Academic Staff

Lecturers

**Dr Joshua Hordern** is a Lecturer in Theology for Jesus College and Associate Professor of Christian Ethics in the Faculty of Theology and Religion. He teaches Christian ethics and moral reasoning, and his research areas include moral and political theology, healthcare, Islam and affections.

**Dr Joe Cunningham** is a Lecturer in Philosophy who teaches General Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Ethics, Knowledge & Reality, and Philosophy of Mind. His research interests are in the theories of reasons, rationality, and moral psychology.

About the Course

Philosophy and Theology brings together some of the most important approaches to understanding and assessing the intellectual claims of religion, and in particular of Christianity. It fosters intellectual capacities that you can apply across both disciplines, and develops skills which you will find useful for a wide range of careers and activities after graduation. The degree is constructed in the belief that the parallel study of these related disciplines provides new perspectives on each, leading to deeper understanding.

The study of philosophy develops analytical rigour and the ability to criticise and reason logically. It allows you to apply these skills to many contemporary and historical schools of thought and individual thinkers, and to questions ranging from how we acquire knowledge and form moral judgements to central questions in the philosophy of religion, including the existence and nature of God and the relevance of religion to human life.

The study of theology and religion brings together a wide range of skills and disciplines, historical, textual, linguistic, sociological, literary-critical and philosophical. It provides a grounding in the theology and ethics, Christianity, from the early to the modern, along with a wide range of options in the academic study of religion, including non-Christian traditions.

The Philosophy Faculty is the largest philosophy department in the UK, and one of the largest in the world, with more than 70 full-time members, admitting more than 500 undergraduates annually to read the various degrees involving Philosophy. Many Faculty members have a worldwide reputation, and our library and other facilities are acknowledged as among the best in the country.

The Faculty of Theology and Religion has nearly 100 members, covering almost every possible branch of the discipline, ranging from experts in the ancient languages and literature of the world's religions to church historians and systematic theologians. Its reputation attracts scholars from all over the world as visiting lecturers.

Your work is divided between tutorials (one or two weekly), lectures (typically six to eight weekly), and perhaps some classes, for instance for first-year logic, or for languages such as New Testament Greek. A large part of your week will be spent in private study to prepare essays for tutorials.

The tutorial system, involving a programme of recommended reading and the individual discussion of weekly essays, is particularly well adapted to subjects such as Philosophy and Theology where the analysis and comparison of different theories and points of view will occupy a central place.
For the Preliminary Examination, taken at the end of the third term, students are examined in four courses. For theology, this includes The Figure of Jesus through the Centuries and one other, chosen between Introduction to the Study of the Bible, Religion and Religions, New Testament Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Qur’anic Arabic, Vulgate Latin, Pali, or Sanskrit. For philosophy, students study the same topics as for PPE and PPL, but are examined over two papers instead of one. Students sit a paper in General Philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology and philosophy of mind) and a further paper in Logic and Moral Philosophy (the latter being studied through engagement with J. S. Mill’s Utilitarianism.)

For the Final University Examination, students take eight papers, either five in Philosophy and three in Theology, or five in Theology and three in Philosophy, or four in each. A thesis may replace one of the eight papers. Students are required to study the Philosophy of Religion. Additionally, they must study either Knowledge and Reality or Early Modern Philosophy. They must also choose to study either Ethics or the work of one Ancient philosopher, for which the available options are Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics. A considerable number of other optional papers are available: see the list under PPE. On the Theology side, there is a wide range of optional papers to choose from, including Ethics I: Christian Moral Reasoning.

**Joint Schools**

Theology is not available as a single subject at Jesus College. Philosophy cannot be studied on its own at Oxford. At Jesus College, you can also study the following combinations:

- Computer and Philosophy
- Philosophy and Modern Languages
- Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
- Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics (PPL)
- Mathematics and Philosophy

**Admissions**

In a total College entry of about 100 undergraduates, 2 are offered places in a typical year to read Philosophy and Theology. Candidates are selected on the basis of academic record (e.g. GCSEs) and potential, as shown by their UCAS reference, submitted written work, and performance in the Philosophy written test and in interviews if shortlisted.

