, and the “War on Terror”: The United States and South East Asia (15PHIHC059)
- Zionist Ideology (15PNMC035)
- Zoroastrianism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives (15PSRC052)

**Half Units**

- African and Asian Cultures in Britain (15PANH009), Term 2
- African and Asian Diasporas in the Modern World (15PANH010), Term 1
- African Missionaries 15PSRH043, 0.5 Unit, Term 2
- African Philosophy (Postgraduate) (15PAFH008), Term 1
- Afrophone Philosophies (Postgraduate) (15PAFH009), Term 2
- Buddhism in Tibet (15PSRH008) Term 1
- Colonial Conquest and Social Change in Southern Africa (15PHIH014), Term 1, TBC
- Comparative International Political Thought (15PPOH021), Term 2
- Conflict, rights and justice (15PPOH018), Term 1
- Diaspora Contexts and Visual Culture (15PARH042), Term 2, Not Running 2014/2015
- East Asian Buddhist Thought (15PSRH018), Term 2
- Gender in the Middle East (15PANH001), Term 1
- Gender, Armed Conflict and International Law (15PLAH035), Term 2, Not Running 2014/2015
- Gender, law and the family in the history of modern South Asia (15PHIH030) Term 1, Not Running 2014/2015
- Gendering migration & diasporas (15PANH002), Term 2
- Histories of Ethnicity and Conflict in South East Asia I – Making States and Building Nations (15PHIH011), Term 1
- Histories of Ethnicity and Conflict in South East Asia II – Non-National Perspectives (15PHIH012), Term 2
- International Political Communication (15PMHS009), Term 2, Not Running 2014/2015
- Japanese Modernity I (15PHIH013), Term 1
- Japanese Modernity II (15PHIH014), Term 2
- Judaism and Gender 15PSRH029, 0.5 unit, Term 2
- Mediated Culture in the Middle East: Politics and Communications (15PMHS003), Term 1
- Queer Politics in Asia, Africa and the Middle East (15PPOH020), Term 1
- Religion, Nationhood and Ethnicity in Judaism (15PSRH030), Term 2, Not Running 2014/2015
- Religions and Development (15PSRH049), Term 1
- Religions on the move: New Currents and Emerging Trends in Global Religion (15PANH055), Term 1
- Representing Conflict: A Cross-Cultural and Inter Disciplinary Approach (15PARH039), Term 2
- The Great Tradition of Taoism (15PSRH036) Term 1, Not Running 2014/2015
- The Holocaust in Theology, Literature and Art (15PSRH028), Term 2, Not Running 2014/2015
- The Making of the Contemporary World (15PHIH035), Term 1
- Transnational Communities and Diasporic Media: Networking, Connectivity, Identity (15PMHS004), Term 2
- Violence, justice and the politics of memory (15PPOH019), Term 1
Programme Administration

The administrative home of the MA Religion in Global Politics is in the Department of the Study of Religions, supported by administrative staff in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

After registering all MA students must meet with the Director of Studies, Dr Sian Hawthorne (Rm 337) in order to discuss their course options and to have their choices approved. The Faculty Office has details of other staff availability during registration week.

Student support

The School offers a comprehensive set of welfare and student support services. Further information can be found at https://www.soas.ac.uk/studentadviceandwellbeing/

The School is required, under the Disabilities Act (2001), to ensure that your learning needs are met. If you have a learning, or any other type of disability, if you feel comfortable doing so please inform the Director of Studies, Dr Hawthorne,. You should also register with the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team. In most cases, arrangements can be made to ensure that course materials etc. are provided in an accessible format. You can read about the School’s Disabilities Policy at http://www.soas.ac.uk/currentstudents/index.cfm?navid=2697.

The School has two Disabilities Officers (Zoe Davis and Angela Axon, Room V306; email: disabilities@soas.ac.uk; tel: 020 7074 5018) who can advise you as to your rights and the assistance that School can offer you. The website for School’s Student Disability Office is http://www.soas.ac.uk/currentstudents/index.cfm?navid=1101.

The Learning and Teaching Team in the Academic Development Directorate offers a wide range of academic support, advanced skills training and development opportunities for Masters students at SOAS. Their training is designed to help get you started on your postgraduate studies and to support you all the way through to the end of your dissertation project. They run regular study skills workshops on various themes and topics as well as offering one-to-one support. See https://www.soas.ac.uk/add/studyskills/masters/ for further information.

Throughout the year students are also always welcome to meet with the programme Director of Studies Dr Hawthorne regarding any personal or academic problems, complaints, or questions, either during her office hours or by appointment. In addition to the Director of Studies, students will be assigned a member of academic staff as a personal tutor who will also be able to offer advice and support.
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Course Descriptions: Compulsory Courses

Religion in Global Politics: Theories and Themes

**Convenor:** Sîan Hawthorne  
**Course code:** 15PSRC174  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full year  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** Two 3 000 words essays (30% each); 5 response papers (40%)

The so-called ‘resurgence’ of religion in the public sphere in recent decades is now a significant area of interdisciplinary scholarship eliciting a complex array of responses, ranging from vehement opposition to the very idea that religious concepts and commitments have a right to expression in public, political debates to a reassessment of the provenance and implications of divisions between the secular and the religious and their relationship to the nation state. The current geopolitical landscape wherein ‘religion’ has become a force to be reckoned with has demanded a reassessment of once predominant understandings of processes of secularisation, as well as the meanings of, and tensions inherent within, secular assumptions and secularist positions. The notion that there is no singular secularism, but rather a plurality of secularisms, and of religion as an invention of European modernity and colonialist exigencies are two of many emerging efforts to reconceptualise the meanings of religion and the secular as well as the entangled relationship between them.

This course will offer a comprehensive overview of the various debates around, and theorisations of the nature of secularism and the role of religion in the public sphere in order to attend to the central issue of how ‘the secular’ is constituted, understood, and instantiated in both domestic and international or transnational contexts. Other related topics will also be examined, taking a thematic approach, such as the relationship between religious discourses and political violence, the legislative difficulties presented by contradictions in liberalist political principles that underpin the political systems of the global North and models of multiculturalism, theocratic conceptions of the state, the role of religion in identity politics and transnational institutions, and state responses to religious identity claims and priorities, amongst others.

Dissertation in Religion in Global Politics

**Convenor:** Sîan Hawthorne  
**Course code:** 15PSRC98  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full year  
**Workload:** Variable  
**Assessment:** 10,000-word dissertation (100%)

The Dissertation in Religion in Global Politics is a core component of the MA Religion and Global Politics, running in parallel to the compulsory course ‘Religion in Global Politics: Theories and Themes’. It is intended both to extend and consolidate a student’s theoretical and regional understanding and knowledge applied to prominent themes and debates in the field of religion and politics. It comprises 25% of the assessed work of the MA Religion in Global politics. It is submitted no later than mid-September of the students’ final year of registration on the 15th September (if 15 September falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then submission must be on the Monday immediately following 15 September).

Students are advised to identify a dissertation supervisor early in the year with whom the dissertation topics will be agreed. They should meet regularly with their supervisors to produce a systematic review of the secondary and regional literature which forms a core, if preliminary aspect of their dissertation. The dissertation (10,000 words)
constitutes the main work in which students demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the key learning outcomes of research training and independent research.

The dissertation should demonstrate a critical understanding of the relevant literature, develop a focused and clear argument, supported by the relevant use of theoretical material and evidence. It should include:

- A review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature;
- An outline of the specific questions to be addressed, methods to be employed, and the expected contribution of the study to debates in the interdisciplinary field of religion and politics;
- An informed critique of published surveys and other tabulated material that relate directly to their research interest, or explanation of a survey or statistical application that they would propose to mount as part of the research;
- A discussion of the practical, political and ethical issues likely to affect the research.

Included in the word count are the number of words contained in the submitted work including quotations, footnotes, titles, abstracts, summaries and tables of contents. Appendices and bibliographies are not included in the word count. Appendices will not normally be marked and they must not include material essential to the argument developed in the main body of the work.

Guidelines for preparation of Masters dissertations
http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/file87829.pdf
Course Descriptions: Taught Options

African and Asian Cultures in Britain

**Convenor:** Parvathi Raman  
**Course code:** 15PANH009  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 2  
**Workload:**  
**Assessment:** two 5000-word essays (90%); two class discussions (10%)

There have been people of African and Asian origin in Britain for over five hundred years. In this course we focus on the communities they have created after the Second World War and examine whether they have helped foster new ideas of ‘Britishness’. The course examines why people from the ex colonies migrated to Britain and the contributions they have made to British culture and society. We will look at the social science literature on these diasporas under a number of key debates, including issues of race and nation, political identity, popular culture, education, and social protest in an attempt to understand the different approaches of those who have written about these issues.

African and Asian Diasporas in the Modern World

**Convenors:** Caroline Osella, Parvathi Raman, Sami Everett  
**Course code:** 15PANH010  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 1  
**Workload:** weekly one-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** two 5000-word essays (90%); two class discussions (10%)

The aim of this course is to take an interdisciplinary approach in order to chart the development of transnational African and Asian cultures in the world today. The course draws on established bodies of work as well contemporary literature on migration studies, issues of space and identity, transnationalism, postcolonialism, and theories of diaspora, and globalisation. By exploring the emergence of international African and Asian diasporas through labour migrations, trade, and displacement, the course incorporates a strong historical perspective as well as contemporary issues.

Drawing on historical memory and personal narratives of slavery and indentured labour, the course charts the changing processes of international migration and the subsequent emergent forms of identity in diasporic communities in the modern world. The course will encourage students to examine concepts such as ‘diaspora’ and ‘postcolonialism’ from a critical perspective, and to challenge the ‘new orthodoxies’ in diaspora and migration studies.

African Missionaries

**Convenor:** Jörg Haustein  
**Course code:** 15PSRH043  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 2  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** one 6,000-word essay (90%); one small group presentation (10%).
This course challenges assumptions about Christian ‘mission’ to the African continent by taking a close look at the cultural dynamics between European and African agents. It will consider the wide range of mission societies and their relationship to colonialism, the role of Africans in shaping missionary perceptions and spreading the Christian faith, as well as their marginalisation in missionary archives. Students will learn to read and critically assess missionary archives in the context of 19th century colonialism.

In particular, the course will provide:

- A detailed reflection of the role that Africans played in aiding or resisting European missionaries and in shaping their perceptions about African cultures and
- An understanding of the religious, social, political and economic motivations underlying the Protestant missionary movement of the 18th century onwards
- A broad overview of the work of missionary societies in Africa from this period to the present day, with a special emphasis on Africans’ reception of the missionary enterprise
- An appreciation of the role of missions in colonialism, and resistance to colonialism
- An in-depth knowledge of at least two geographical areas and/or missionary societies.

