2017 Student Guide

Department of Studies in Religion

School of Literature, Art and Media
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
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Welcome

“Welcome to Studies in Religion. One of the puzzles concerning religion – and there are many – is that it’s a subject that every person has an opinion about, knows exactly what it means and how it works in the world around them, and yet scholars still spend an enormous amount of time trying to define religion, to nail down its role and function in both historical and contemporary societies, and to chart the ways that it has changed throughout history and in the contemporary context.

The abstract noun ‘religion’ immediately calls to mind religions, and the great variety of such traditions among human beings. Our undergraduate program covers the full range of religious phenomena. From the global religions (typically given as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism), through the indigenous traditions of Aboriginal Australia, to new religions such as Scientology and Wicca, and also those ideologies and activities that – while they are not religions in the formal sense – feel religious or ‘sacred’ to many people (Anzac Day ceremonies, sporting events, popular culture fandom, war and patriotism, and so on), we investigate the human spiritual quest for meaning in formal religions, diffuse spiritualities, and in secular pastimes.

The staff of Studies in Religion are distinguished international researchers and committed teachers, with a deep concern to communicate the complexities of the study of religion in the twenty-first century. We invite you to join our community and to engage in the endlessly fascinating study of how people define themselves and their communities in terms of their ultimate concerns, those things that mean the most to them.”

Professor Carole Cusack
Chair of Department
Athena, Barrack Street, Sydney. Photographed in 2010 by Donald Barrett
Studies in Religion

at the University of Sydney

Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney is an internationally recognised centre for the academic study of religion. Our teaching is inspired by our research and the excitement of being able to take a fresh look at the world every day. Religion for us is a broad concept that relates to humanity’s ultimate concerns and worldviews. We study religions as operative in cultural and political fields such as art, literature, mythology, violence, consumerism, and how systems of belief and practice that may be deemed ‘religious’ (if not actually religion) more generally pervade our lives. Our departmental ethos of curiosity and experimentation in and around the field of religion means that our students consistently report outstanding levels of satisfaction with their studies. There are also sound reasons why you could join us in developing an understanding of what makes meaning for people around the globe.

– Our students develop both compassion and a critical understanding of how others see the world. It is not surprising then that our graduates go into teaching, diplomatic and government service, and develop additional skills for careers in social work, counselling, and a range of people-centred careers.

– A Major in Studies in Religion gives you the best opportunity to understand the religious traditions that form the fascinating patchwork that constitutes our globalised and increasingly multicultural world. Our units of study will enable you to engage with human experience at its most profound level.

– Our Honours program is designed to assist you to develop a critical academic voice. We provide you with the tools and the confidence to speak about both the sacred and the profane at a deeply sophisticated level. Honours in the department is a gateway to further research study, and our postgraduates are in demand as tutors and academics, policy advisors, and world-transformers.

Beyond vocational considerations, studying religion is about wonder and enchantment. Our department forms a supportive community of students and scholars who are united in their excitement about, and fascination with, how people place their belief in ideas, stories, myth and rituals.

The principal question for you as a student, however, is why you should study religion? In sum, we encourage you to study units in Studies in Religion because we think there is a critical lack of literacy regarding religions in much social and political discourse. You may have noticed
lately that media analysis and popular conceptions maintain that religion is ‘responsible’ for certain current global conflicts. Further, the prevalence of the ‘secularisation thesis’ in the Western academy – the presumption that with the march of modernity, religion has lost its relevance – has encouraged a level of religious illiteracy within the academy and throughout broader society. This is not illiteracy among religious believers, but rather from a critical external standpoint. With it has come a failure to adequately recognise the profoundly important roles that religions, belief, myth and ultimate meanings play in the rich and diverse tapestry that is human life. In many respects understanding these elements is the key to the pursuit of the Humanities and Social Sciences as a whole – the quest to comprehend what it means to be human. It is thus vitally important to learn how religions, beliefs, myths, and rituals, act as agents in local and global events, and in the everyday lives of the people who make up our communities and our societies.

“Flowers from Mount Moriah”, taken from Flowers and pictures of the Holy Land, (1890).
What Our Students Say

Studying religion has been a fun experience, with a wide variety of topics that I hadn’t even thought possible, from New Religious Movements, to violence, to exploring gender and identity. The Religion department provides a welcoming environment where the staff are always approachable and willing to give advice.