**Academic requirements:** Applications are accepted from candidates with any subject at A-level. Religious Studies may be helpful for some elements of the course, but is by no means essential. Offers made to candidates will be conditional upon A-level results (AAA, excluding General Studies) or equivalent qualifications.

**Written test:** All candidates must take the Philosophy Test in schools (or approved test centres) on 4 November 2020. The Philosophy Test is administered by Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing, and the registration deadline is 15 October 2020. There is no written test for the Theology element of the course. For further details, see: [http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/philosophy-test](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/philosophy-test)

**Written work:** For Theology, candidates are required to submit one essay, normally essays which have been written and marked as part of their school or college work. The deadline to submit written work is 10 November 2020. Further information can be viewed here: [https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/written-work](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/written-work)

**Interviews:** In the interview, tutors are looking for an interest in the proposed fields of study, a critical and analytical approach to abstract questions and the ability to defend a viewpoint by reasoned argument.
Deferred Entry: Applications for deferred entry to Jesus College are accepted. You must apply for deferred entry at the time of application to Oxford: you cannot change your mind after an offer has been made. Please refer to departmental web sites for subject-specific advice. You should be aware that applicants who are offered places for deferred entry will generally be among the strongest of the cohort for their subject. We would not usually offer more than one deferred place per subject in order not to disadvantage the following year’s candidates. In some cases, an applicant for deferred entry may be offered a place for non-deferred entry instead. If you require any further advice, please contact the Admissions Officer via admissions.officer@jesus.ox.ac.uk

Postgraduate Studies and Careers

Oxford is a major centre for postgraduate study in Philosophy. At this level (by contrast with the undergraduate course) it is possible to specialize exclusively in Philosophy, with the help of formal and informal classes, seminars and discussions. It is frequently possible to hear and meet visiting philosophers from abroad.

Students pursuing a postgraduate degree in Philosophy at Oxford typically work toward the BPhil. BPhil examination is by submission of a thesis of up to 30,000 words and six assessed essays, each of no more than 5,000 words, across at least five subjects with no more than two essays in any one subject. At least one essay must be in theoretical philosophy, at least one must be in practical philosophy and at least two essays must be on the history of philosophy, of which at least one must be concerned with philosophy written before 1800. Oxford also offers MSts in Ancient Philosophy and Philosophy of Physics, as well as the DPhil in Philosophy.

Similarly, Oxford’s Faculty of Theology and Religion is a world-leading research centre and an excellent place to pursue postgraduate study at Masters and Doctoral level. It was recently ranked in the top two universities for quality of research in the United Kingdom. Undergraduate study in Philosophy and Theology provides an ideal first step into research work. In a global context in which the value of religious literacy is increasingly obvious, Oxford is leading the way in providing expertise of great social and political significance.

Undergraduates who have taken courses including Philosophy and Theology have engaged subsequently in a wide variety of careers, sometimes involving a direct application of their undergraduate studies but in many cases not. Philosophy and Theology graduates enter a wide range of careers, including academic teaching and research, school teaching, commerce, banking and financial services, journalism and communications.

Preliminary Reading and Further Information

If you are contemplating a course involving Philosophy, or wondering whether such a course would suit you, you might wish to read some of the following:

- Thomas Nagel: What Does It All Mean? (Oxford)
- Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy (Oxford)
- M Hollis: Invitation to Philosophy (Blackwell)
- Nigel Warburton: Philosophy: The Basics (Routledge)
- Julia Driver: Ethics: the Fundamentals (Blackwell)
- Simon Blackburn: Think (Oxford)
- Roger Scruton: An Intelligent Person’s Guide to Philosophy (Duckworth)

On the Theology side you might find the following useful:

- NT Wright & M. Borg: The Meaning of Jesus (Harper, 2007)
Further information about Philosophy and Theology at Oxford can be found on the faculty websites:

- www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk
- www.theology.ox.ac.uk

Information about Admissions is available at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/philosophy-and-theology

Contact details

If you have any questions about our entrance requirements, or about applying to study at Jesus College, please contact the Admissions Officer:

Tel: 01865 279721
Email: admissions.officer@jesus.ox.ac.uk
Web: www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/study-here

Last updated: May 2020