African Philosophy (Postgraduate)

Convenor: Alena Rettová
Course code: 15PAFH008
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload: 3 hours classroom contact per week.
Assessment: One 5,000-word essay (60%); 20-minute oral presentation (20%); two 1000-word analyses of readings (20%)

This course outlines the development of African Philosophy in the 20th century, a discourse that hinges on the following questions: does philosophy exist in Africa? What are the specific qualities that distinguish it from Western philosophy? We will survey the trends in African philosophical thought classified under the rubrics of “ethnophilosophy”, “nationalist-ideological philosophy”, “sage philosophy”, and “professional philosophy”, and discuss specific concepts with philosophical reference or resonance, such as race, time, but also development or art. Several classes will be devoted to influential contemporary philosophers, in particular Paulin Hountondji, Kwame Anthony Appiah, V.-Y. Mudimbe, Henry Odera Oruka, and Kwasi Wiredu.

Afrophone Philosophies (Postgraduate)

Convenor: Alena Rettová
Course code: 15PAFH009
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 2
Workload: 3 hours classroom contact per week
Assessment: One 5,000-word essay (60%); 20-minute oral presentation (20%); two 1000-word analyses of readings (20%)

Afrophone philosophies (i.e. philosophies in African languages) are the philosophical discourses in African languages: the (oral or written) texts that are the channels of philosophical thought in Africa. After an introductory lecture on the role of language and of genre in the expression of philosophical thought, we will examine in this course how “professional philosophers” (i.e. thinkers who have been critical to “ethnophilosophy”) engage with communal thought, looking at case studies such as the thought of the Akan, the Yorùbá, or the southern African concept of ubuntu. In the second half of the course, we will study original authored texts in African languages: novels in Swahili and Shona (by Euphrase Kezilahabi, William Mkufya, Ignatius T. Mabasa, etc.) which explicitly reflect and elaborate
various philosophical topics (the meaning of life, the being of God and of evil, the role of free will in religious behaviour, the nature of reality, and many others). We will also analyze non-fictional texts (such as ethnography or historiography) in Wolof, Bambara, and Ndebele and explore their interfaces with contemporary artistic productions (film, fictional literature).

All the texts will be available in translation; no prior knowledge of an African language is a prerequisite for this course.

Buddhism in Tibet

Convenor: Ulrich Pagel
Course code: 15PSRH008
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: one 3000-word essay (40%); two-hour exam (60%).

The content of this course covers four areas of instruction. The first segment, taking primarily a historical approach, focuses on Indian Buddhist developments that came to influence the Tibetan Buddhist culture. Particular attention will be given to Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism and to the phases in which these found their way into Tibetan religious culture.

The second segment deals with Tibetan ritual practice and addresses such topics as ritual structures, ritual typologies, initiations, consecrations and the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon.

The third area of study centres around Tibetan Buddhist doctrines. It examines, in some detail, the positions of the various schools and assesses their respective literary contributions to Tibetan Buddhist thought.

In the fourth segment, emphasis will shift to the socio-political sphere, investigating the impact of Buddhism on Tibetan society, in particular with reference to institutional monasticism. Each of these segments will include analyses of some of the more salient features of the Buddhist culture of Tibet, including the practice and concepts of meditation, re-incarnation, spiritual lineage, guru-disciple relationship as well as the social and political manifestations of religious government.

Christianity and Social Change in Sub Saharan Africa

Convenor: Jörg Haustein
Course code: 15PSRC157
Unit value: 1
Workload: Assessment: three 3,000-word essays (50%); three-hour exam paper (50%)

Besides spectacular numerical growth, which ensures Africa a prominent place in the global Christianity of tomorrow, there are also momentous changes afoot within African Christianity. In the latter part of the course these themes are examined through case studies of various African countries. The course will study the enormous contributions made by religious communities to every aspect of life in contemporary Africa. It will provide the tools to assess and analyse these diverse contributions.

The course will cover major issues, including:
- the socio-political role of the churches;
- their role in areas of ethnic or religious tension;
- churches as agents of development and democracy, as vehicles of modernity, as creators of civil society, as protectors of human rights, as transformers of women’s roles;
- African theology;
- Inculturation;
- the Pentecostal explosion;
- the theology, ritual and experience of Africa’s burgeoning new churches;
- their relation to Africa’s classical Independent Churches;
- the ‘pentecostalisation’ of the historic churches;
- the missionary factor today;
- the contemporary ‘conversion debate’.

Colonial Conquest and Social Change in Southern Africa (TBC)

Convenor: Wayne Dooling
Course Code: 15PHIH002
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload:
Assessment: two-hour exam paper (40%); two essays (60%)

This course examines the colonial history of southern Africa. It is concerned with the social, cultural, political and economic transformations that took place in the region since the onset of colonial rule to the end of the Second World War. It examines the varied ways in which European rulers sought to ‘conquer’ African societies - ranging from warfare (itself very varied in nature), to the co-option of local indigenous rulers, as well as the proselytising activities of missionaries. But the greater part of the course is concerned with the interactions between colonisers and colonised peoples. Thus it pays particular attention to the novel societies and cultures that emerged out of contact between Europeans and Africans, the responses of African men and women to processes of conquest and the alternate tenacity and dissolution of African social and cultural institutions.

Throughout, the course is concerned to emphasise the unity of the region.

Topics covered include:
- The conquest of the southern African Khoisan;
- Colonial society and colonial war in the Cape Colony;
- The ‘long conversation’ between Africans and missionaries;
- Millenarian movements;
- German colonialism in Namibia;
- The rise of peasant societies;
- Prazo society in the Zambesi Valley;
- The founding of a settler state in Zimbabwe;
- South Africa’s ‘mineral revolution’;
- The colonial state in southern Africa;
- The rise of African urban cultures in southern Africa.

Colonialism and Nationalism in South Asia

Convenor: Shabnam Tejani
Course Code: 15PHIC071
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload:
Assessment: three-hour exam paper (40%); one 3500-word essay (20%); one 5000-word essay (30%); seminar participation (10%)
The course examines the historiographical questions and themes that have been central to the study of modern South Asian history over the last three decades. It is organized thematically as well as chronologically but does not seek to provide a historical survey as such. Students will be expected to round out their historical knowledge with reference to the range of text books that exist in the field.

We cover the period from the late eighteenth century to the present. The course pays special attention to the mechanics of colonialism laid down through the nineteenth century, the cultural and political innovations of south Asians and the transitions to independence as well as the challenges faced by postcolonial states and their people. Themes to be covered include: Term 1: land, caste, law, gender, religion, linguistic identities, urbanism. Term 2: nationalism, communalism, independence and partition, regionalism, art, caste, religious nationalism, urban violence.

Comparative International Political Thought

Convenor: Rahul Rao
Course code: 15PPOH021
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 2
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: Essays (70%); seminar presentation (20%); seminar participation (10%)

This course is intended to serve as an introduction to the comparative study of international political thought. The course will open with a consideration of what counts as ‘international political thought’. Why is so much of what passes as ‘international’ political thought of European or Western provenance? Do the very categories of ‘West’ and its rather inchoate other—‘non-West’—make sense, given the complicated genealogies and itineraries of political thinking across lines of geography and ideology? In keeping with this scepticism of regional ‘traditions’ of thought, the course will be organised conceptually, with the discussion each week attempting to bring different strands of international political thought into conversation with one another around a central concept.

The arrangement of topics in the course list is intended to foreground the different sorts of methodological challenges that one might encounter in endeavouring to compare political thought. A first cluster of topics (2-4) compares thinkers who might roughly be considered contemporaries. Although differently located in terms of geography and ideology, they might be thought to be grappling with a common world conjuncture, which they nonetheless perceive and respond to in different ways. In the second cluster of topics (5-9) the comparison operates across both space and time, making it especially crucial to consider whether different worldviews are premised on a common ontology (i.e. we need to ask whether the thinkers being compared share a common object of analysis).

Substantively, the topics covered by the course span a range of concerns that have typically been placed within the realm of ‘political’ thinking. We will be comparing thinking about justice: what forms of consciousness have been thought to be most conducive to liberation and emancipation in different places and times? How is the scope of justice imagined? What significance is accorded to locality and globality in different conceptions of justice? What anxieties underpin contemporary ‘fundamentalisms’ and what sorts of utopias do they strive towards? We will also be comparing thinking about conflict: how similar and different are the motivations, justifications, strategies and tactics underpinning and informing theorisations of war that emanate from different parts of the world as well as from different ideological formations? In a course of this kind, it will be especially important to problematise conceptions of ‘the political’ and to think carefully about how such conceptions may differ across space and time.

Contemporary Islamism in South Asia: Readings in Sayyid Abu al-Ala Mawdudi

Convenor: Jan-Peter Hartung
Course Code: 15PSRC170
At the end of the course, a student should be able to demonstrate:

- an ability to discuss the historical and cultural contexts in which Contemporary Political Islam developed
- an understanding of the construction of a religio-political system of thought
- an ability to consider the degree of the impact of Modern Western political and philosophical thinking and Classical Islamic thought, as well as the intercultural contact on the self-perception of the Islamic tradition and its reinterpretation
- an understanding of Mawdūdī’s genuine attempt to a practical realisation of his ideology in the religio-political movement Jamāʿat-ī islāmī
- an ability to discuss the impact of Mawdūdī’s system of thought on other Islamist theorists and movements
- an ability to reflect upon the usefulness of the analytical categories ‘Islamism’, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism’, ‘Political Islam’
- an ability to critically analyze primary source material in the field of Islamism
- an ability to present orally an introduction and critical discussion of different problems relating to the field to an audience within a given time frame
- consolidated skills in academic writing in view of the upcoming MA dissertation

Critical Theory and the Study of Religions

**Convenor:** Sian Hawthorne  
**Course code:** 15PSRC037  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full Year  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** two 4,000 word essays (70%), Research Journal (30%)

Historically, the field of the academic study of religions has sought to understand the diverse cultures, beliefs and practices of the world by developing methodological approaches and orientations that emphasise neutrality and empathy. However, contemporary critiques have problematised these approaches from a variety of theoretical and political perspectives. In spite of claims within the study of religions to apparent neutrality, its scholarly methods and assumptions can be shown to play a pivotal role in producing and maintaining a narrowly ethnocentric cultural hegemony that has increasingly ethical implications. The aim of the course will thus be to examine the ethics and politics of knowledge within the context of the study of religions as an academic field. It is an advanced level course which deals with three main bodies of critical theory (poststructuralist, postcolonial, and gender theory), plotting the intersections and points of departure between them and extending them to examine and assess the epistemological commitments of the study of religions.