Vivien Cinque

The department of Studies in Religion provides a unique interdisciplinary approach to a vast array of traditions, beliefs and behaviours; which are explored through numerous different cultural and historical lenses, be it lived experiences, texts or film (among many others). This comprehensive and overarching department combines the fascination of a seemingly endless choice of subject matter with a supportive and passionate staff.

Stephanie Hart

Studying religion is not simply about the theology of different faiths, it is much more multidisciplinary than that. Studying religion encompasses everything from sociology, anthropology, history, archaeology, theology to literature, film and politics; there is so much room to investigate what makes humans tick.

Breann Fallon

Religious Studies is an extremely multidisciplinary field and the honours program provides a superb training in the area. The subject is an intellectual playground for those who seek to understand the world, rather than merely learn the trade of a single discipline. Only in Religious Studies Honours can one study the political structure of the Catholic Church, a crime fiction novel of Graham Greene, the origins of the idea of Hell, the spirituality of an ancient sect, the contemporary war of words between Israel, America and Iran… and how all these subjects are linked together.

Jono Lusthaus

Studies in Religion provides an approachable and challenging entrance into one of humanities most controversial topics. The department allows you to follow your strengths and passions by embracing a strong multi-disciplinary approach, whilst maintaining the highest levels of academic scholarship. Rewarding and inspiring, Studies in Religion instils a critical edge applicable to any field.

Daniel Tower
Studies in Religion

Undergraduate Program

Studies in Religion is an academic discipline that is open, serious, scholarly and critical. Studies in Religion equips students with the necessary skills in critical thinking to understand and interrogate the central role of religion - overtly and covertly - in broader socio-cultural practices. The discipline draws on a wide range of methodologies, including (but not limited to) history, philosophy, sociology, textual studies and cultural studies. We aim to enable students to master a body of academic knowledge, facilitated by cross-disciplinary tools, needed to comprehend the particular nature of religion (both through texts and engagement with living communities). This includes consideration of ways in which students can take leadership roles in the global community of scholars of religion. Studying Religion also develops in students a necessary awareness of those problematic issues that pertain to the study of concepts of ultimacy and transcendence held by individuals and communities, whether they involve gods, ideals, holy people and places, texts and practices, or sacralised versions of ‘secular’ phenomena (self, sport, consumerism etc).

Studying Religion facilitates student development of sensitivity when approaching the religious, and a deep consideration of ethical issues that arise when examining religious phenomena (ritual, new religious movements, primary sources), as well as a clear understanding of the difference between the academic study of religion, public commentary on religion (for example media and political discourses), and the confessional discipline of theology. In this way, studying Religion stresses a profound ethical and social understanding of the need for both scholarly rigour and ethical sensitivity when approaching any phenomenon that might be labelled “religious.”

The chief outcome is the ability of the student to use his or her acquired knowledge and skills in a variety of academic and non-academic situations. These include the understanding of important methodological thematics behind the teaching of the discipline at primary and high school level, contributing to public policy, and generally being aware of the role religion plays in other fields of study, and in the diversity of religions and ultimate goals that add to both the diverse nature and the cohesion of the modern multi-ethnic, multi-faith state.
Major in Studies in Religion

First Year (or Junior) units are designed to equip students with a broad knowledge of both historical and contemporary religions and issues arising from the study of these phenomena. RLST1002 A History of God, Deities and Demons examines a range of influential religious traditions. This includes the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditions, Indian and Chinese faith systems. Additionally we examine indigenous faiths and introduce some methodological challenges to how the academy should study these things we call religions. In RLST1005 Atheism, Fundamentalism, and New Religions, we cover a range of issues that impact on the concept of religion right now. Each year we update the content of this unit to reflect current events and the conditions of contemporary religiosity, as well as to reflect additions from new scholarship. In this unit we introduce you to two of the most important religious themes of the twenty-first century, fundamentalisms and atheisms, as well as the multitude of ways people do religion today.

