

## PART I - 2024-2025

**Paper A1a** - Elementary Hebrew

**Paper A1b** - Elementary New Testament Greek

**Paper A1c** - Elementary Sanskrit

**Paper A1d** - Elementary Qur'anic Arabic

**Paper A2** - David: Israel's Greatest Hero?

**Paper A3** - Jesus and the Origins of the Gospels

**Paper A4** - Christianity and the Transformation of Culture

**Paper A5** – The Question of God

**Paper A6** - Understanding Contemporary Religion

**Paper A7** - Studying World Religions: History, Comparison, Dialogue

**Paper A8** - Philosophy of Religion

**Paper A9** – Ethics

In Part I, you study **five papers** as follows:

### 1) One scriptural language:

**Paper A1a** - Elementary Hebrew

**Paper A1b** - Elementary New Testament Greek

**Paper A1c** - Elementary Sanskrit

**Paper A1d** - Elementary Qur'anic Arabic

### 2) One paper on the Old Testament or New Testament

**Paper A2** - David: Israel's Greatest Hero?

**Paper A3** - Jesus and the Origins of the Gospels

### 3) Three papers chosen from:

**Paper A2** - David: Israel's Greatest Hero? (if not taken above)

**Paper A3** - Jesus and the Origins of the Gospels (if not taken above)

**Paper A4** - Christianity and the Transformation of Culture

**Paper A5** – The Question of God

**Paper A6** - Understanding Contemporary Religion

**Paper A7** - Studying World Religions: History, Comparison, Dialogue

**Paper A8** - Philosophy of Religion

**Paper A9** – Ethics

## PAPER A1A – ELEMENTARY HEBREW

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Kim Phillips

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Prescribed Texts:**

2 Samuel 13-18.

**Course Description:**

The Elementary Hebrew course falls into two parts, which together are intended to familiarise students with the basic grammatical forms (especially nouns and verbs) and vocabulary of Hebrew and to enable them to read and understand a straightforward prose narrative text from the Bible. To improve their grasp of the language students are given exercises in translation from English into Hebrew, but the main emphasis falls on reading Hebrew text and translating it into English. During the Michaelmas and most of the Lent Term students study Hebrew grammar using the textbook by Thomas O. Lambdin, supplemented with material provided by the class teacher. In the last week or so of the Lent Term work is begun on the set text and this continues for the first four weeks of the Easter Term. In the Easter term supervision work is needed to practise the exercises that will be tested in the examination.

## PAPER A1B – ELEMENTARY NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Marieke Dhont

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Prescribed Text:**

John 1–4

**Course Description:**

On induction day, students are taught the alphabet and grouped into three classes to optimise class size for language learning. During term, classes meet three times a week for an hour. Broadly speaking, the Michaelmas term and the first half of Lent Term are devoted to the study of Greek grammar, while study of the set text is begun during the Lent term.

## PAPER A1C – ELEMENTARY SANSKRIT

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Vincenzo Vergiani ([vv234@cam.ac.uk](mailto:vv234@cam.ac.uk)) ([Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies - FAMES](#))

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Any updates for 2024/25 TBC**

**Prescribed Texts:**

- (1) Rāmāyaṇa, 2.18 (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa. A critical edition with the commentary of Sri Govindarāja (Ayodhyākāṇḍa). Ed. T.R. Krishnacharya and T.R. Vyasacharya. Bombay, 1911), pp. 83-87; Rāmāyaṇa, 3.45-46 (ibid., pp. 147–155)
- (2) Pañcatantra, Book 1 (“The five discourses on worldly wisdom” by Viṣṇuśarman, with Sanskrit text and Translation by Patrick Olivelle, Clay Sanskrit Library, New York University Press, 2006)

(3) Bhagavadgītā, chapters 3,4, and 11 (edited by S.K. Belvalkar, BORI, Poona, 1968).

#### **PAPER A1D – ELEMENTARY QUR'ANIC ARABIC**

**Paper Coordinator:** Mrs Nadira Auty

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Prescribed Texts:**

The Qur'an, I: 1–7, II: 1–18, V: 44–50, LIII: 1–25;  
al-Bukhari, *al-Jami' al-Sahih* (Cairo, 1313 AH), Vol. I, pp. 1–10;  
al-Isfara'ini, *al-Tabsir fi'l-din* (Beirut, 1983 CE), pp. 45–46, and 97–99.

**Aims:**

This paper aims to test knowledge of the Arabic grammatical features and vocabulary most commonly encountered in the Qur'an and other early Islamic religious literature. The paper contains a passage for pointing, and passages for translation, and for linguistic and grammatical comments. Candidates are also required to translate passages from English into Arabic.

