

The information here is for the **2023-24** academic year. The papers on offer can vary from year to year.

## **Part IIA (second year)**

### **Paper B1a - Intermediate Hebrew**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Nathan MacDonald

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper is taken in the year after offering Elementary Hebrew (A1a), normally in Part IIA. But a student who took Elementary Hebrew in Part IIA would be able to offer B1a in Part IIB. The study of the texts from Deuteronomy, Judges, and Jonah is designed (apart from their intrinsic interest) to lead students on to a fuller appreciation of the syntax of prose texts (including the significance of word order and the less common uses of the tenses of the verb). Throughout the course lectures and private study are expected to be supplemented by fortnightly supervision work on translation from English into Hebrew, which will be tested in the examination. The lectures will focus mainly on linguistic aspects of the texts, but their theological and literary aspects will be explored in two or three essays which students will write in the course of the year.

### **Paper B1b - Intermediate New Testament Greek**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Simon Gathercole

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

The overall objective is for students to develop their Greek language abilities and to acquire exegetical skills and knowledge. The paper will achieve these aims by introducing students to the language, syntax, exegesis and theology of Mark and Galatians on the basis of the Greek text.

### **Paper B1c - Intermediate Sanskrit**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Vincenzo Vergiani

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

Candidates will be required to translate passages from the prescribed texts from Sanskrit into English, to answer questions on their grammar, style, and content, and to translate one unseen passage from Sanskrit to English.

### **Paper B1d - Intermediate Qur'anic Arabic**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Timothy Winter

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper will contain passages for pointing, for translation, and for linguistic and exegetical comment from portions of the Qur'an, Qur'anic commentaries and other Islamic literature which the Faculty Board shall from time to time prescribe. The paper will also contain a passage for translation from English into Arabic.

### **Paper B2 - Israel in Exile: Literature, History and Theology**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Katharine Dell

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

The exilic age has long been regarded in scholarship as a watershed for the faith of Israel, with important theological understandings formulated in this period. It is also a crucial time in the history of Israel and a time of the collection and writing of formative documents. This course seeks to give a thorough understanding of the literature, history and theology of the period leading up to the Exile, of the Exile itself and of the repercussions that followed it. It involves study of texts from different genres of Old Testament material, including some detailed textual work. It also involves engagement with scholarly methods of analysing literary texts, of evaluating historical claims with the assistance of archaeological finds and ancient Near Eastern parallels and of seeking an overall sense of the theological developments of the period.

### **Paper B3 – The shaping of Jewish Identity (332 BCE – 70CE)**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Marieke Dhont

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper will be concerned with an essential period for our understanding of the formation of Judaism (and the context from which Christianity arose). It will examine the social, historical and political contexts in which ancient Jews shaped their identity and how as a result they came to fashion new forms of literature and beliefs. It will focus on the land of Israel in the time from the rise of Alexander the Great (332 BCE), when it became incorporated into the Greek empires, up to and including the First Roman Revolt.

### **Paper B4 – Paul and John: The First Christian Thinkers in Comparative Perspective**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor George van Kooten

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper introduces the thoughts of Paul and John and brings them in discussion, first with one another and subsequently also with their contexts—Jewish, Hellenistic, and Roman. As there are no separate set text classes for this paper, the lectures will make full use of the available hours and use a form that is suitable for, and supports the comparison between Paul and John: all lectures consist of double hours that follow the following pattern—twice forty minutes with usually the first part on Paul and the second part on John, followed by twenty minutes of explicit comparison and discussion.

### **Paper B6 - Christianity in Late Antiquity (to circa 600)**

**Paper Coordinators:** Dr Anna Lefteratou and Dr Thomas Graumann

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

Many important features of Christianity emerged and developed in Late Antique period. The paper examines the development of Christian churches and groups, their organisation, institutions, identities and ways of life in the context of the political, social and cultural life of the Roman Empire. It studies main strands of Christian theological reflection and discussion in the period with a focus on the Christological controversy, and introduces exemplary texts from what is often called the "Golden Age" of patristic literature.

### **Paper B7 - Themes in World Christianities: Context, Theology and Power**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr James Gardom.

**Assessment method:** Two essays of 5,000 words each

The aim of this paper is to enable students to understand the increasingly non-Western nature of contemporary Christianity, and to understand the emerging discipline of the study of World Christianity. The lectures and seminars will give an overview of the global shift of Christianity away

from the West, and provide some guidelines for the interpretation of non-Western Christian groups, including Diaspora and Migrant groups in the West and elsewhere.

### **Paper B8 - Christ, Salvation, and the Trinity**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Simeon Zahl

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper contains questions on Christian doctrines concerning Jesus Christ, salvation, and the Trinity. The paper is designed to provide an overview of three of the most central topics in Christian doctrine, by way of engagement with key thinkers from the patristic period to the present day. It aims to give students a strong foundation in traditional language and concepts associated with the person and work of Christ, the nature of God, and Christian salvation, while also exploring how these topics are being discussed by theologians today.

