‘THEOS’

Big Questions. Real-World Skills.

Discover Theology & Religious Studies

George Lapshynov

What do TikTok misinformation, climate activism, and AI ethics have in common? They can all be studied on a TRS course!

We live in a world shaped by rapid technological change, global interconnection, and deep differences in belief and identity. Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) is a subject that speaks directly to that world.

Students who study TRS go on to careers in law, journalism, policy, education, the civil service, finance, NGOs, and many other fields. Employers value their ability to analyse complex information, communicate clearly, think critically, and handle disagreement with care. At the same time, TRS remains one of the most intellectually engaging degrees you can take. It offers the chance to study philosophy, history, ethics, politics, and culture together, while focusing on questions that genuinely matter to people's lives.

If you're curious about how beliefs shape individuals and societies – and how ideas about truth, identity, justice, and meaning influence the world around you – TRS offers a distinctive and rewarding path.

> *"I have really enjoyed studying Biblical Greek and Hebrew, something which I would never have considered looking at had it not been for studying TRS at university."*
>
> Philippa, BA Theology and Religious Studies

What you will study

Theology and Religious Studies brings together several areas of study in a single subject. You might explore philosophical questions about truth, knowledge, and ethics; examine historical developments within religious traditions; study sacred texts; or analyse how religion shapes politics, law, and social life.

Depending on whether you study Theology or Religious Studies, a typical week at university might include seminars or lectures on topics such as:

- religion and artificial intelligence
- ethics and medical decision-making
- Buddhist or Confucian philosophy
- the Gospels and New Testament Greek
- theological responses to climate change
- freedom of speech and public debate
- the history of the Reformation
- ritual, identity, and community

Different universities emphasise different areas, and many courses allow you to combine approaches. Some lean more towards theology or philosophy while others draw more heavily on sociology, anthropology, or politics. That variety is part of the subject's appeal.

You don't need A-level Religious Studies to apply. Many students come to TRS from History, English, Politics, or other subjects. What matters most is curiosity, motivation, and a willingness to engage seriously with ideas.

Why it matters now

Religion and belief continue to shape public life, even in societies where many people don't identify as religious. Understanding how belief works, and how it influences identity, language, conflict, and community, is increasingly important.

Recent public debates have shown how quickly complex issues can be simplified or misunderstood. Discussions about protest movements, freedom of expression, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and religious identity often reveal gaps in understanding. TRS develops what is sometimes called 'critical religious literacy': the ability to interpret beliefs and practices carefully, without reducing them to stereotypes.

This matters well beyond the classroom. It is relevant in healthcare, law, education, journalism, and public service. It also matters in a digital environment shaped by social media, misinformation, and rapidly evolving technologies. Questions about artificial intelligence, online communities, and "digital religion" are already changing how people form beliefs and identities.

TRS helps you ask better questions about what's happening in the world: What assumptions are shaping this argument? What's been left out? How do different worldviews understand the same issue? These are essential skills for navigating contemporary public life.

The Big Questions

TRS is also one of the few subjects where the big human questions are taken seriously and explored in depth. Students can reflect seriously on questions such as:

- What does it mean to live a good life?
- Why do human beings search for meaning?
- How do ideas of justice, dignity, or personhood develop?
- Why do religions emerge in every civilisation?
- Can technology – such as artificial intelligence – reshape what we mean by being human?

These questions are still part of real life, and often sit beneath key debates about medicine, law, politics, family, culture, and identity. One of the distinctive features of TRS is that it allows you to explore them carefully, with the time and depth they require.

TRS invites – and rewards – curiosity, encouraging you not only to understand different viewpoints but to test your own assumptions along the way.

Learning to think well

TRS is intellectually demanding. It develops the ability to read closely, weigh evidence, compare arguments, and communicate clearly. You learn how to move through disagreement without reducing it too quickly to simple answers.

These habits are valuable in academic work, but they also extend beyond it. In professional contexts, people are often required to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty, to interpret competing perspectives, and to communicate across differences in belief and experience. TRS gives you practice in doing exactly that.

For some students, the subject also connects with personal questions about belief, spirituality, or worldview – whether religious, agnostic, or atheist. Although it's an academic discipline, TRS can provide a structured way to explore questions that matter at a personal as well as an intellectual level.

> *"Doing a degree in TRS really allowed me the freedom and flexibility to pursue a career in something that I love, without too much pressure surrounding how much the degree I chose would limit my opportunities. The skills I've gaining during my degree such as critical thinking and the ability to interpret, research, present and analyse information, placed me in a perfect position to go into a career in heritage and museums."*
>
> Hannah, BA Theology and Religious Studies

Skills and career pathways

Graduates of Theology and Religious Studies enter a wide range of professions. These include roles such as:

- policy adviser or civil servant
- journalist or communications specialist
- teacher or lecturer
- lawyer or legal researcher
- NGO or charity professional
- consultant or analyst
- roles in healthcare, education, or public service
- and many more...