#### **PAPER A2 - DAVID: ISRAEL'S GREATEST HERO?**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Nathan MacDonald

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Set Texts:**

- 1 Sam 16–19; 21–23; 28.
- 2 Sam 1–2; 5–7; 9; 11–12; 21–24.

**Aims:**

The set texts and teaching of the course will provide an introduction to the Old Testament and the different ways in which it may be read and analysed. In particular the course aims to:

- introduce students to the genres of narrative and poetry
- orientate students to some of the Old Testament's historiographical texts, and the issues in interpreting them.
- introduce the main ways in which the Old Testament text may be analysed. Although technical language of methodology will be used rather sparingly, the range of methods which may be introduced in a rudimentary manner include textual criticism, comparison to ANE texts, feminist criticism, historical criticism, narrative criticism, form criticism, archaeology, tradition criticism, and inner-biblical interpretation.
- examine some of the religious and theological ideas in the Old Testament.
- explore some of the challenges in dealing with biblical texts and some of the dynamics of textual change and reinterpretation.

#### **PAPER A3 – JESUS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE GOSPELS**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr James Carleton Paget

**Any updates for 2024/25 TBC**

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Prescribed Texts:**

Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.63-64, in *Josephus*, with translation and notes by L. H. Feldman (Loeb Classical Library: Harvard, 1981: Vol. IX), 48-51.

Mark 1.7-11; Matthew. 3.11-17; Luke 3.15-22 (excluding vv. 19-20); and Matthew 11.2-6 and Luke 7.18-23

Mark 2.1-12; Matthew 9.1-8; Luke 5.17-26.

Mark 8.27-30; Matthew 16.13-20; Luke 9.18-21.

Mark 12.1-12; Matthew 21.33-46; Luke 20.9-19 and Gospel of Thomas 65 and 66.

Mark 14.53-72; Matthew 26.57-75; Luke 22.54-71.

Mark 15.33-39; Matthew 27.45-54; Luke 23.44-49.

John 1.1-18.

**Aims:**

- To provide an introduction to the study of the New Testament by focusing on its central figure, Jesus, and the texts which most directly concern his life (the Gospels). In the process students will develop exegetical skills and become familiar with a variety of critical approaches to New Testament texts.
- To enable students to engage in the close study and critical analysis of relevant primary sources.
- To help students understand and evaluate current scholarship and debates about main issues concerning the Gospels and the Historical Jesus within the field of New Testament study.

**PAPER A4 - CHRISTIANITY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURE**

**Paper Co-ordinator:** Dr Sophie Lunn-Rockcliffe

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Aims and Learning Outcomes**

This paper aims to introduce students to the study of the history of Christianity and to the methods of historical study through a relatively detailed investigation of processes of conversion and Christianization in the late Roman world in the fourth and early fifth centuries AD, and to explore the interaction of Christianity with the culture in which it is set. This was a period in which Christians were frequently 'made' - converting from other religious communities and identities - rather than 'born' into Christian families. But what kinds of people, and how many, converted to Christianity? Who or what converted them? Was conversion conceived as a process or an event? How were individuals and communities instructed in Christian doctrine and practice, and what marked their admission to the church? What factors influenced whether Christianization was peaceful and consensual or violent and forced? How visible and how fluid were the boundaries between individual pagans, Christians, and Jews, and between communities of same, in this period? And underpinning all these questions, what are the chief problems with the literary, material, epigraphic and documentary evidence for conversion?

As a result of taking this course, students should attain a) *knowledge of:*

- Broad patterns of Christianization in the fourth and early fifth centuries AD

- Processes and agents of conversion, of instruction in doctrine, and of admission to the church in this period
- The variety of sources (literary, material, epigraphic and documentary) available for the study of conversion in this period
- Historical trends in scholarship on conversion and Christianization in late antiquity

b) *the ability to:*

- Identify and summarize the essential features of some of the historical events and processes covered in this paper
- Evaluate sources in context, and assess their strengths and weaknesses
- Assess differing historical interpretations in the light of evidence
- Synthesise and analyse a range of materials in order to produce and present in an ordered and effective way an account of or answer to problems or questions

## PAPER A5 – THE QUESTION OF GOD

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor David Fergusson

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

### Course Description

Theology is the discussion of God and all things as they relate to God. In this paper we will examine three topics within Christian theology: God, creation (as that which is not God, but from God) and evil (as that which neither God, nor from God). In doing so, we will cover many of the topics that underlie any discussion of theology, considering the sources upon which theology draws, for instance, how it uses them, and how human language can work in seeking to refer to one who transcends created reality. We will also consider some of the arguments proposed against religious belief, and ways in which theologians have shown a keen interest in other disciplines, such as literature and the natural sciences.