Culture and Conflict in the Himalaya

**Convenor:** Michael J. Hutt  
**Course code:** 15PSAC291  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full Year  
**Workload:** 2-hour classroom contact per week  
**Assessment:** Ten fortnightly 800-1000-word reaction papers (40%); two 3500-4000-word essays (60%).
This course is intended to provide Masters students with an opportunity (which is unique in UK Higher Education) to consider and understand current socio-cultural and political issues in the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. It provides a basic framework for the cultural and political history of the Himalayan states, discussing specific questions of national and cultural identity, and takes the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, the flight of ethnic Nepali refugees from Bhutan, and the status of members of the Nepali diaspora in India as important case studies.

This course will provide students with insights that will enable them to consider more generally issues such as the relationship between ethnic, linguistic and national identities; processes of nation building; the relationship between dominant elites and marginalised minorities; the tension between tradition and modernity; the underlying causes of social and political conflict in a resource-poor environment; the factors that can lead to refugee flight; and the difference between assumed and ascribed identities.

Death and Religion

**Convenor:** Peter Flugel  
**Course code:** 15PSRC162  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full Year  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** two 5,000 word essays (40% and 60%)

Cultural specific interpretations of death and dying are significant because they are intrinsically connected with prevalent conceptions of the self, the person, the body, and with definitions of life, and visions of the good life, which are transmitted through ritual and (oral) literature. Death and death rituals are central concerns of most cultural and religious systems. In his classical study on the representation of death Robert Hertz (1907/9) has pointed out that in many cultures death is not understood as a unique moment, but as an episode in a journey which integrates life and death. Death is generally depicted to be not the end of life. Nor are the dead entirely disconnected from the living. Students will explore notions of the meaningful life and the good death through the analysis of religious practices of voluntary death, martyrdom, and sacrifice, as well as rites of mourning and commemoration in selected traditions.

This course is intended to complement courses on individual religious and philosophical traditions in the Department of the Study of Religions. It will also be of interest for students interested in cultural aspects of medicine.

The first part of the course reviews the principal approaches and theories on death and religion in the academic literature (Hertz, Hubert & Mauss, Heidegger, Burkert, Girard, etc.), followed by a history of western attitudes toward death (Aries, etc.), and case studies on death and dying in modern contexts (Moody, Kübler-Ross, Hockey, Moeller, Firth, etc.).

The second part of the course is devoted to the exploration of the concepts of death and the meaning of life in different religious and cultural traditions, with a focus on cosmology, concepts of the self, personhood, and the body, death rituals, and the social functions of cultural constructions of death.

At the end of the course students should have gained a comprehensive understanding of the complex variety of death practices and of the symbolism of death, the meaning of life, and life-course models in the major religious and secular traditions. Each student will have studied in depth at least two important cases.

Diaspora Contexts and Visual Culture

**Convenor:** Tania Tribe  
**Course code:** 15PARH042  
**Unit value:** 0.5
Taught in: Term 2  
Workload:  
Assessment: three 2000-word essays (75%); seminar presentation (15%)

The course is designed to complement and extend my other MA course dealing with Diaspora issues, The Arts of the African Diaspora. More specifically, it will question the concept of Diaspora, examining how conditions of mobility, exile and displacement have been experienced and represented in different visual cultures, and considering which functions these representations play in these societies. The course will also explore the relationship between diaspora, migration and travel, looking at the processes of gain and loss which are inherent to all of them. Among the topics discussed will be the role played by memory in the process of interaction between dominant and diasporic cultures and in the selective adoption and/or rejection of new ways of being and new cultural patterns. Notions of acculturation, inculturation, syncretism and cultural resistance will be examined, together with the role played by power, the body, religion and gender in these processes.

East Asian Buddhist Thought  
Convenor: Lucia Dolce  
Course code: 15PSRH018  
Unit value: 0.5  
Taught in: Term 2  
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
Assessment: one 4,500 word essay (90%); one classroom presentation (10%).

This is a thematic course on one aspect of the Buddhist tradition in East Asia, mainly China and Japan. The subject of the course may be different every year.

The first topic to be analysed will be the esoteric tradition (mi-jao/mikkyo). In the following years other major systems of Buddhist thought, such as the Tiantai/Tendai and the Pure Land traditions, will be explored. The course will address the history of the selected tradition, its specific doctrinal tenets, its textual corpus and its major deities, and the forms of worship that characterize it. Attention will be devoted to the influence that the selected form of Buddhism exerted in the formation of the culture of China and Japan (with more emphasis given to Japan). A critical appraisal of the way in which the specific tradition has been studied, in East Asia and in the West, will also be offered.

Considering the importance of East-Asian forms of Buddhism within the broader ‘Buddhist tradition’, and the importance of Buddhism in the cultures of China and Japan, this course will be of great significance for the training of students in Buddhist Studies, Chinese and Religions, Art, and Area Studies.

Eastern and Orthodox Christianity  
Convenor: Erica Hunter  
Course code: 15PSRC055  
Unit value: 1  
Taught in: Full Year  
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
Assessment: two 3,000 word essays (40%); oral presentation (10%); three-hour exam paper (50%)

This course uses the prism of historical, theological, political, social, cultural and religious dynamics to examine the evolution of Eastern and Orthodox Christianity over two thousand years. It examines ‘apostolic links’ and ‘conversion narratives’, that point to the Judaeo-Christian matrix of early Christianity which was subsumed by Hellenism in the fourth century CE.
The doctrinal disputes of the fourth and fifth century, which introduced concepts of heresy and orthodoxy that were inherent in the emergence of the so-called 'Oriental' Churches, are evaluated to demonstrate the challenges that accompanied the changed face of Christianity when it became an 'establishment' religion.

The course explores its profile in both the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires (as 'establishment' and 'non-establishment' institutions respectively), its 'dhimmi' status in Islam (including the Ottoman period) as well as its tension with Communism and the challenges faced in the post-Communist period. Regional case studies articulate the contribution of Christianity to the development of vernacular identity in Armenia, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iraq and Syria (Eastern Church), Georgia, Russia and Serbia (Orthodox Church).

Gender in the Middle East

Convenor: Nadje Al-Ali
Course code: 15PGNH001
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: One 3500-4000 word essays (50%), five best reaction papers; 600-800 words each (50%).

The aim of this course will be to offer an overview of the key issues in the study of gender in the Middle East. It will provide a specific area focus for students in Gender Studies, but also provide a gendered understanding of prevailing discourses, ideologies, social practices and trends for those students interested in Middle East societies and politics. The course is interdisciplinary in scope, readings and theoretical underpinning.

Core Topics:

- Representing Gender in the Middle East: From Orientalism to Post-colonialism
- Islam & Patriarchy: Gender Ideologies and Social Practices
- The State & 'Gender Regimes': Modernization, Reform and Citizenship
- Families & 'Selves': Social Relations and Identity Constructions
- Gender & Sexuality: From 'Honour & Shame' to Queer
- Exploring Masculinities: Hegemonic and subordinate masculinities
- Feminism & Women's Movements: Women's rights and the struggle for 'authenticity'
- Autobiographies & Fiction: Gendered writing and creativity
- New Public Spheres: Gendering the media and the Internet
- War & Conflict: Gendering Violence and Peace in the Middle East

Gender, Armed Conflict and International Law

Convenor: Gina Heathcote
Course code: 15PLAH035
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 2
Workload: weekly two-hour seminar
Assessment: 6,000-word essay (100%).

This course offers an introduction to legal reforms and strategies in response to understandings of the relationship between war and gender as well as feminist peace studies. Contemporary institutional take up of ‘gender perspectives’ are studied alongside theoretical and empirical accounts of the gendered experience of war and armed conflict. Some study of post-conflict communities is also discussed. The collective security regime, particularly Security Council initiatives on women, peace and security are analysed alongside debates from feminist and gender theorists.
Weeks 1-5 connect understandings of violence, gender and law through an analysis of interdisciplinary approaches. The weeks 7-11 apply this knowledge to contemporary legal responses to topical issues in conflict and security.

A representative syllabus is indicated below.
- The gendering of violence in the law
- Feminist peace studies
- Gender mainstreaming
- State, sovereignty, women’s participation
- Feminist methods, legal writing and narratives on conflict
- Reading week
- Feminist action and international institutions
- Humanitarianism and the use of force to ‘save’ others
- Sexual violence during armed conflict
- Collective Security – beyond resolution 1325
- Feminist Responses to International Terrorism

Gender, law and the family in the history of modern South Asia

**Convenor:** Eleanor Newbegin  
**Course code:** 15PHIH030  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 1  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** two-hour exam paper (50%); one essay (45%); one practical examination (5%)

Beginning with the advent of British rule in the late eighteenth century and running up to the present day, this year-long course looks at the Indian family to explore the impact of British colonial power on Indian social and political structures, and its legacy for how we understand Indian culture and identity today. From the writings of social reformers during British rule to Bollywood’s current obsession with stories of family strife, notions of family and kinship have long played an integral role in shaping ideas about South Asian culture and identity. This course looks at the economic, political and social factors that shaped debates about family life over the course of three turbulent centuries. It explores the ways by which the family became an important site for defining and demonstrating social difference, between coloniser and colonised but also between the different caste, class and religious groups comprising South Asian society. Secondary reading on specified themes will be supplemented with primary source material, including legal and government records, autobiographical material and photographs, as well as novels, short stories and films relating to the topics covered.

Gendering migration & diasporas

**Convenor:** Maryann Bylander  
**Course code:** 15PGNH002  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 2  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** One 3500-4000 word essay (50%); five best 600-800-word reaction papers (50%).

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the various ways migration as well as diaspora formations and experiences are gendered. It will engage with a range of migratory and diasporic forms (labour migration, forced migration & transnational migration) while challenging some of the analytical categories underlying these distinctions. The course will address both the social, economic and political dimensions of migration and diasporas as well as issues related to identity construction, cultural productions and imaginations.
Core Topics:

- Labour and the Economics of Migration
- Forced Migration and Displacement
- Exile & Asylum
- Transnational Migration
- Transnational Social Spaces & Activities
- Diasporic Spaces
- Political mobilization in the Diaspora
- Cultural Productions I: Writing
- Cultural Productions II: Film and the media
- Body politics in the Diaspora

History and Doctrines of Indian Buddhism

**Convenor:** Vincent Tournier  
**Course code:** 15PSRC059  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full Year  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** one 3,000-word essay (20%); one 4,000-word essay (30%); one oral presentation (10%); One two-hour exam paper (40%).

This course has the two following aims: (1) To explore the historical developments of Buddhist groups and lineages in South Asia, from the birth of the Buddhist tradition in the 5th century BCE, to its disappearance around the 12th-13th century CE.; (2) To engage with major Buddhist scriptures and doctrines, by carefully considering these in their wider context of production and transmission, and in relation to other forms of religious practices.