After completing the Junior units of study, the Major in Studies in Religion requires passing 36 Senior credit points (or 6 Senior units of study), of which at least 6 credit points (or 1 unit) must be at 3000 level. Note: the Major may incorporate approved units from other departments and programs, and formal permission may be granted to enter units if students have not completed the pre-requisite units.
Pathways through the Major

There are three significant pathways through the Studies in Religion Major:

• historical development: focuses on ancient polytheisms, the emergence of monotheism, and ‘world religions’ such as Hinduism; this pathway concentrates on the student’s mastery of a body of knowledge about religious traditions

• contemporary religious phenomena: introduces contemporary themes in the study of religion and concentrates on the student’s understanding of what religion, myth and spirituality say about the contemporary world

• methodology and theory: focus on methodological issues, models and theories of religion, and includes religious manifestations of religion that fall outside of both the ‘traditional’ and the ‘contemporary’ models of religion.

These pathways are not compulsory, and a student can still complete a sound Religion Major by choosing units from across the three pathways to construct their Major.
Junior Units (1000 level)
These units introduce you to the practice of studying religions as well as giving you the background knowledge required to progress through the Major.
RLST1002  A History of God, Deities and Demons
RLST1005  Atheism, Fundamentalism and New Religions

Core senior-intermediate Units (2000 level)
Once you have completed the two 1000 level units you can take any combination of RLST units to complete a Major in Studies in Religion, provided that at least one unit is at 3000 level. Studies in Religion units include:
RLST2605  Christianity and the Medieval World
RLST2612  Ancient Gnosticism
RLST2614  Philosophy of Religion: Reason & Belief
RLST2620  Religion and Violence, Faith and Blood
RLST2624  The Birth of Christianity
RLST2625  Creativity, Art and the Spiritual
RLST2626  Witchcraft, Paganism and the New Age

Taman Ayun Temple, Mengwi, Bali. Photographed by Donald Barrett, 2005
RLST2628 Religion and Film
RLST2631 Celtic and Germanic Mythology
RLST2633 Religion and Television
RLST2634 Religion, Media and Consumerism
RLST2636 Ancient Egyptian Religion and Magic
RLST2635 Sex, Desire and the Sacred

Core senior-advanced Units (3000 level)
RLST3601 Rethinking Religion
RLST3602 Global Christianity
RLST3603 Contemporary Australian Religion

Cross-listed Units
SCLG2626 Sociology of Religion

## 2017 Units of Study

### Semester 1
- **RLST1002**
  A History of God, Deities and Demons
- **RLST2620**
  Religion and Violence
- **RLST2636**
  Ancient Egyptian Religion and Magic
- **RLST3603**
  Contemporary Australian Religion

### Semester 2
- **RLST1005**
  Atheism, Fundamentalism and New Religions
- **RLST2605**
  Christianity and the Medieval World
- **RLST2624**
  The Birth of Christianity
- **RLST2633**
  Religion and Television
- **RLST3601**
  Rethinking Religion
Below: Buddha statue, Shambhala Gardens, NSW, image: JH Fraser
Junior

RLST1002
A History of God, Deities and Demons
Credit points: 6
Sessions: Semester 1
Classes: 2x1hr lectures/week, 1x1hr tutorial/week
Assessment: 1x1000wd take-home paper (30%), 1x2000wd essay (40%), 1x500wd early feedback (definition and referencing style) (10%), 1x1000wd tutorial presentation (20%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/tutorial) Day
This unit is a general introduction to the history of religions, beginning with the emergence of religion in pre-literate societies as evidenced in art and archaeology. It then studies the ancient religions of Egypt and Mesopotamia, Persia, India, China, Israel, Greece and Rome; before turning to the growth and spread of world religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Students are expected to specialise in traditions and themes of their own choice in writing essays.

RLST1005
Atheism, Fundamentalism & New Religions
Credit points: 6
Sessions: Semester 2
Classes: 2x1-hr lectures/week, 1x1-hr tutorial/week
Assessment: 1x2500wd essay (40%), 1x1000wd take-home research task (30%), 1x1000wd oral presentation (20%), tutorial participation (10%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/tutorial) Day
What is the ‘new’ atheism? How have globalisation and new media affected religious practice? This unit considers a broad range of recent high-profile events and contemporary debates and controversies in religion. Topics include: the supposed rise of fundamentalism, arguments over ‘the death of God’, new forms of spirituality and enchantment. Through the use of case studies, from UFO-religions to The Gospel of Judas, students examine the overarching theme: What is the future of religion?
Senior

