

## Presentation

This multidisciplinary research Master's in 'Religions and Societies' includes theory-based, methodology-based and applied course units. The programme opened in 2005 and pioneered the French public higher-education sector's response to the threat posed by the religious mistrust so entrenched in French society. The unique variety of religious specialists at Université Bordeaux Montaigne has enabled us to develop a sophisticated programme of study, fuelling on-going reflection. This programme is the only Master's programme in Religions and Societies to offer both on-site and distance-learning teaching. Each year between 90 and 100 students enrol for this programme.

In a nutshell...

**Duration:**  
year(s)

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**Education level:**

## Objectives

### Programme objectives

This Master's programme is aligned with the concerns of the European Institute of Religious Sciences (IESR).

It has two priorities of equal importance.

- \* Research, thanks to backing from Université Bordeaux Montaigne's many research centres. The university lecturer-researchers who participate in this programme come from a range of different academic disciplines and research areas: history, French and foreign literature, the arts, foreign languages and cultures, philosophy, geography, politics, law etc. The programme draws on research that focuses particularly on the links between religions and their social, cultural and political contexts in France and abroad.

Students also participate in all these research activities. Distance-learning students must become involved in research projects underway in their place of residence. All students report back on their work via written reports, dossiers, oral communications etc. The most convincing work is then published in coedited publications tackling the question of religion.

- \* Professional development: students are trained to be specialists in Religion as a social and cultural phenomenon. This includes equipping them with knowledge and skills that they can apply to the notion of Religion in a range of professional contexts. Thanks to the seminar units, optional internships and compulsory in-situ shadowing, students quickly become operational in the current socio-economic and political context, in France and abroad. Indeed many of our enrolled students are already living abroad.

## Joint degree establishments and partnerships

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### Training content

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Two years of study: Master 1 (M1) and Master 2 (M2)

The objectives of this course are thus two-fold.

- \* The programme of study aims to encourage students to understand Religion in France, in Europe and globally as a social and cultural phenomenon. This is based on an interrogation of the history of interaction between religions on the one hand and the societies in which these religions are born or take hold on the other. Students learn to interpret the religious displays and demonstrations seen in modern-day societies.
- \* The programme interrogates the social, political and cultural roles of religions in the past and today. This includes the study of sectarianism, fundamentalisms and secularism. The programme also looks at Religion and the State, the French notion of *laïcité* and religious pluralism within democracies. It considers the importance of religion in internal and foreign politics. There is also an analysis of millenarianism and messianism, and the link between religion and violence.

Master 1: First year of two-year Master's programme

In the programme of study in Master 1 students define and analyse the spiritual, social, political and cultural roles of religions. The major religions are presented (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism) and their impact in their areas of origin and expansion considered. Students study history and current affairs. There is an induction to the work of research centres. Students lead a field-research project within a religious group in order to tackle the notion of religion in a more tangible and concrete manner. This work is based on interviews with religious leaders and the congregation and on the observation of group ceremonies. Students must attend several religious services of a range of different religions, describe these ceremonies and then analyse and compare them.

Master 2: Second year of two-year Master's programme

In the second year of this two-year programme students analyse in depth the impact of a religious leader and the interaction s/he has within the arts (painting, music, architecture), literature and philosophy. Students encounter ancient religions, indigenous religions, new movements and globalised religions.

The programme concentrates on an interrogation of the relationships between religions and governments.

Students also look at the French notion of *laïcité*, the history and role of Freemasonry and the legal status of cults.

### Admissions

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Find information regarding enrolment procedures and the supporting documents to be provided, according to your profile and your level of studies :

- \* Independent Stay
- \* Exchange Programme

## Career pathways

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Les compétences acquises leur permettent de travailler dans divers secteurs professionnels ou directement au contact de la mosaïque religieuse, ou, s'ils sont déjà en activité, d'améliorer leurs compétences dans ce domaine.

Ce master ouvre vers :

- \* Tous les métiers de la fonction publique : enseignement, affaires étrangères, diplomatie, armée, gendarmerie, secteur pénitentiaire... Collectivités territoriales
- \* Journalisme
- \* Métiers de la culture et de la communication
- \* Commerce international
- \* Métiers du développement
- \* Secteur de l'animation socio-culturelle.

La formation de ce master est très appréciée par les candidats aux concours Bac + 5 qui exigent une bonne culture générale, laquelle inclut de plus en plus une solide connaissance du fait religieux. Nombreuses sont les administrations et entreprises tous secteurs qui privilégient les candidats qui ont eu une formation sur les religions car le besoin dans ce domaine est très élevé en ce moment.

Le master est également impliqué dans la lutte contre la radicalisation en partenariat avec diverses instances nationales et régionales.

## Further studies

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Employment opportunities

Students can aspire to careers in all professions related to French public service: teaching, foreign affairs, diplomacy, the army, the Gendarmerie (French military police force), prison services and regional authorities. There are also opportunities in journalism, professions related to culture and communication, international business, development and the organisation of socio-cultural events.

This Master's training proposes a programme of study that is highly valuable for those students seeking to take competitive recruitment examinations open to candidates with level Bac+5 (equivalent to five years of French higher education). These recruitment examinations necessitate a sound knowledge of

general culture, which increasingly includes a sophisticated understanding of Religion. Many services and companies across all sectors favour candidates who have this training in religions, simply because there is currently such a great need for this. This Master's programme is engaged in the fight against radicalisation, in partnership with a range of national and regional bodies.