Topics to be addressed during the lectures will include:

- An assessment of the little we know about the origins of the Buddhist tradition, and of the fascination these exerted on modern scholarship.
- Early Buddhist lineages, and the formation of the Buddhist monastic order.
- The formation, transmission and diversity of scriptures, and the issue of authority and authenticity.
- Early Buddhist doctrines and scholasticism.
- Indian Buddhist cosmology.
- The personality of the Buddha and the hagiographic process.
- The development of the Bodhisattva ideals and practices.
- Loci of the sacred: images, temples, relics, and sacred books.
- Rituals of protection, healing, consecration, and merit-making.
- The interactions of Buddhists with the temporal power in South Asian kingdoms.
- The development of the Bodhisattva ideals and practices.
- Major philosophical developments: followers of the middle way (Mādhyamika), proponents of the mind only (Yogācāra-Vijñānavādin), and of the Buddha-nature (Tathāgatagarbha).
- The advent of Esoteric Buddhism in its broader Indian religious context.
- Why did Buddhism disappear from its homeland?

The seminars will be dedicated to the discussion of primary sources (in English translation) and of academic articles relevant to the lecture’s topic. We will especially read scriptural, scholastic, and other literary sources, while also taking into consideration inscriptive, architectural and art-historical evidence. In the second term, each student will be given the opportunity to present the topic of his or her choice within a seminar.
Histories of Ethnicity and Conflict in South East Asia I - Making States and Building Nations

**Convenor:** Mandy Sadan  
**Course Code:** 15PHIH011  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 1  
**Workload:** weekly one-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** two-hour exam paper (40%) two 2,500-word essays (50%); seminar presentation (10%)

The course will consider the ways in which ideologies of state and nation and of ethnicity have emerged across mainland and island South East Asia over a broad historical and geographical landscape. Its objective is to explore comparatively how and why South East Asia as a region has experienced so many entrenched conflicts in which ethnic identities have been mobilized and why so many spaces of resistance to the centralising state can still be found region-wide today.

The course will be divided into two parts. The first part (weeks 1-5) will focus on establishing a broad, comparative analytical framework across both regional space and time:

- **Weeks 1 & 2** will begin with a critical consideration of the principle debates on pre-colonial state formation in island and mainland South East Asia and discussion of what we can read from these of the nature and/or significance of ‘ethnic’ and other forms of social and cultural identity. This will provide students with an overview of the main ideas and debates concerning the emergence of states, nations and ethnic identities in South East Asia, considered both anthropologically and historically.

- **Weeks 3 & 4** will then explore comparatively the history of state building by colonial states and the various ways in which ethnic identities and ideas of citizenship and nationhood were redrawn through these processes.

- **Week 5** will continue this theme to consider the emergence of indigenous nationalist movements, including a critical analysis of ideological constructions of ethnicity and difference by indigenous elites within the later colonial state.

The second part of the course will concentrate on the histories of conflict within individual states, particularly in the period after World War II to consider in more detail comparative postcolonial histories of nation-building, the development of ethnic discourse within particular nations, and the strategies used to integrate alternative identities (Week 6 – Burma and Thailand; 7 – Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia; 8 – Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei; 9 – Philippines; 10 – Indonesia).

In this, the particular ideological nature of the postcolonial state and its understandings of ethnic difference will be considered and compared to facilitate understanding of why conflicts took on certain shapes and trajectories in different countries, and how states have idealised, actualised or fail to realise the resolution of conflicts.

At the end of the course, the students will have a good understanding of these issues regionally and historically. They will also be able to relate these historical models to other literature in anthropology and political science. They will have good comparative understanding of the fulcrum of conflict as a contestation between national and other identities.

Histories of Ethnicity and Conflict in South East Asia II - Non-National Perspectives

**Convenor:** Mandy Sadan
Course Code: 15PHIH011
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 2
Workload: weekly one-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: two-hour exam paper (40%) two 2,500-word essays (50%); seminar presentation (10%)

The course will focus on non-national spaces (transnational, regional, local, periphery/margin, borderland) and histories to illuminate the histories of minority ethnic groups that have been engaged in armed conflict with national governments during and/or after the period of colonial rule in mainland South East Asia.

It will explore the historical contexts of issues that are typically explored through the lenses of anthropology and/or of political science and will encourage students to develop interdisciplinary methodologies and analytical frameworks by which they can develop awareness of an under-studied aspect of South East Asian history.

The course will operate independently from but in relation to ‘Histories of Ethnicity and Conflict in South East Asia (1)’ by shifting attention to the alternative geographies of space and community than that expressed primarily through national affinity and citizenship. It will consider the interactions between these various layers of identity over time. By considering particular contexts of ethnicity and conflict in detail, understanding will be developed of the militarisation of identities, from the pre-colonial to the postcolonial context of globalisation and the War on Terror.

The course will also emphasise the different range of source materials that are available for the study of non-national histories and will develop awareness of the methodological and theoretical implications of different kinds of material, visual and oral data. The course will conclude with a discussion of the production of narratives of ethnicity and conflict within ethnic armed groups and within ethnic communities to better understand issues surrounding the production of oral histories of conflict.

The term will be divided into three parts. The first part (weeks 1-4) will consider ideas and debates around notions of non-national space, culture zones, lineage and non-national identities, as well as the ways in which peripheries contribute to the production of centres and the negotiation of political and cultural space between national and non-national identities in South East Asia historically.

The second part (weeks 5-7) will consider the militarisation of ethnic movements: the significance of ethnic armies from the pre-colonial times onwards, culminating in the impacts of global conflicts, globalisation of commodity flows and of local identities in diaspora.

The third part (weeks 8-10) will consider the narratives that ethnic minority communities produce about their experience in nation-states, constructions of 'ethno-history' and forms of ethnic mobilization through the exploration of specific case-studies.

Students will be encouraged to develop a sensitive, critical, analytical apparatus for exploring how such discourses have emerged. They will also engage with non-textual materials to develop awareness of the roles that material, visual and oral evidence plays in both representation and conflict. It is also intended that during the term journalists, writers, NGO representatives and ethnic minority leaders resident in or close to London will work with the students in exploring issues relating to their personal experiences of writing about, working within or mobilizing communities in settings of ethnic conflict.

Human rights and Islamic law

Convenor: Mashood Baderin
Course code: 15PLAC150
Unit value: 1
This course critically explores the different theoretical perspectives to the relationship between Human Rights and Islamic law and also examines the practices of some relevant Muslim States in that regard.

Initially, we will examine relevant theoretical and conceptual issues relating to the nature of both human rights and Islamic law respectively. This will include a critical analysis of the theoretical foundations of human rights, its sources, contents and enforcement methods in relation to the nature, sources and methods of Islamic law, and its current role, application and influence in Muslim States. We will also examine whether or not there is a concept of human rights in Islamic law and explore the areas of common grounds and the areas of conceptual differences between the two systems.

Following this, we will undertake a critical study of some “Islamic” human rights instruments and, over the course, critically analyse, in relation to Islamic law, specific and topical issues such as:

- the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- rights of minority groups;
- women’s rights;
- children’s rights;
- prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments and punishments;
- right to fair trial and due process;
- human rights enforcement;
- and case studies of the human rights practices of some selected Muslim States.

We will then round up with a desideratum of possible domestic, regional and universal mechanisms through which the enforcement of international human rights can be realistically achieved in the Muslim world, especially in Muslim States that apply Islamic law.

International Political Communication

**Convenor:** Dina Matar  
**Course code:** 15PMSH009  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 2  
**Workload:**  
**Assessment:** 100% coursework

The course aims to provide students with a critical understanding of the role of media and communications technologies in national politics in non-Western contexts as well as the increasingly important role of mediated communication in contemporary international relations and public diplomacy. The course reviews the relevant literatures and establishes a critical vocabulary.

The course explores the role of media in gaining and maintaining political influence in Western democracies and the importance of political campaigns, political marketing and advertising. It asks whether and how these techniques are used outside Western democratic nations and what meaning concepts such as ‘public sphere’, ‘public opinion’ and propaganda/spin have in non-Western contexts. The course offers comparative perspectives on political communication through detailed case studies (Middle East, India, China).
But the course also explores the role of propaganda and public diplomacy in international situations of conflict and war, propounding the argument that much of contemporary international relations is actually international communications in various forms.

Within these frameworks, the course examines a range of interconnected topics: theories of democracy and the media; modern political persuasion, spin and international propaganda; international political marketing and advertising; the Americanisation of political communication; personalisation of politics; different traditions of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy; media’s role in conflict and peace processes; the growth of e-government and the expansion of potentially interactive media.

**Islam in South Asia**

Convenor: Roy Fischel  
Course code: 15PHIC042  
Unit value: 1  
Taught in: Full Year  
Workload:  
Assessment: two 5,000-word essays (50%); three-hour exam paper (50%)

This course examines Islamic societies, polities, institutions, and thought in the South Asian environment. The course covers the period from the establishment of Turkish rule around the turn of the thirteenth century to the end of British rule in 1947. Thus, it discusses the periods of the Delhi Sultanates, the Mughals, and British colonial rule, in addition to examining parts of the subcontinent that fell beyond the dominion of the aforementioned polities.

The course is organized both chronologically and thematically, thus enabling us to explore several phenomena over the centuries. Special attention is given to the development of social, political, and religious Muslim communities in South Asia; continuity and change of institutions, concepts, and ideologies; the role of Islamic traditions and thought in the history of South Asia; the emergence of Indo-Muslim identities and their social and political manifestation; and the relationship within the various Muslim communities and their interaction with their non-Muslim environment.

The readings include a variety of secondary sources as well as primary materials (in translation), and class discussions is an important part of the learning process.

**Israel, the Arab World and the Palestinians**

Convenor: Yair Wallach  
Course Code: 15PNMC038  
Unit value: 1  
Taught in: Full Year  
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one hour seminar  
Assessment: three-hour exam paper (50%); two 3500-word essays (50%)

This course provides a historical overview of the Israel-Palestine conflict and examines its political, social and cultural reflections, from late Ottoman Palestine to the present day. Alongside the political history, the course will emphasise social and cultural aspects of the conflict. It will bring a variety of voices and perspectives, often contradictory, on the conflict, its underlying causes and dynamics; these perspectives include not only the two “official” narratives, the Israeli and the Palestinian, but also voices “from below” of marginalised groups. Attention will be given to groups whose position does not fit easily with the official narratives: local Jewish communities in Palestine, Arab Palestinian collaborators with the British and the Zionists, Middle Eastern Jews in Israel, and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Architecture, visual art, film, novellas and poems will be discussed as means to analyse and understand the conflict.

