



Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Contact Hours (Lectures and Supervisions)

Contact hours and workload depend on which papers you choose each year, in addition to the approach your supervisors wish to take.

In first year, you take 5 papers, depending on these papers, you will have roughly 8 hours of lectures a week. You will also have supervisions, in my experience, usually two a week. Supervisions are usually focused on the lecture material for that particular week, as a result, these can be extremely useful for consolidating knowledge and exploring ideas further.

In second and third year there are a wider range of papers to choose from, you take four papers, in this way, some find second and third year more enjoyable due to the wider choices of papers. There are also fewer lecture hours, usually 6 hours for second year. Choosing at least one coursework-based paper per year can be very beneficial as well, depending on the person.

Supervisions are focused on an essay which would be set by your supervisor for that particular paper. The recommended word length for these essays is usually between 1500-2500 words, again, depending on your supervisor. These supervisions are a great way to discuss debated ideas and concepts with world leading experts who frequently nuance your perspective through challenging your position. These sessions are particularly useful if you enjoy what you wrote about and approached issues in unique and provoking ways. These supervisions aid in preparation for your end of year exams, both through writing style and content, but also through the 'pre-reading' set by the supervisions. These readings are important to complete, especially for the end of year exam, in which, examiners would expect to see evidence of both mandatory and wider reading

What is unique about the Cambridge course?

The main thing that makes this course stand out at Cambridge is the sheer range of disciplines you are able to engage with. Whilst some focus on the stereotypical Christian theology and biblical studies, many others focus on Philosophy, Anthropology, World religions, Culture and Language. You are also able to switch to the Human Social and Political Science "Modern Religion" Track after first year. Here you would be able to choose two Social Anthropology papers from HSPS and two from Theology, which is great for those with a focus on anthropology, sociology and politics. Additionally, the faculty is very welcoming and supportive, allowing you to build a good relationship with course mates, lecturers and supervisors. "TRPR" is therefore a multidisciplinary course with great pastoral care.

What did you wish you knew when applying?

Generally, first year is quite 'Christianity' heavy, which for me was at times difficult since it is not my primary interest. If I had known, I would've read ahead slightly more into Christianity. But I enjoyed these papers in the end, and although I did not choose any Christian papers after first year, I am glad I did them.

Favourite and worst thing about your subject?

Favourite: Dealing with difficult and very interesting ideas in a supportive and intellectually stimulating environment.

Least Favourite: Some of the concepts we learn, whilst interesting, have little practical usage. Its important to know that with theology and philosophy, some concepts are important within the discipline, but occasionally fail to be applied outside of it.

Personal Statement Tips

Structure your personal statement concisely, showcasing your interests and views on certain issues. Unique points of view are held in high regard, as well as the way you word them. Additionally, its important to display a capability to change previous views through further research. Perhaps describe your intellectual journey with a certain theological dilemma and how/what influenced your perspective. The main thing is to show both an aptitude and interest for studying theology, make sure you have some super-curriculars that exhibit this too.

Interview Tips

The interview is almost like a conversation, so treat it as that! The interviewer(s) will purposefully try to challenge your views so be ready to defend anything you have claimed in your personal statement and submitted work. Additionally, it is common for them to introduce new material to you in order to examine your ability to adapt, learn and apply new ideas. Here, they want to hear your thoughts, and despite you possibly messing up at times or being stumped, it's important that they see you at least trying to answer their questions. The interview is a great way to showcase your debating, reasoning and listening skills, so try to make the most of it inshallah.

Recommended reading/activities

In preparation, I advise entering some essay and debating competitions, especially to do with the topic area. In doing so, you will broaden your horizon into the subject and show admissions that you are truly interested in the

subject. Additionally reading relevant and interesting works of theology and related fields will aid your interpretative, hermeneutical skills and familiarise you with material found commonly throughout the course.

Other

Inshallah this has helped you, feel free to consult the faculty page for more information: <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/theology>