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RLST2605
Christianity and the Medieval World
Credit points: 6
Session: Semester 2
Classes: 2x1hr lectures/week, 1x1hr tutorial/week
Prerequisites: 12 Junior credit points from Studies in Religion
Assessment: 1x2000wd essay (40%), 1x1500wd take home exam (35%), tutorial presentation (25%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/ tutorial) Day
This unit examines the history of Christianity from the late Roman Empire to the close of the Middle Ages. A survey of the chief landmarks of the Christian religion in its social setting, in terms of its significant beliefs, experiences and diverse cultural expressions. A tutorial hour will be devoted to an exploration of some major philosophical and theological themes from Late Antique Christianity to the Middle Ages.

RLST2620
Religion and Violence
Credit points: 6
Session: Semester 1
Classes: 1x2hr lecture/week, 1x1hr tutorial/week
Prerequisites: 12 Junior credit points from Studies in Religion
Prohibitions: RLST2020
Assessment: 1x1000wd oral presentation (20%), 1x2000wd essay (40%), 1x1500wd take home paper (40%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/ tutorial) Day
The twentieth century faced an unprecedented range of near-global crises - wars, depressions, communist-capitalist confrontation, ethnic conflict, epidemics, ecological disasters, extraordinary technological advances, the radical questioning of traditional values (along with secularisation) followed by reactive fundamentalisms, as well as serious tensions between modern science and religious conservatism. This unit considers how these crises have been addressed in religious thought and action. It will discuss popular mentalities and new spiritualities together with responses in the thought and praxis of leading religious figures.

RLST2624
The Birth of Christianity
Credit points: 6
Session: Semester 2
Classes: 1x1hr lecture/week, 1x1hr seminar/week, 1x1hr tutorial/week
Prerequisites: (12 junior credit points from Studies in Religion) or (6 junior credit points from Studies in Religion and (ANH1600 or ANH1601 or ANH1602))
Prohibitions: RLST2024
Assessment: 1x1000wd oral presentation (20%), 1x2000wd essay (40%), 1x1500wd take home paper (40%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/ tutorial) Day
This unit discusses the textual, archaeological and socio-cultural evidence for the origins of Christianity; with a particular purpose to analyse how cults centred on the charismatic figure of Jesus of Nazareth led to the construction of such a powerful religious tradition. Tensions within that emergent tradition will be considered, and especially its struggle towards self-identity with both Judaism and the Greco-Roman world.
RLST2633
Religion and Television
Credit points: 6
Session: Semester 2
Classes: 1x2hr lecture/week, 1x1hr tutorial/week
Prerequisites: 12 Junior credit points from Studies in Religion
Assessment: 1x3000wd essay (60%), 1x1500wd personal report on group project (30%), 1x group seminar presentation (10%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/tutorial) Day

Television is central to the daily consciousness of the world and the key to understanding sudden shifts in thinking on religion in Australia and the West in general. We will examine various examples of television, discuss and workshop through various theoretical explanations, their impact on how religion is and can be understood. Dramas, reality television, comedy and current affairs programs will be considered along with music videos, commercial advertisements and religious propaganda.

RLST2636
Ancient Egyptian Religion and Magic
Credit points: 6
Session: Semester 1
Classes: 1x2hr lecture/week, 1x1hr tutorial/week
Prerequisites: 12 junior credit points of Religion
Assessment: 1x2000wd essay (50%), 1x1000wd exam (30%), 1x1000 wd tutorial presentation (20%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/tutorial) Day

This unit will introduce the cosmologies, gods and religious structures of Pharaonic Egypt, including the imperial cult, sacred language, popular religion and magic. It will then consider the legacy of ancient Egyptian religion and magic in late antiquity, including the cult of Isis, Hermetic and Gnostic movements, the spiritual influence of the city of Alexandria, and the persistence of Coptic magic. Finally, there will be discussion of the abiding fascination with all things Egyptian in modern esotericism and popular culture.