Topics
The Palestine-Israel conflict: narratives, memories, histories
Late Ottoman Palestine and the origins of Arab Nationalism
Zionism and Palestine’s Jewish communities, the early encounters between Zionists and Arabs
World War I – local viewpoints, Imperial viewpoints: Sykes Piccot and the Balfour Declaration
The British Mandate of Palestine: British visions for Jerusalem
The Arab Revolt: political violence during the Mandate
Arab-Jewish interaction: engagement, collaboration, conflict
The End of the Mandate – prosperity, terror, illegal immigration and political confusion
1948: Palestine’s Nakba and Israel’s War of Independence
The enduring scars of 1948 in cultural memory: the stories of Ghassan Kanafani and A.B. Yehoshua
Israel between 1948 and 1967: the immigration of Middle Eastern and North African Jews and the question of Mizrahim (“Arab Jews”)
The birth of the PLO and the Armed Struggle
1967 and Greater Israel: Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories
The first Palestinian uprising, the Intifada (1987-1991); Mahmoud Darwish and Etgar Keret
The Oslo Accords; the global and local context of the peace process
Palestinian citizens of Israel
Religious Fundamentalism in Israel and Palestine
From Rabin’s assassination to the second Intifada; the collapse of the peace process
Israel: Apartheid State or the Only Democracy in the Middle East? The debate on the “end of the two state solution”
Film screening: Arna’s children (2003, Juliano Mer Khamis)

Jainism: History, Doctrine and the Contemporary World

Convenor: Peter Flugel
Course code: 15PSRC024
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one hour seminar
Assessment: three-hour exam paper (40%); two 2,500-3,000 word essays (60%).

The aim of this MA course is to introduce students to key aspects of Jainism. It will focus on the doctrinal and social history of Jainism, on the Jaina paths of salvation, Jaina asceticism and monasticism, Jaina communities and Jaina sectarianism, and on religious practices. These include, the rites of purification or āvaśyaka rites, self-mortification, tapasya, meditation, dhyāna, temple worship, pūjā, charity, dāna, vegetarianism and the Jaina practice of sallekhanā, death through self-starvation. The course will conclude with an overview of Jaina philosophical pluralism and modern Jaina ecology.

The structure of the course is broadly historical, but material will be drawn from both textual and ethnographic sources. The key subjects will be the history of Jainism, the Jaina prophets and Jaina scriptures, Jaina doctrines of non-violence, Jaina schools and sects, contemporary religious and social practices, and Jainism in the modern world.

Japanese Modernity I

Convenor: Christopher Gerteis
Course Code: 15PHIH013
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture
Assessment: two 3,000-word essays (100%)
The course is intended to provide an introduction to both the classic and recent historiography on modern Japan, and thereby a basis for further research. Japanese Modernity I will cover topics in Japanese history from the Tokugawa period to the early 20th century, addressing the question of the relationship between early modernity and the radical transformation to industry and empire in the late 19th century; Japanese Modernity II will address the tumultuous events of the 20th century.

Much of the early English-language work in the field took Japan to be the exception that proved the rule of modernization as an exclusively Western achievement. It therefore sought to explain the reasons for Japanese success (in terms of nation-state formation and industrialization) or failure (the drift to militarism and war) by isolating the archipelago from its East Asian context, comparing it to an often implicit Anglo-American norm, and seeking in the Japanese past either analogues for or the absence of those factors thought necessary for any country to succeed. More recent work has started from the premises that modernity is a global phenomenon, rather than a Western invention; that it is structured by transnational dynamics of capitalism and imperialism, rather than a unilinear process of national development; and that the Japanese experience of these can only be understood in its local and regional context. In this light, Japan is a compelling case-study of both the broader logic and process of modernization and the tensions to which it gives rise.

Japanese Modernity II

**Convenor:** Christopher Gerteis  
**Course Code:** 15PHIH013  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 2  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture  
**Assessment:** two 3,000-word essays (100%)  

The course is intended to provide an introduction to both the classic and recent historiography on modern Japan, and thereby a basis for further research. Japanese Modernity I will cover topics in Japanese history from the Tokugawa period to the early 20th century, addressing the question of the relationship between early modernity and the radical transformation to industry and empire in the late 19th century; Japanese Modernity II will address the tumultuous events of the 20th century.

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Judaism and Gender

**Convenor:** Catherine Hezser  
**Course code:** 15PSRH029  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 2  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** 1 essay of 5000 words (80%), 1 presentation outline (10%), 1 oral class presentation (10%)
The course will examine the role and representation of women in Judaism from antiquity to modern times. In the first part of the course images of women in the Bible, in Jewish Hellenistic literature, and in rabbinic sources shall be studied.

Ancient society was a patriarchal society in which women were generally subordinated to their husbands and delegated to the private domain. This social structure had many consequences for women’s religious roles and practices. In the Middle Ages a rabbinic orthodoxy developed which controlled all areas of daily life. For the life of Sephardic women in Spain, Portugal and North Africa the Cairo Geniza documents provide valuable source material with regard to women’s literacy and occupations. It seems that at the time when Jews lived under Islamic rule Jewish women’s education increased and they obtained a more prominent role in daily life. Amongst Ashkenazic Jews of Central and Eastern Europe women’s status depended on their husbands’ and fathers’ scholarly reputation, but women became the breadwinners and intermediaries between Jewish and non-Jewish society.

A number of scholars have stressed that after the French Revolution and Jewish Emancipation the ways in which women assimilated to European and American non-Jewish society differed in many regards from those of Jewish men. The late 19th century bourgeois ideal of the housewife reassigned women a place within the private sphere. Through synagogue sisterhoods and charitable organizations women could eventually obtain more influence on Jewish public life, but it was not until very recently that liberal Judaism permitted women to study for the rabbinate and to be ordained rabbis.

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**Mediated Culture in the Middle East: Politics and Communications**

**Convenor:** Dina Matar  
**Course code:** 15PMSH003  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 1  
**Workload:** weekly one-hour lectures plus a one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** The course will be assessed by one essay of not more than 5,000 words. Students choose their topic and agree with the course leader how they wish to proceed. The deadline is the first day of the week of the second term. Students are encouraged to use case studies.

Anyone who wants to understand the Middle East, particularly the Arab world after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, needs to understand the relationship between the region’s media and culture and between media and politics. For the past 40 years, the communications ecology of the Middle East has been shaped by a mass media regime, a one-to-many model of communication, with a strong structural ‘fit’ with authoritarian, centralised regimes. This model, dominated by representations of state power, authority and symbolic legitimacy, has been important in defining a mass citizenry that has been largely seen as conforming to the views of the state.

This easy fit relationship has been challenged by the proliferation of transnational and new media which are providing new communicative spaces for social action and interaction. Much has been said about the new media’s potential for change, both on the political and social level, because of their potential in providing spaces for marginalised voices, including those of women, and their ostensibly censor-free content. Much has been written about the ways in which new media coupled with rising levels of education are resetting the parameters of citizenship across the different countries in the Middle East. What is not so obvious, however, is how these challenges have been uneven: regulation of and access to information vary considerably depending on the particular nation state, and the short-term influence of new media has been contradictory, not the least when discussing traditionally marginalised groups, such as women. Furthermore, few studies have been carried out on how audiences make use of these media as major sites for ongoing struggles for participation and dissent and for more open communicative spaces vital for the development of civil societies.

This course takes up the study of the relationship between politics, culture and communication in the Middle East through two inter-related approaches, the first thematic and the second through comparative analyses of case
studies. It draws on theoretical approaches central to the study of culture, politics and communication, as well as theoretical frameworks used in other disciplines, to critically assess the continuously changing media and cultural landscape in the Middle East and interrogate the relationship between media, culture and politics.

The lectures are not formally structured and are meant to help provide students with the theoretical approaches central to the study of media, culture and politics. The seminars are student-led and demand intelligent, critical and engaged discussions as well as prepared presentations by each student. Each week will have key texts that need to be read by all and that need to be discussed in relation to the topic of the week and the seminar presentation. The themes discussed in the lectures and seminars will provide the basis for essay titles. Presentations may count for 10 per cent of the course grade. Each student must complete the readings and come to the class ready to discuss and engage with them critically and in-depth.

Modern Muslim Thinkers from South Asia

Convenor: Jan-Peter Hartung
Course code: 15PSRC169
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly one-hour lecture; one hour seminar
Assessment: One essay (4500-5000 words) (40%), one essay (4500-5000 words) (50%), 1 oral presentation (10%).

In this course we will, on the basis of secondary as well as translated primary readings, take a closer look on life and work of major protagonists of this development, prominent among them Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Sayyid Amir ‘Ali (1849-1928) and Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938). According to the typology of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, each one of them represents a particular approach to Modern Western thought, ranging from emphatic rejection to creative synthesis. These three different approaches, however, correspond to a large extent to different phases in the colonial encounter until independence in 1947. Crucial for a thorough understanding would therefore be a comprehension of the wider social, political, and intellectual context, but also a thorough knowledge of Western Orientalist approaches to the Islamic tradition by scholars like William Muir (1819-1905) and Aloys Sprenger (1813-1893) that became explicitly targeted by the three Muslim thinkers. Moreover, the course will provide an understanding of the different reference points in Western and Islamic philosophical and theological thought. Finally, we will have a look at the logical consequences of each of the three approaches, as well as on their social and political relevance.

Modern Trends in Islam

Convenor: Katherine P. Zebiri
Course code: 15PNMC228
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one hour seminar
Assessment: One written examination (50%); an essay of 4,000 words (25%); an essay of 4,000 words (25%).

This course will introduce students to the study of contemporary Islam by exploring a variety of interrelated religious and social topics. It will draw on theory and methods from the study of religions in general (e.g. sociology and psychology of religion, hermeneutics, and phenomenology), as well as Islamic studies in particular, in order to illuminate key areas of debate and discussion, while not excluding other approaches, such as anthropology, law, and gender studies, where appropriate.

In covering religious and social aspects of contemporary Islam, the course attends both to religious practice, values and discourse and to the role of religion in society. The former could include such topics as scripture and its interpretation (which of course is not without social and political implications), patterns of religious authority, the
centrality of Shari’a law and its interpretation, and religious experience and identity (including conversion to Islam and expressions of mysticism and spirituality, particularly within Sufism), while the latter could include gender and sexuality, interfaith relations, expressions of the ‘New Age’ in Islam, and issues affecting the Muslim diaspora in the West. While not central to the course, political issues will be touched upon (particularly in relation to Jihadism and radicalisation). Within this thematic approach, students will be introduced as appropriate to key Muslim thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh, Abdolkarim Soroush, and Fazlur Rahman.

Muslim Britain: Perspectives and Realities

Convenor: Sarah Stewart
Course code: 15PSRC158
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one hour seminar
Assessment: two 3,000 word essays (50%); three-hour exam paper (50%)

The publication of *The Satanic Verses* in September 1988 marked the beginning of a dramatic increase in media coverage of Muslims and Islamic culture in Britain which continued through Britain’s involvement in the Gulf, anti-terrorist legislation, the London bombings of 7/7 and the trial of Abu Hamza leading to the perception of Islam as a threat to the majority culture. Serious work on Islam in Britain has tended to focus on specific Muslim communities rather than the place and function of Islam within those communities and the diversity of attitudes held by Muslims and others towards Islam and Islamic cultural expression.

