

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSt in Study of Religions



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

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

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

Course structure

An overview of the course structure is provided below. Details of the compulsory and optional elements of the course are provided in the *Course components* section of this page.

You will take one core course with two elements. All seminars will require student preparation and will be led by academic staff.

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

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

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

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

Research seminars

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

Progression to the DPhil in Theology relies on a strong performance in the taught course. The faculty would normally expect a final grade of 67% or above.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the [University's Residence requirements](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements). (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements>)

Resources to support your study

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

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

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students to support with learning and research, as well as [guidance on what technology to bring with you as a new student](https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring) (<https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring>) at Oxford.

The Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities

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

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

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

Further libraries

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

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

Languages

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

Supervision

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

Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

Course components

Compulsory study

Two-part core course:

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

Options

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

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism

Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out in this course page. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after registration. The safety of students, staff and visitors is paramount and major changes to delivery or services may have to be made if a pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency occurs. In addition, in certain circumstances, for example due to visa difficulties or because the health needs of students cannot be met, it may be necessary to make adjustments to course requirements for international study.

Where possible your academic supervisor will not change for the duration of your course. However, it may be necessary to assign a new academic supervisor during the course of study or before registration for reasons which might include illness, sabbatical leave, parental leave or change in employment.

For further information please see our page on [changes to courses \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) and the [provisions of the student contract \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) regarding changes to courses.

Costs

Annual course fees

The fees for this course are charged on an annual basis.

Fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£17,910
Overseas	£43,730

What do course fees cover?

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

How long do I need to pay course fees?

Course fees are payable each year, for the duration of your fee liability (your fee liability is the length of time for which you are required to pay course fees). For courses lasting longer than one year fees will usually increase annually, as explained in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Our [fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges) pages provide further information, including details about:

- [course fees and fee liability \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability);
- [how your fee status is determined \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status); and
- [changes to fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges).

Information about how much fees and other costs will usually increase each academic year is set out in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Additional costs

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

Living costs

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

Living costs for full-time study

For the 2026-27 academic year, the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student is between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month spent in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford. Depending on your circumstances, you may also need to budget for the [costs of a student visa and immigration health surcharge \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) and/or [living costs for family members or other dependants \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2), that you plan to bring with you to Oxford (if [dependant visa eligibility criteria \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family) are met).

Further information about living costs

The current economic climate and periods of high national inflation in recent years make it harder to estimate potential changes to the cost of living over the next few years. For study in Oxford beyond the 2026-27 academic year, it is suggested that you budget for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

A breakdown of likely living costs for one month during the 2026-27 academic year are shown below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month in Oxford during the 2026-27 academic year

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545
Accommodation	£825	£990
Personal items	£160	£310
Social activities	£50	£130
Study costs	£35	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,405	£2,105

For information about how these figures have been calculated as well as tables showing the likely living costs for nine and twelve months, please refer to the [living costs \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this document please [contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email \(graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk\)](mailto:graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk).