

Philosophy, Ethics & Religion BA (Hons)

UCAS Code: V620 | Duration: 3 years | Full-time | Hope Park | 2025/2026

Placement year opportunities available



Course Overview

If you want to understand the world we live in, you have to be able to understand the great religious traditions and philosophical questions that shape it. Our degree in Philosophy, Ethics and Religion is a rigorous programme that exposes you to the big questions of philosophy: what is good? What are the ideals or principles by which we can lead a meaningful life, individually and politically? What defines a human person? What can we rationally say about the existence and nature of God? What is beauty? At the same time, it offers an in-depth understanding of major religions, such as, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

In philosophy, you will not only be reading the great texts of western thought for yourself, but also significant texts from wider global philosophies, such as: African, Indian, and Japanese philosophies. There will also be an emphasis on developing your own ability to think critically and put forward reasoned arguments. The study of religion is grounded in an understanding of religions as they are lived and understood: field trips and research in real communities sit alongside the interpretation of texts, symbols and ideas.

Your studies will be led by internationally renowned lecturers who bring their own research to bear on their teaching. Our staff have special expertise in, for example, the study of Islam, Zen Buddhism, and contemporary philosophy of religion. They will guide and inspire you to clarify the questions you want to ask, and to explore the world views of others as you work out your own.

Entry Requirements

This course follows the standard University entry requirements. Please see the website for further information.

Fees and Additional Costs

The tuition fees for 2025/2026 are £9,535 for full-time undergraduate courses.

On top of tuition fees, you will need to purchase core textbooks at a cost of approximately £100. There are also fieldwork costs of approximately £50.

You will also need to consider the cost of your accommodation each year whilst you study at university.

Visit our accommodation webpages for further details about our Halls of Residence: www.hope.ac.uk/halls

Applicants will need access to a computer if course delivery is switched to online. The University has a laptop lending service if remote study is necessary.



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Philosophy, Ethics & Religion

BA (Hons) Curriculum

Year One

Normative Ethics and Meta-Ethics

You will begin by studying normative ethics, including utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and deontological ethics. This will be followed by a study of Meta-Ethics.

Free-will and Determinism

This unit will explore theories and debates with the context of free-will and determinism.

Epistemology and Existentialism

In this unit we will examine different areas within philosophy of knowledge (epistemology) such as empiricism, rationalism, and transcendental idealism.

Introduction to the Study of Religion

This unit covers the main theories of religion, key ideas and themes (sacred texts, myth, ritual, sacred objects), questions such as the insider/outsider debate, religion and identity.

African Traditional Religion

This unit introduces you to some of the key aspects of the study of religion through the lens of the traditional religions of Africa.

Introduction to Islam

The course aims to introduce students to the contemporary study of Islam. It begins by covering matters to do with the origins of Islam, the Quran and the tradition-literature.

Introduction to Judaism

Is Judaism a religion, an ethnicity, or a culture? This unit introduces students to Judaism in its rich and varied traditions and history, as well as contemporary practice.

Introduction to Hinduism

Hinduism is one of humanity's ancient and complex religious traditions. This unit helps students to navigate the rich ideas, texts and images of Hinduism.

Religion and Violence in Liverpool

Themes covered include the slave trade, the impact of emigration from Ireland on the religious landscape of the city, and the roots of the 1909 Liverpool sectarian riots.

Year Two

Themes in Philosophy of Religion

You will explore the limits of language when faced with the infinite (can we only say what God is not?), as well as a number of contemporary perspectives.

Phenomenological Aesthetics

This course begins with an introduction to philosophical aesthetics, before exploring how phenomenology informs, influences, and even critiques aesthetics.

Political Philosophy

This course engages with key debates about liberty, the limits of democracy, socialism, anarchism and global justice.

Environmental Ethics

Using the so-called death of nature as a starting point, this course will explore pressing contemporary issues including how and why we ought to value the nonhuman environment (if at all), and the ethics of climate change and rewilding.

Applied Ethics

Building on normative ethics and meta-ethics studied in the first year, this course will explore the following prominent issues in applied ethics: abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, sexual perversion, homosexuality, pornography, love and fidelity.

Christianity

In this course Christianity, a thoroughly global faith, is studied from a global point of view, examining diverse ritual practices, behaviours, beliefs and customs.

Buddhism

This course offers an introduction to Buddhism, including looking at who Siddhartha Gautama (the historical Buddha) was, and what he did, before exploring various key areas of Buddhism.

Islamic law and society

The course examines how Islamic law engages questions of politics, gender and its application within Western civil legal system.

Year Three

The Limits of Personhood

You will examine the influence of early modern theories of personal identity including those of Locke and Hume. You will also look at contemporary debates in the philosophy of mind.

God after the Death of God: Modern and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion

You will study understandings of God in continental philosophy and phenomenology, looking at key thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas, and Luce Irigaray.

The Soul and the Absolute

This advanced course will explore answers to this fundamental question from the perspective

of the Indian spiritual philosophy known as Advaita Vedanta, the Jewish mystical discipline called - Kabbalah, and the Chinese or Japanese tradition of Zen Buddhism.

Religion, Conflict, and Reconciliation

The course looks at various contexts in the world to assess the relevance of engaging religion for the coherence of societies and pursuit of peace even when conflict is associated with religious sensitivities.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Teaching on this degree is structured into lectures, where all students are taught together, seminars of smaller groups of around 15-20 students, and tutorials which typically have no more than 10 students. Lectures will give you an overview of a specific topic, which will then be studied in more detail in your seminars. Tutorials are a more intensive forum for discussion and are primarily used to analyse key texts. You will also have the opportunity to have a one-to-one meeting with your tutor each week.

In your first year, there are approximately 12 teaching hours each week, which reduces to approximately 10 teaching hours in your second and third years. On top of teaching hours, you are also expected to spend a number of hours studying independently each week, as well as studying in groups to prepare for any group assessments you may have.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

During your three years of study, you will have a number of assessments, including portfolios, essays, group presentations and written exams. In your final year you also complete a dissertation project.

You will receive your feedback via the University's Virtual Online Learning Environment (Moodle), and you are also welcome to discuss the feedback with your tutors.



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