### **Paper B9 - Religious Encounter**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Esra Özyürek

**Assessment method:** Two essays of 5,000 words each

Different religious communities commonly co-exist. However, the ways in which they do so varies tremendously. Their interactions are conditioned by many factors, like tradition, politics, landscape, economy, and even calendars, ghosts or dreams. This paper turns to encounter as a productive site to think about the ways in which individuals and communities experience, negotiate and manage religious difference in specific contexts. It raises questions about the challenges to plurality and interfaith relations, about the production of religious borders, the convergence and synthesis of religious ideas and practices, the protection of shared sacred heritage, as well as about conflict, violence and the politics of religious difference. We consider the impacts of colonialism, nationalism and xenophobia on religious plurality, but also the surprising modes of resistance through alliances and exchanges across boundaries. Based on anthropological accounts of actual lives from around the world, the paper suggests that religious co-existence and encounters are the norm, not an exception. By familiarising students with the many ways humans live with difference, the paper builds skills to bring together real-life examples and theoretical models, as well as to critically engage with historical and contemporary scholarship of religion.

### **Paper B10 - Philosophy of religion: God, freedom and the soul**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Douglas Hedley

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper is conceived as an introduction to Philosophical Theology in the narrow sense, i.e. theories about the nature of God, the cosmos and the soul. Is God one or many, personal and impersonal, transcendent or immanent, timeless or everlasting? How is creation of the cosmos to be thought of? Is the Soul the form of the body or a separate entity? Is God best perceived in nature or in the soul? Is freedom a coherent notion? Can we know God? How does God act? These very general and abstract questions have puzzled philosophers and theologians since Plato. The approaches to these topics tend to be either historical or very abstract. The idea of this paper is to combine the concern with the topics as real issues of contemporary interest with an awareness of how for example Plotinus or Spinoza, Kant or Hegel thought about these problems. The second section will enable candidates to answer at least one question of a more abstract nature. It is felt that candidates for this paper will have acquired a greater degree of philosophical confidence and a broader acquaintance with the philosophical canon to enable them to attempt essays of a more general or abstract philosophical nature.

## **Paper B11 - Ethics and faith**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Ferdia Stone Davis

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

Paper B11 builds on the foundational questions concerning the nature of goodness, value and moral obligation that arose in relation to the canon of thinkers explored in Paper A9, though it does presuppose any familiarity with the content of that paper. Drawing on dozens of historical and contemporary texts, this paper is constellated around eight themes that touch in different ways on the nature of moral judgments and the meaning of moral claims; the conceptual complicity between commitment to a created order and belief in a moral order; the many and various challenges to moral realism from figures such as Hume, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche and Ayer; the function of narrative in grounding and guiding religious and secular moral commitments; the genealogy of natural rights and human rights, as well as criticisms and defences of rights-based frameworks; and, finally, the promise and pitfalls of theologically invested conceptions of political sovereignty, public reason, and distributive justice.

## **Paper B12 - Themes in the Anthropology of Islam**

**Paper Coordinator:** Professor Ozurek

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

The regional focus will range from the Middle East, to Europe, Africa and South-east Asia. We will consider the academic and political context for the study of Islam and Muslims, and the ways in which the anthropology of Islam has been productive for broader debates in anthropology.

## **Paper B13 - Theology and Literature**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Giles Waller

**Assessment method:** Two essays of 5,000 words each

This paper seeks to examine key theological and ethical issues in novels from the literary traditions of Europe and America shaped by Judaism and Christianity. A variety of theological and ethical topics will be explored, including suffering, agency and responsibility, the place of the human animal in its natural and political environments, providence, Christology, messianism, hope and despair.

## **Paper B14 - Modern Judaism: Thought, Culture, and History**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Daniel Weiss

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper introduces students to Jewish culture and thought, approaching contemporary issues along with the historical developments that shaped them. Topics will include central Jewish ideas such as Messianism and Zionism, the distinct and variegated character of the Jewish communities in Britain, the State of Israel and abroad, as well as aspects of religious observance such as Shabbat and Prayer. It explores how Judaism relates to surrounding cultures and especially how it has responded to the challenges of modernity, and it approaches Judaism in the methodological context of the study of 'religion' and 'culture' by inviting students to consider whether the term 'religion' makes sense at all when applied to Judaism. By the study of primary texts, it aims to acquaint students with the self-understandings of Judaism at critical periods of its development. Although history will be provided to give the necessary background, the focus throughout will be on contemporary communities.

**Paper B15 - Introduction to Islam**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Timothy Winter

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

This paper will cover the origins, development and contemporary situation of the theology, law and mysticism of Islam. It will deal with literary-critical and interpretative problems relating to the founding documents of the religion, and with contemporary methodologies in philosophy of religion, gender studies, and comparative jurisprudence as applied to Islam. References to Christianity may be included. The Board may from time to time prescribe texts for special study.

**Paper B16 - Life and thought of religious Hinduism and of Buddhism**

**Paper Coordinator:** Dr Ankur Barua

**Assessment method:** Three-hour examination

The principal aim of the study of these Indian traditions is to form a sensitive understanding, in terms of context and historical perspective, of their main beliefs and practices. The approach is thematic and phenomenological, though when occasion demands, anthropological, sociological and political comments will also be made. It is not only important to show what Hinduism and Buddhism mean in the lives of their adherents, but also that as religious traditions they cannot be understood in a vacuum.

**Paper B17 - Philosophy: Meaning**

This paper is borrowed from the Philosophy Tripos (Part IA, Paper 3). Please contact the Faculty of Philosophy for the full paper description and assessment details.