Theology and Religion

The following courses in Theology and Religion are available to Visiting Students and details of each course are given below. For further courses which may be available please go to http://www.theology.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate-admissions/our-courses.html. If you have a particular interest in an area of Theology which you do not see here, please contact vsp@mansfield.ox.ac.uk, and we will ask our Theology fellows for advice. Before confirming your choice of topics we will look at your past qualifications and statement of interests to make sure we are providing the most suitable courses for you.

Reformation
19th-Century Christian Thought
Modern Theology
Philosophy of Religion
Nature of Religion
Hinduism
Buddhism
New Testament
Old Testament
Introduction to Mysticism

Reformation
The subject includes the work and thought of the leading mainstream Protestant reformers, especially Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, together with the radicals, and the development of the Reformation in European society. Questions will be set both on renewal in the Roman Catholic Church throughout Europe, the confessional tensions which led to the Thirty Years’ War (1618-48) and on religious change in the kingdom of England from the Henrician reforms through to the reign of Charles I and the downfall of his government and Church.

19th-Century Christian Thought
This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course and is supported in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms by Faculty lectures. The course addresses key issues in theological thinking in Britain and Europe during the long nineteenth century. These include biblical interpretation, the nature of authority, reason and faith, ecclesiology, Christology, romanticism, literature and imagination, spirit and history, reductionism, religious experience, and the encounter with world religions. The topics will be addressed through seminal or representative texts. Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Newman and Coleridge are especially significant thinkers whose work or influence will normally be represented in the paper.

Modern Theology
This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course and is supported in all three terms by Faculty lectures titled ‘Modern Theology’ and ‘God, Christ and Salvation’. The course addresses topics in modern theology, from the early twentieth century through to the present, with particular references to the doctrine of God, Christology, and soteriology. Special emphasis will be placed on the interrelationship between these three topics and on the way in which their treatment is affected by differing understandings of the nature, the sources, and the practice of theology. Candidates will
be expected to be aware of the interplay of tradition, innovation and confessional context in the work of major systematic theologians of the twentieth century.

**Philosophy of Religion**
This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course and is supported by Faculty lectures in Michaelmas term. The course addresses claims about the existence of God, and God's relation to the world: their meaning, the possibility of their truth, and the kind of justification which can or needs to be provided for them, and the philosophical problems raised by the existence of different religions.

**Nature of Religion**
This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course and is supported in Michaelmas Term by an eight week Faculty lecture course titled Introduction to The Study of Religions and in Hilary Term by an eight week lecture course titled The Nature of Religion. The course addresses the contested nature of the term 'religion' and examines some key authors, texts and issues in this interdisciplinary field. Prior reading might be the introduction to John Bowker ed. Oxford Dictionary of Religion and D Corrywright and P Morgan Get Set for Religious Studies. Either Ivan Strenski ed. Thinking About Religion OR Seth D Kunin with Jonathan Miles Watson eds. Theories of Religion: A Reader have useful texts.

**Hinduism**
This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course and is supported by Faculty lectures on Hinduism in both Michaelmas and Hilary Terms. It seeks to interrogate the use of the term 'Hinduism' and to understand other key ideas in this family of traditions and examines some key texts and historical movements. Prior reading might be Kim Knott Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction and (for those with existing background) Gavin Flood An Introduction to Hinduism. A useful selection of texts to which reference will be made is Dominic Goodall ed. Hindu Scriptures.

**Buddhism**
This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course and is supported by Faculty lectures in Michaelmas and Hilary terms. It introduces both the teaching of the Buddha and the main ideas of early Buddhism in their historical setting. Particular attention will be paid to the foundations of Buddhist ethics, the relationships of householder, and ascetic lay ways of life. Prior reading might be D Keown Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction and (for those with some existing background) Richard Gombrich What The Buddha Thought. A useful collection of texts is Rupert Gethin ed. Sayings of The Buddha.

**New Testament**
This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course. The subject includes a consideration of both the historical circumstances of origin and the literary, theological character of the documents that make up the New Testament. Topics include the historical Jesus, the synoptic problem, the provenance, purpose, theology and social context of the Gospels and the Pauline literature, and the early history of the Christian movement. This option is supported in all three terms by Faculty lectures titled "Introduction to the New Testament with Special Reference to the Gospel of Mark," "The Gospel of Matthew," "The Gospel of John," "The Historical Jesus," "Introduction to Paul," "Romans" and "1 Corinthians".
Old Testament

This can be taken as a four or eight week tutorial course and is supported by Faculty lectures on 'Introduction to the Old Testament' in Michaelmas term and on 'Types of Old Testament Literature' in Trinity term, with further lectures on a variety of more specialised topics also available in all three terms. The course investigates the main theological themes of the Old Testament within its historical setting, with particular reference to three major texts (the books of Isaiah, Psalms, and Deuteronomy).

Introduction to Mysticism

This course seeks to examine the way mysticism has been defined and studied and will give the student the chance to look at a selected example of mystical writing from a particular tradition (e.g. Jewish; Christian or Islamic). There are Faculty lectures and seminars in this area to support learning.

Select Bibliography:

William James relevant chapters of The Varieties of Religious Experience
Steven T Katz ed. Mysticism and Religious Traditions
Bernard McGinn The Foundations of Mysticism
Annemarie Schimmel Mystical Dimensions of Islam
G. Scholem Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism
Richard Woods ed. Understanding Mysticism