In the context of the Tripos, this course connects with others in Part I on scripture, history, philosophy and the study of religion. In Part IIA it leads particularly to Paper B8 – Christ, Trinity, and Salvation, which takes on some themes from A5, and adds others. It also leads to Paper B13 – Theology and Literature, and relates to Papers B6 - Belief and Practice in the Early Church, B10 - Philosophy of Religion, and B11 - Ethics and Faith.

## PAPER A6 – UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY RELIGION

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Joseph Webster [jw557@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jw557@cam.ac.uk)

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

**Course Aim:** To introduce students to the ways in which social scientists analyse and account for religion as a social force in the contemporary world, including the interactions of religious life with social, political, familial, national, and global structures.

**Course Objectives:** In particular, to enable students to acquire a broad familiarity with key theoretical debates surrounding the social scientific study of religion. To develop students' skills in

detailed, analytical reading of case-studies and ethnographies. To encourage students to assess and interpret empirical evidence in the light of theoretical scholarship. This introduction to the social scientific study of religion will provide a foundation for the study of religion papers in the second (B7 on World Christianities and B9 on Religious Encounters) and third years (C21 on Apocalypticism, and C24 on World Christianities).

## **PAPER A7 - STUDYING WORLD RELIGIONS: HISTORY, COMPARISON, DIALOGUE**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Jörg Hausteine

**Assessment Method:** Two essays of 3,000 words each

### **Aims**

1. to provide an historical and theoretical orientation for understanding the concept of 'world religions'.
2. to explore how Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism have engaged with globalisation, colonialism, and scholarship since the nineteenth century.
3. to trace the influence of Perennialism and inter-religious engagements that have shaped the concept of 'religion' since the nineteenth century.
4. to show how academic scholarship has contributed to shaping and problematizing the very idea of 'world religions'.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- students will be able to demonstrate and apply the necessary foundational knowledge and epistemological competencies for the critical study of global religious traditions
- students will acquire in-depth knowledge of at least two religious traditions among Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and World Christianity.
- students will be able to offer intellectual reflection on their own perspective on inter-religious dialogue and the study of religions.

students will be able to engage critically introductory textbooks

## **PAPER A8 - PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Douglas Hedley

**Any updates for 2024/25 TBC**

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

### **Aims and Objectives**

This paper is designed to introduce techniques of engagement in critical analysis of primary sources, and to help students gain skills in the identification and understanding of fundamental problems associated with the study of philosophy of religion, arising from the sources and themes being studied. The paper's aims include helping students to understand and evaluate current scholarship, as well as debates concerning the main issues of philosophy of religion.

As a result of taking this course, students will learn to:

- evaluate central questions in philosophy of religion
- gain understanding of primary sources within the canon of the Western tradition of philosophy of religion
- examine principal ideas and frameworks which underpin current scholarly debates in the field

- assess sources from a range of metaphysical and religious traditions, and explore how they fit together
- develop transferable skills of analysis of texts, critical reasoning, synthesis, and communication

## **PAPER A9 – ETHICS**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr James Orr

**Assessment Method:** Three-hour examination

### **Core Texts**

The core texts for this paper are as follows:

- Plato, *Republic*, Book I and Book VII
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I and Book VII
- Augustine, *On the Free Choice of the Will*
- Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Questions 1-5
- Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*
- Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding & The Principles of Morals*
- Kant, *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *The Critique of Practical Reason*
- Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

In addition to the items listed under Background Reading (Section 2.2) and Course Summary (Section 3), a reading list of core texts with accompanying literature will be available in the Faculty Office and online before the beginning of the Michaelmas Term.

### **Course Aims**

This course aims to introduce students to ancient and contemporary debates concerning the nature of the good (axiology) and the right (deontology) as these have arisen in the Western philosophical and theological traditions. This text-based paper is an excellent partner for Paper A8 (Philosophy of Religion) and an important prelude to the theme-based Paper B11 (Ethics and Faith). It is also invaluable preparation for Paper B10 (God, Freedom, and the Soul), Paper C11 (Metaphysics), and the MPhil in Philosophy of Religion. The paper is designed to introduce techniques of engagement in critical analysis of primary sources and to help students in the identification and understanding of fundamental problems and debates that arise in the study of moral philosophy and theological ethics.