The course will begin by establishing the religion in a historical context starting with early Muslim migrations and settlement in Britain in the 19th century, through the various phases of subsequent migrations, to the institutionalising of Islam in Britain in the early twentieth century and the emergence of community leaders. Within this framework it will cover the different ethnic, sectarian and doctrinal approaches to Islam belonging to and/or adopted by migrants and second and third generation Muslims.

The second part of the course will focus on particular issues that have arisen, uniquely, out of the above context and in response to world events. Students will be asked to differentiate between ‘perceptions of Islam’ as portrayed in historical accounts, media coverage, popular culture, and oral testimony, and ‘realities’ of Islam which include the ways in which government, at national and local level, have provided for the particular needs of the various Muslim communities with respect to the law, employment, education and health, gender issues, religion, and the role of Islamic institutions.

Areas of debate will include such issues as the extent to which ‘Islam’ can be separated from Muslim society; the ways in which British Muslim identities are replacing ethnic ties amongst second and third generation Muslims; the role of Arabic in religious worship amongst the predominantly non-Arab British Muslim population.

Mystical Traditions

Convenor: Cosimo Zene
Course code: 15PSRC068
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: two 5,000 word essays (80%), two classroom presentations (20%)

This course provides students with a general introduction to the study of mysticism and a basic knowledge of mystic thought/experience in different traditions. While the course does not stress the comparative aspect of mysticism, it
does encourage students to develop theoretical frames and analytical tools which will allow them a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Special attention is paid to the philosophical and psychological roots of mystic experience and this is complemented by focusing on the historical and socio-cultural reasons which motivated the expansion of mystic groups at different times in diverse places.

Non-Violence in Jain Scriptures, Philosophy and Law

**Convenor:** Peter Flugel  
**Course code:** 15PSRC062  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full Year  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one hour seminar  
**Assessment:** two 2,500-3,000 word essays (60%); three-hour exam paper (40%)

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the Jain ethics of non-violence, āhīṃsā, in Jaina scriptures, philosophy and law. In cultural history, the Jain scriptures are unique in their exclusive focus on the religious significance of strictly non-violent practice, in mind, speech and action. Jain literature offers a millennia old tradition of philosophical and legal reflection on solutions for practical dilemmas faced by individuals or groups intent on the implementation of non-violent principles in everyday life. Based on key texts in translation, selected from the canonical and post-canonical Jaina literature, and illustrated by ethnographic examples, the course discusses the distinct contribution of Jain literature to the philosophy of consciousness and applied ethics (asceticism, vegetarianism, discourse ethics, philosophical pluralism, conflict resolution, and legal philosophy and procedure).

Origins and Development of Islam in the Middle East: Problems and Perspectives

**Convenor:** tbc  
**Course code:** 15PHIC040  
**Unit value:** 1  
**Taught in:** Full Year  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one hour seminar  
**Assessment:** one three-hour Exam (50%); 2 essays (50%)

This course discusses the formative period of Islam, the period during which the religion acquired the main features which today we would regard as characteristics of Islam. The approach is historical and assumes that religions do not emerge fully formed, overnight or even in the lifetime of the person who is regarded as the religion's founder.

Islam, like other major religious traditions, is complex and varied, and we should envision it as developing gradually and not uniformly before crystallizing in the forms which subsequently came to be regarded as characteristic and typical.

The course involves study of a number of topics in the history of the Middle East in the period from about 600 AD to about 900 AD. Topics are chosen for their relevance to the origins of Islam, its diffusion and its early development. The course attempts to familiarize students with a number of general questions which are important for this period of Middle Eastern history, e.g:

- the scope and nature of the source material;
• continuity and innovation;
• Islam as the creation of a community or of a prophet-figure;
• Arabization and Islamization;
• political change and religious developments.

Queer Politics in Asia, Africa and the Middle East

Convenor: Rahul Rao
Course code: 15PPOH020
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload:
Assessment: 70% coursework, 20% seminar presentation, 10% seminar participation

Queer theory is ‘for’ and ‘about’ everyone. Although frequently assumed to be a branch of social and political theory preoccupied with the study of sexual minorities, the insights of theorists such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler into questions concerning the constitution of identities, subjectivities, resistance and the operation of power, have travelled widely, informing scholarship in a host of ostensibly unrelated terrains. Yet like many other kinds of social and political theory, queer theory has been Eurocentric and has only recently begun to engage seriously with the world outside the North Atlantic.

This course is intended to provide both an introduction to queer theory, as well as to engage with the question of its relevance in contemporary Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. As queer identities have become ever more visible in these parts of the world, queer politics has become implicated in a host of questions that are central to the disciplines of political theory and international relations. LGBT rights have recently become a centrepiece of Western human rights diplomacy as well as a major priority for UN human rights advocacy. Conversely, conversations about LGBT rights have become a major point of tension between Western and non-Western states. In some discourses, acceptance of LGBT rights has become a new signifier of the age-old divide between the civilised and the savage.

Tensions have emerged within queer movements between purveyors of such orientalist tropes and their radical critics invested in a politics of intersectionality involving sex, race, class, nation and other forms of subjectivity.

This course will use struggles for sexual self-determination as a prism through which to consider broader questions about the constitution of modernity, the proliferation of identities, rights and claims for justice, the consolidation and deconstruction of postcolonial national identities, the aspirations and anxieties of postcolonial elites, etc. These questions will be studied contextually, with topics in many weeks focusing on a single area case-study, or a comparison of two or more country-contexts.

Religion in Britain: Faith Communities and Civil Society

Convenor: Cosimo Zene
Course code: 15PSRC163
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: two 4-5000-word essays (75%), one classroom presentation (25%)

This course provides students with the necessary anthropological and related skills to conduct fieldwork in the sphere of religions. It combines both a theoretical and practical approach thus allowing students to gather relevant data and to interpret these with appropriate analytical tools. Students will be exposed to a variety of religious experiences of relevant groups/communities especially in London, but also other areas in the UK. They will be asked to carry out a field research amongst one specific group of their choice, to write a report and present their findings
to the class. With the intent of fostering critical thinking, great importance will be given to the integration of theoretical/analytical approaches with the practice of fieldwork.

Religion, Nationhood and Ethnicity in Judaism

Convenor: Catherine Hezser  
Course code: 15PSRH030  
Unit value: 0.5  
Taught in: Term 2  
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
Assessment: one 5,000 word essay (80%) and presentation and assessment notes (10%).

This course will discuss the manifold ways in which Jewish identity is expressed in ancient, medieval, and modern Jewish culture. Were religious, ethnic, and national identity always connected, and if so, in what ways? Are developments recognizable with regard to definitions and expressions of Jewish identity? How and to what extent do political, social, and economic circumstances play a role in this regard?

The first part of the course will focus on Judaism in antiquity, in its transformation from biblical to post-biblical and rabbinic times. It has been argued that in post-biblical times the Israelite tribal cult became a religion. How did post-biblical Jewish religion define itself and to what extent were ethnic and national definitions of Jewishness maintained? When was the matrilineal principle introduced? What was the significance of the Land of Israel for ancient Jewish identity? Did Jews in the Land of Israel and the Diaspora express their Jewishness in different ways? How did ancient Jews cope with Greek and Roman imperialism, and how did they distinguish themselves from the surrounding pagan and Christian environment? In the Middle Ages Jews lived as minorities within the dominating Christian and Islamic cultures. How did they manage to remain Jewish and how was this Judaism expressed? The course will examine the processes of cultural distinction and acculturation within the Ashkenazic and Sephardic environments.

The following sessions will deal with the changes which Jewish identity formation underwent from the Middle Ages to modern times. For Jews modernity began with the French Revolution which eventually led to Jewish Emancipation. Subsequently, the question of how to maintain a Jewish identity while at the same time participating in Western culture was solved in many different ways. Different Jewish religious denominations developed and cultural and secular definitions of Jewishness emerged.

Finally, the role of Zionism and the foundation of the State of Israel for Jewish identity will be discussed. How do Diaspora Jews define their relationship to Israel and how is this relationship expressed in literary and autobiographical sources? What range of different positions can be discerned and how did they change over time, depending on the particular historical and political circumstances? How is Jewish religious identity expressed in Israel and how are the conflicts between secular and religious Jews to be understood?

Religions and Development

Convenor: Jörg Haustein  
Course code: 15PSRH049  
Unit value: 0.5  
Taught in: Term 1  
Workload: weekly two-hour seminar  
Assessment: One 6,000-word essay (90%); one oral presentation (10%)

Despite projections of increasing secularisation, religions continue to play a vital role in the societies of many developing countries, which has multiple implications for development efforts. Major development organisations now seek to integrate religious actors or collaborate with faith-based organisations. Religious groups increasingly
project their own visions of social advancement and the role of traditions, which may be found to clash with Western values or those of other religions. In development studies this configuration has led to a renewal of the controversial debate about religions and development, with new research and publications emerging.

The course explores this increasing field of study from two angles. On the one hand it follows the scholarly debate on religions and development by providing a historical overview since the 1950s and studying concrete positions and policy documents until the present day. On the other hand it explores specific issues in relation to religions and development in Africa and South Asia, such as the role of religions in determining social class, the implications of the rise of prosperity Pentecostalism, the persistent battle against female genital mutilation, the integration of religious sentiments and traditions in education, Western medicine and traditional beliefs about health and illness, and the role of religious actors and interreligious relations in the formation of development polity.

The course thus enables students of religions to engage with a specific field of practice, in which to test and refine their ideas about religion and society. Students of development studies are familiarised with the variability of religious sentiments and practices that development efforts in Africa and South Asia are confronted with and will learn about tried strategies of engaging religious actors. Participants coming from regional studies in turn will learn to take into account specialist knowledge from other disciplines in deepening their knowledge about cultures, religions, and politics in Africa and South Asia.

Religions on the move: New Currents and Emerging Trends in Global Religion

**Convenor:** Marloes Jansen  
**Course code:** 15PANH055  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 1  
**Workload:** weekly one-hour lecture; two-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** two pieces of coursework (30% and 70%)

The course will explore new currents and emerging trends in global religion. By means of conceptual questions and ethnographic case studies from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, it will emerge that globalization processes have not only contributed to the expansion of religion, but that religious forces have been crucial in the development of globalization itself. Indeed, questions about religion have been integral to the development of a significant amount of anthropological thinking about globalization. Nevertheless, many social scientists writing on globalization still overlook or neglect religion in their preoccupation with the political or economic dimensions of the phenomenon. This course will restore the balance by highlighting the association between new religious movements (NRMs) and globalization. Instead of taking a bi-directional approach to religious flows from the north to the south, by focusing on "reverse mission" by southern missionaries trying to reawaken religion as it is practised in the north and south, this course seeks to bring developments in multiple religious traditions, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, indigenous religious traditions and a synthesis of several traditions, into conversation with each other.