What draws employers to TRS graduates is not a single area of technical expertise, but a combination of strengths: critical thinking, careful argumentation, cultural awareness, and the ability to make sense of complex information.

> *"Theology and television may seem very different, but I see the documentaries I make as visual essays. Studying theology taught me how to structure an argument and create the logical, progressive development of a story. In a documentary, you interview someone with one opinion, someone with another, and then come to a conclusion."*
>
> **Laura Capaldi** | Executive Producer, ITV Studios

Ethics, law, and public life

If you are interested in careers where ethical judgement matters, TRS provides a strong foundation. Questions about responsibility, care, justice, and human dignity arise constantly in law, medicine, public policy, and social work, where religious and cultural literacy is increasingly recognised as relevant.

Because the subject combines philosophical argument with attention to lived experience and social context, it prepares students to think about these issues in a grounded and informed way. It doesn't make difficult decisions easy, but it helps you approach them with greater clarity and awareness.

A subject that connects

One of the distinctive strengths of TRS is its ability to connect different areas of study. Ideas about religion and belief run through literature, politics, philosophy, history, art, and law. Studying TRS allows you to see how these connections work in practice.

Rather than studying subjects in isolation, you learn to see how ideas travel between them – how, for example, a theological argument can shape political thought, or how questions about ritual, identity, and power can converge in a single issue.

This makes it especially well-suited to students who enjoy bringing ideas together rather than keeping subjects separate, and who want to understand not only individual topics, but how they interact.

Graduate Testimonies

"Studying religion and theology taught me to think about the interaction between people's beliefs and the world they live in. In a fast-changing world, understanding the ideas and beliefs that shape people's worldviews is going to be an even more crucial task."

Jonathan Downing | Policy Adviser to the Mayor of Bristol

"Most of my colleagues come from scientific, engineering or economics backgrounds. I am able to interpret, explain and present their findings. Spending so much time studying highly persuasive texts prepared me for a career in which I often have to mount an argument for an audience."

Joseph Honour | Change Management Consultant, Department for Work and Pensions

"Studying theology and religion gives you an original way of thinking that not everyone else has access to. In interviews, when people ask how theology relates to communications and PR, I ask them to name an organisation with as much brand recognition and media coverage as Christianity."

Tiwa Adebayo | PR Project Consultant

"It might not seem obvious that theology is perfect preparation for a career in law, but theology is all about evaluating evidence - and that is very much what I do as a barrister. I studied whether you could prove the existence of God. It is fascinating as a lawyer to consider what it means to prove something, and to try to prove a claim as bold as that God exists."

John De Bono QC | Barrister, Serjeants' Inn Chambers

"One of the things we are trying to develop is the ability to have difficult conversations. When I did my theology degree, many classroom conversations were like that. I think it is crucial that the next generation learn the skills to transform conflict and make reconciliation happen. Theology also helps pupils explore sacred texts as resources for real reconciliation - including the uncertainty of reaching out to someone when you do not know whether they will embrace you or hurt you."

Jennifer Jenkins | ICON Schools Project Manager, Coventry Cathedral

"Theology focused me on understanding the core of someone's argument: what have they experienced that has made them feel this way?"

Ben Wilson | Head of Communications, National Infrastructure Commission

Be part of the conversation

At university, Theology and Religious Studies offers serious engagement with ideas, close analysis of texts and traditions, and sustained reflection on questions that shape human life.

It draws together ethical thinking, historical study, philosophical argument, and attention to lived experience, giving you multiple ways into understanding complex questions.

If you're interested in understanding the world in depth – its beliefs, conflicts, values, and possibilities – TRS is worth serious consideration. It's a subject that develops both intellectual depth and practical skill, preparing you not only for a range of careers,but for thoughtful participation in a complex and changing world.

In a world changing fast, understanding the ideas that brought us here can help you decide where we go next. Theology and Religious Studies gives you the chance to question assumptions, discover new perspectives and explore the issues that affect us all. You'll develop the skills to understand the world and the confidence to help change it for the better. You don't need to be religious.

If you are interested in studying theology and religious studies at university, you can find a list of all 34 UK universities offering this degree at: https://trs.ac.uk/studying-trs/where-can-i-study-trs/

As every TRS degree is different, make sure you read the course descriptions on the relevant department pages carefully. If you have any questions, contact the TRS department of the relevant degree for more information.

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