NRMs challenge most of what we traditionally take for granted about religion, including the ingrained north-south divide in missionization and our understanding of faith itself. We will begin with an explanation of the concept of NRMs in relation to the established world religions as well as cults or sects. We will proceed with a discussion of current debates in anthropology on transnationalism, religious pluralism and syncretism, followed by methodological issues concerning the study of NRMs. Other topics that will be addressed are the global processes that led to the emergence and expansion of NRMs; migration and diasporic religious communities; conversion processes; NRMs’ membership and leadership; the role of new religious agents in bringing about socio-religious transformation; society’s responses to NRMs; and the dissemination of NMRs’ ideologies through the use of new media. We will conclude with a discussion about what NRMs tell us about the future of religion. To explore these topics the course will draw on case studies ranging from Independent Churches in South Africa, vernacular Christianity in South Asia, Pentecostal and other Christian Charismatic Movements in West Africa, Islamic revivalist movements in the Middle
East, the new “Spiritual Sciences” in Africa, New Age movements in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, to diasporic religious communities in Britain.

A core component of this course will involve a site visit to a religious or ritual setting in London, as appropriate to the topic. Students will be expected to engage as a participant observer, take field notes about what they see and do, and (if permitted) take photographs. Interviews should be conducted with at least three different practitioners (one leader and two lay). As needed, the course convenor will help students identify potential settings and will provide an introduction to ethnographic methods. Literature research should also be conducted in order to analyse the fieldwork component.

Religious Practice in Japan: Texts, Rituals and Believers

Convenor: Lucia Dolce  
Course code: 15PSRC071  
Unit value: 1  
Taught in: Full Year  
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
Assessment: two essays (90%); one classroom presentation (10%).

This course addresses the religious phenomena in Japan in their historical context and focuses on specific themes relevant to the understanding of the social aspects of Japanese religion, and the influence of religion upon Japanese culture.

During the first term the course will explore the process through which the various traditions came into being and underwent transformation, following a chronological order. Particular attention will be paid to the relation between religious institutions and the centres of political power, and to the mechanisms of legitimation that religious movements used to promote themselves.

During the second term the course will follow a thematic approach, focusing on topics which are critical for the understanding of the religious landscape in contemporary Japan. Links will be made with the material analyzed in the first term, aiming to disclose the paradigms of continuity and change in the religious practices of Japan.

Representing Conflict: A Cross-Cultural and Inter Disciplinary Approach

Convenor: Tania Tribe  
Course code: 15PARH039  
Unit value: 0.5  
Taught in: Term 2  
Workload:  
Assessment: one 2000-word essay (40%); one 3000-word essay (50%); seminar presentation 10%

This course will examine how conflict and violence have been understood and represented thorough time and in different visual cultures and what role and function such representations have had in these societies. The discussion will consider how the visuality of violence is produced in different media – paintings, film, photography, theatre, poetry, performance – drawing on a range of examples from across the multiple cultural and philosophical perspectives that have existed on this issue.

The examples chosen for discussion will range from traditional media like painting and sculpture to installations, photography and film. By comparing the verbal-visual strategies employed in the construction of the works discussed the course will question issues such as:

- the role of the individual and of society;
the importance of memory in the genesis and visual construction of conflict;
- the ethical overtones associated with both violence and its representations;
- the power of rhetorical persuasion inherent to visual signs;
- the role of the human body and human emotions in the perception and representation of such events;
- the possibilities for dialogism in visual culture;
- the importance of gender;
- the presence or absence of subjective elements in these representations and the psychoanalytical overtones associated with this kind of imagery;
- the aestheticization of cruelty.

Taiwan’s politics and cross-strait relations

Convenor: Daffyd Fell
Course code: 15PPOC252
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload:
Assessment: 60% unseen exam, 30% coursework, 10% seminar presentation

This course seeks to examine the political processes that have shaped the Republic of China on Taiwan since 1949, with particular emphasis on the last two decades, and the evolution and the future prospects of Cross-Strait relations. The course focuses on two core themes (1) an analysis of Taiwan’s domestic politics and (2) analysis of Cross-Strait relations. Units on Taiwan’s domestic politics will address a variety of issues, including the island’s democratic transition, Taiwan’s party and electoral politics, the quality of its democracy, competing national identities in Taiwan’s politics, the role of new social movements and the formulation of public policy under democracy. The sessions on Cross-Strait relations will examine topics such as the nature and sources of political conflict across the Strait, the security dilemma facing the two sides, the increasing economic integration across the Strait and its impact on security, the role of the U.S. in the dyadic relationship, and prospects for political reconciliation between the PRC and Taiwan.

This is the first year-long postgraduate course in Europe or North America that focuses on Taiwan’s domestic politics and Cross-Strait relations. Taiwan’s political democratization, its identity politics and its contested international status have all contributed to making its politics one of the most researched topics in the fields of East Asian and Chinese politics. In addition, the increasing military imbalance across the Taiwan Strait and the paradoxical growth in economic ties between Taiwan and Mainland China – “paradoxical” since it has taken place against the background of the threat of conflict inherent in the dyadic relationship - help explain why Cross-Strait relations remain a focal point in East Asian international relations. Even more importantly, the future prospects of Cross-Strait ties are central to regional and global security because a Taiwan Strait clash is the only armed conflict which may result in the U.S. direct confrontation with China, a nuclear power with a huge military establishment.

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The course will use Taiwan as a test case for Political science and international relations theories and frameworks. Although the course focuses on Taiwan, students will be encouraged to bring to bear a comparative approach in their investigation and analysis of its politics. Political developments in Taiwan will be compared with those that have taken place in mainland China and other developing countries, as well as in new democracies. Political processes in different time periods of contemporary Taiwanese history — for example, before and after democratization and changes of ruling parties — will also be compared. Finally, the interplay between economic interdependence and political conflict in the Cross-Strait case will be compared to that with two other contemporary examples of transnational relationships characterized by political tensions and military rivalry: North and South Korea; India and Pakistan.

Text and Context in Classical Hinduism

Convenor: Theodore Proferes
Course code: 15PSRC007
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: two 7000-word essays, of 7,000 words (100%)

In this course we will encounter some of the most fundamental religious texts of the Hindu tradition, including the Rg Veda, the Upanishads, Mahābhārata, and Bhagavad Gītā. Through close readings, we will examine some of the core religio-philosophical ideas of early Hinduism, as well as pay close attention to the composition, style, and structure of the texts themselves. We will also attempt to situate Hindu religious discourse within a social and historical context, paying close attention to who participates in the religious world of ancient India and in what kinds of social circumstances religio-philosophical ideas are discussed. Additionally, students will be expected to analyze critically the methods and approaches of textual analysis in the fields of the Study of Religions and Indology.

The Great Tradition of Taoism

Convenor: Antonello Palumbo
Course code: 15PSRH036
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: one 6000-word essay (100%)

This course will offer a main narrative of Taoism as a recognisable tradition of religious ideas and practices throughout the history of China, while giving particular emphasis to the areas of cosmology, meditation, alchemy and ritual. The seminars will focus on selected readings of textual materials in translation and in-depth discussion of the topic treated in the lectures.

The course as a whole will explore the early shaping of Taoist identity at the stage sometimes defined as ‘proto-Taoism’ (from antiquity to the second century CE), focusing on ancient texts like Laozi (Daode jing), Zhuangzi and Neiye. Attention will then be paid to the emergence and development of Taoism as an organised religion during the Chinese Middle Ages (3rd-9th cent.), with special emphasis on the structure and ritual of the Celestial Master (Tianshi) church and its dialectic with popular cults.

Other topics will be the Shangqing and Lingbao traditions, the formation of the Taoist canon, and the relation of Taoism with Buddhism and power.
The final part of the course will survey modern developments from the Song dynasty (960-1279) to the late imperial period, focusing on the Quanzhen order, the practice of Internal Alchemy and exorcistic ritual. It will also assess the presence of Taoism in contemporary China and Taiwan, and discuss the perception of Taoism in the West.

The Holocaust in Theology, Literature and Art

Convenor: Catherine Hezser
Course code: 15PSRH028
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 2
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: one 5,000-word essay (80%); presentation and assessment notes (10%).

The purpose of the course is to analyse different representations of the Holocaust in 20th and 21st century theology, literature, film, and art. The impossibility of adequately expressing the horrors and atrocities of the Holocaust stands in contrast to the need to transmit knowledge about the Holocaust to later generations. How and to what extent is it legitimate to write fiction and poetry about the Holocaust, to address the Holocaust in art, and to make movies about it which are non-documentary and sometimes even have the form of comedy?

The Making of the Contemporary World

Convenor: Angus Lockyer
Course code: 15PHIH035
Unit value: 0.5
Taught in: Term 1
Workload: weekly two-hour seminar
Assessment: one 1,500-word essay, one 3,000-word essay (90%); seminar participation (10%)

The course will examine the historical conditions under which the contemporary world came into being, with an emphasis on the recent past. It will proceed chronologically, beginning with the world system of the thirteenth century, before European hegemony, then move quickly through the early modern period and the long 19th century— in the second half of term—the last hundred years. As it does so, each week will focus on a particular theme, including: archaic and modern globalization; early modern empires and new imperialism; industrialization and the great divergence between the West and the rest; the question of multiple modernities; colonialism and nationalism; uneven and underdevelopment; the global Cold War and failed prophecies about the end of history. To do so, it will draw on the exploding field of global history, together with relevant theoretical literature, ranging from political economy to cultural studies.

The course is designed primarily for History students, providing a global context within which to place their own research on particular regions and periods. It will suggest connections between their field and developments elsewhere, as well as a comparative framework within which to evaluate their research questions. The course may also be of interest to other students in programmes, notably international relations and politics, economics and development, providing the historical context within which to place contemporary developments in and against which to test general claims about the world today. Two essays will evaluate students’ engagement with and understanding of the key themes and issues in the course. Seminar participation will be assessed, to ensure that students keep up with an intensive reading schedule.

The Politics of Culture in Contemporary South Asia

Convenor: James Caron
Course code: 15PSAC314
The course begins by problematising the notion of national culture while noting the ways in which nation-states in South Asia produce and broadcast particular cultural models. However, these models form only one strand of cultural production: vigorous forms of activism produce counter-cultural forms that often re-use and re-interpret older traditions. Also, despite attempts to purify or delimit national cultures, culture in South Asia continues to mix and remix motifs and vocabularies and to speak to new audiences.

While considering English (and its local hybrid forms) to be a South Asian language, the course will also draw attention to the richness and salience of vernacular expressive codes.

Theory and Method in the Study of Religion

Convenor: Cosimo Zene
Course code: 15PSRC010
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
Assessment: one 2,500-word analytical report (20%); one 1000-word book review (15%); one 5,000-word essay (55%); one 30-minute class presentation (10%)

This course is offered both as a training MA programme in the Studies of Religions and available for First Year research students in the Department. Though conceived as one unit, the course can be divided into 3 major components:

1. Examining the place of the Study of Religion in postmodern thought with particular reference to critical theory and the works of Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida, Vattimo, Agamben.
2. Introducing Hermeneutics as a response to the ‘postmodern condition’ and the basis for a relevant theoretical approach to the Study of Religion. For those interested in interpreting data, texts and phenomena relating to religion, Hermeneutics might provide the tools to concentrate on this task by examining the contributions of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Bultmann, Ricouer, Gadamer and Habermas.
3. In line with critical Hermeneutics and the ‘dialogical disposition of language’, the final part of the course covers a reflection on ‘Otherness’ and the Self-Other encounter as exemplified in the works of Levinas, Bakhtin, Gramsci and de Certeau.

Despite the overwhelming presence of western theorists, the course aims at fostering a positive dialogue with the diversity of other philosophies and religious experiences.

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In line with critical Hermeneutics and the ‘dialogical disposition of language’, the final part of the course covers a reflection on ‘Otherness’ and the Self-Other encounter as exemplified in the works of Levinas, Bakhtin, de Certeau and Gramsci. Despite the overwhelming presence of western theorists, the course aims to foster a positive dialogue with the diversity of other philosophies and religious experiences. The course is comprised of a two-hour lecture and
one hour seminar per week. Students are expected to contribute to the course by conducting in turn the seminar - discussing the topic of the previous week’s lecture - either through class presentation or by proposing common readings around which to centre the discussion.

Transnational Communities and Diasporic Media: Networking, Connectivity, Identity

**Convenor:** Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad  
**Course code:** 15PMSH004  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 2  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour seminar/lecture  
**Assessment:** 100% coursework

A central component of globalization is the mass movements of people and the consequent growth of a variety of communities and networks whose lives are played out across and beyond national borders. Media and communications are central to the lives and practices of such collectivities and take many different forms.

Many diasporas have developed a range of media channels to bind members and maintain connection with the homeland. Religious communities are amongst the biggest transnational media players, for example in the development of Christian broadcasting channels or the multiplicity of sites for Koranic interpretation on the Net. Transnational political activity is fostered and coordinated through the use of media, the Net and mobile telephony. These practices do not fit into classic studies of national mass media or even international communication. These are new and still emergent practices, growing out of the contemporary lived experience of transnational communities and networks strung out across a variety of locations. They complicate models of ‘the West and the Rest’ and raise important questions about the limitations of available models of both communications and collectivities.

The course introduces students to the key theoretical debates around the network society, identity-formation and representation, and engages them in the critical analysis of the communicative practices of select transnational communities. It will also invite students to think reflexively about their own life trajectory and identity-formation.

Violence, justice and the politics of memory

**Convenor:** Phil Clark  
**Course code:** 15PPOH019  
**Unit value:** 0.5  
**Taught in:** Term 1  
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar  
**Assessment:** 90% coursework and 10% class participation

This course offers historical, theoretical and empirical perspectives on the nature and causes of conflict and its impact on social and economic development in Africa and Asia over the past century, as well as memory and justice responses to violence. The course emphasises the crucial linkages of conflict, memory and justice, in particular the prevalence of unaddressed or manipulated memories of violence, historical grievance and impunity as causes of further conflict.

Students begin the course with a selection of readings on explanations of warfare and violence, including models that apply social, cultural, materialist and instrumental theories of causation, followed by theoretical considerations of responses to conflict, principally in terms of memory and justice processes. The course then explores these themes through detailed African and Asian case studies. The course concludes with some overarching considerations for
memory and justice responses to conflict, explored through the institution of the International Criminal Court and attempts to create a global accountability regime.

The choice of cases include the Rwandan genocides of 1960, 1973 and 1994; brigandage and predation in eastern Congo after 1993; Amin’s Uganda, the war of liberation and religious cults and violence in northern Uganda; the southern Sudanese wars since 1958; and the Khmer Rouge ‘utopian’ genocide in Cambodia. In each case, students will be encouraged to consider the means of violence employed, the causes and motivations of conflict (including rational choice explanations and political economy factors), the relevance of political systems (including ‘imposed’ democratisation) and political instrumentalism, issues of gender, youth, religion and ethnicity, and questions of culpability, ethics and moralities. The economic aspects of conflict (‘the costs of war’) are also tackled. International dimensions are treated in relation to relief aid, development aid, reconstruction, and conflict resolution. The course also includes discussion of various forms of memorialisation, commemoration, accountability, reparations, reconciliation and atonement.

Of particular concern for this course are issues of transitional justice, which broadly concern the processes by which societies address the legacies of widespread human rights abuses, such as those arising from political repression or mass conflict, and facilitate transition to stable, open societies where human rights are fostered and protected. Over the last twenty years, the realm of transitional justice has witnessed the proliferation of different legal and non-legal mechanisms designed to address the legacies of human rights abuses, including the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the gacaca community courts in Rwanda, and the International Criminal Court.

As a result of this proliferation, transitional justice has become an increasingly fragmented area of study, with various disciplines – particularly law, politics, sociology, criminology, development studies and international relations – conducting discrete theoretical and empirical research. This course provides a more systematic, inter-disciplinary examination of transitional justice theory and practice. It examines the theoretical and historical foundations of transitional justice, the objectives and modalities of different transitional justice mechanisms, the effect of legal, political and cultural contexts on the operation of transitional justice processes and, in turn, the impact of transitional justice on those dimensions of post-conflict and/or post-repression societies. After laying important theoretical and conceptual foundations, the course focuses on case study-based analyses in order to explore the implications of transitional justice concepts in practice.

Topics

- Analysing Conflict: Grand Narratives, Local Struggles
- The Politics of Memory: The Past in the Present and Future
- Theorising Justice: Historical, Conceptual and Methodological Issues
- South Africa: Amnesty after Atrocity?
- Rwanda: Ethnicity, Genocide and Tiers of Justice
- Uganda: Are Victims Perpetrators?
- Sudan: Darfur, Oil and Southern Independence
- Cambodia: Genocide in Pursuit of ‘Utopia’
- Timor-Leste: Militias, ‘Local’ Justice and the Role of Outsiders
- A Global Accountability Regime? The International Criminal Court and Tensions in Transitional Justice

World War II, Cold War, and the “War On Terror”: The United States and South East Asia

Convenor: Michael Charney
Course Code: 15PHiC059
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload:
Assessment: Exam (50%); two essays (50%).

This course examines one of the most dynamic periods of South East Asian history, the period from the beginning of the Second World War to the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the last half-century, U.S. foreign policy has affected every continent as a result of its global reach as the preeminent superpower, and South East Asia is no exception. However, the U.S. impact has been perhaps far greater on political and cultural change in the region than anywhere else, in large part because the beginning of the Cold War encountered complex processes of decolonization. Southeast Asia was divided into numerous different international camps during the war, made more confusing by the frequent rise and collapse of pro-U.S. regimes. Now, as we head into the twenty-first century, a new context has emerged in which the growth of Chinese political and economic power and the outbreak of the global war on terror is breaking down old relationships and encouraging yet another reconfiguration of U.S. friend and foe in the region.

While significant attention will be paid to specific historical developments in each of the major countries of the region during this half century, the emphasis will be upon broader developments that shaped the region from the breakdown of colonial rule and through consecutive regional divisions to the decline of the Cold War divisions and reintegration of the region, a process begun by the end of the 1980s.

The course also seeks to show how many of these developments were informed, re-directed, or determined by U.S. foreign policy and outright intervention. Soviet and American policies had a major impact on the region, especially when given muscle through the deployment of the U.S. soldiers in Vietnam and even covertly through the manipulation of aid. U.S. influence, however, did not end with Vietnam and has continued to complicate the development of the region.

Zionist Ideology
Convenor: Yair Wallach
Course code: 15PNMC035
Unit value: 1
Taught in: Full Year
Workload: 3 hours of classroom contact per week
Assessment: one written examination (50%); two 3500-word essays (50%)

Zionism is one of the most fascinating political-cultural projects of the twentieth century – and one whose enduring legacy and current meaning are still fiercely contested. This multi-disciplinary course focusses on the development of Zionism before the 1948 establishment of Israel, exploring the political and conceptual genealogies of the movement and its key ideological factions; it examines Zionism’s cultural and everyday manifestations, in gender, art, and architecture. Critical approaches to Zionism are explored both historically and in their contemporary forms.

The syllabus includes:

- Zionism – Ideology, Project, Movement?
- The European context: East European Jewry in 19th century. Nationalism, Socialism, Imperialism
- Christian Zionism; Jews, Palestine and the Second Coming of Christ in 19th century Britain and 21st century USA
- Early Zionist thinkers: anti-Semitism and Jewish nationalism
- Theodor Herzl and the emergence of Political Zionism
- Ahad Ha'am: Zionism as a project of cultural revival
- Labour Zionism: marrying Jewish ethno-nationalism with universal struggle for workers’ rights? The origins of the Kibbutz movement, Second Aliya
- Revisionist Zionism: Vladimir Jabotinsky and the Far Right
Zoroastrianism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

**Convenor:** Almut Hintze
**Course code:** 15PSRC052
**Unit value:** 1
**Taught in:** Full Year
**Workload:** weekly two-hour lecture; one-hour seminar
**Assessment:** two 3,000 word essays (50%); one three-hour exam (50%)

Zoroastrianism, known of old as ‘the Persian religion’, is one of the world’s most ancient prophetic faiths and one of Iran’s great contributions to the history of religious thought. It is deeply rooted in the prehistoric Indo-Iranian and, ultimately, Indo-European tradition and thus shares a common heritage with the Vedic religion and Hinduism. In its long history it has influenced many other religions, notably Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and, especially, Christianity. For over a thousand years it was the official religion of three great Iranian empires under the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian rulers, extending at times from the Indus river to the coastline and islands of Asia Minor.

The course will provide a survey of Zoroastrian doctrines, rituals and observances with reference to the Zoroastrian scriptures (Avestan and Pahlavi literature). It will be taught within a historical framework beginning with the Indo-Iranian religious system to which the prophet Zarathushtra belonged, and going on to trace the development of the religion under Persian rulers, its decline after the Islamic conquest of Iran and its revival on the Indian subcontinent. The course will also cover modern Zoroastrian thought and the ritual and devotional practices of Zoroastrians today.