Bahai Universal House of Justice, Haifa. Image: Wikimedia Commons.
RLST3601
Rethinking Religion
Credit points: 6
Session: Semester 2
Classes: 1x2hr seminar/week
Prerequisites: 12 senior credit points from Studies in Religion
Assessment: 1x2000wd essay (30%), 1x3000wd research proposal (50%), 1x1000wd oral presentation (10%), tutorial participation (10%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/tutorial) Day
This unit investigates pressing contemporary issues in the method and study of religion. It prepares students for advanced research, including honours. Historical analysis of religion and contentious key terms are debated, as students are introduced to field studies methodology and other complex research strategies. Theoretical work is more tightly integrated in this unit with research practice and the unit is structured to nurture the student in an extended research project, helping them to find a dynamic and assured academic voice.

RLST3603
Contemporary Australian Religion
Credit points: 6
Session: Semester 1
Classes: 1x2hr seminar/week
Prerequisites: 12 senior credit points in Studies in Religion
Prohibitions: RLST2627
Assessment: 1x750wd scoping exercise (10%), 1x750wd oral presentation (10%), seminar participation (10%), 1x2000wd research journal/plan (30%), 1x2500wd research report (40%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (seminar) Day
Contemporary Australia manifests low levels of institutional religion, a multi-cultural and multi-faith population, and a vocal atheist/secularist lobby. It is an ideal laboratory for students to study twenty-first century trends. Learning activities include engagement with religion in the media and law, investigation of religious sites, the Constitution, and the Census data on religion. Issues examined include atheism and secularity, Aboriginal religion, spirituality, values, sport and ANZAC as religious phenomena, and the significant contribution of religion to politics, education, and art.
Honours

An Honours degree with Studies in Religion is a statement of significant achievement. It can be the final accomplishment of your undergraduate degree, or the preparation that allows you to go on to enrol in a postgraduate research degree. Either way, it is a year that requires rigour, commitment, enthusiasm, and stamina. It involves seminars that focus on the concepts and methods that underpin the critical study of religions and focused case studies, along with a large research project.

It is a highly rewarding year, and many of our graduates report that it was the year that ‘made everything click’. They also report that an Honours year in Studies in Religion was the completion of their preparation for a workforce that demands flexibility and the ability to operate independently under pressure. There should be no mistake; Honours with Studies in Religion is hard, in fact we think it is one of the most rigorous undergraduate programs in religious studies in the world, but it will also leave you prepared for any research or project challenge.

Honours Prerequisites

A minimum 70% across the Studies in Religion major, consisting of 6 senior units of study (36 senior credit points).

Units of Study

RLST4011 Religious Studies: Honours A
RLST4012 Religious Studies: Honours B
RLST4013 Religious Studies: Honours C
RLST4014 Religious Studies: Honours D

Credit points: 12
Teacher/Coordinator: Associate Professor Jay Johnston
Sessions: Semester 1, Semester 2
Classes: 1x2hr seminar/week
Prerequisites: 70% or above in 36 senior credit points of Studies in Religion
Assessment: 1x20000wd thesis (60%), 2x10000wd or equivalent of written works for 2 seminars (40%)
Campus: Camperdown/Darlington
Delivery Mode: Normal (lecture/lab/tutorial) Day
Note: Department permission required for enrolment.

The Honours program in Studies in Religion consists of a thesis written under the supervision of one or more members of academic staff and two semester seminars that meet weekly for two hours. The thesis should be of 20000 words in length. Each seminar requires 10000 words of written work or its equivalent. The thesis is worth 60% of the final Honours mark and each of the seminars is worth 20%.
Research Degrees

Postgraduate Program

The Department does not offer a postgraduate coursework program, though it does offer the following postgraduate coursework units of study:

- RLST6921 Dissertation Part 1
- RLST6922 Dissertation Part 2
- RLST6946 Academic Research Project

Please check with the Department for further information.

The Department does offer the following postgraduate research degrees:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Master of Arts (Research)

Studies in Religion offers a rich scholarly environment for the critical study of religion at a postgraduate level. Ours is a multidisciplinary field where philosophy, anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, cultural studies, and even science and legal studies interact. Our academic staff have a wide variety of research interests that include the large religious traditions, media, popular culture, minority religions, esotericism, spirituality, and new religious movements. They are able to offer supervision for postgraduate students in these and many other fields.
Options for Postgraduate Study

Depending on your previous academic experience and the nature of your interests, the available options include:

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

A PhD in Studies in Religion is the highest research degree you can achieve and, if successful, is a mark of your standing as a learned, skilful, and original contributor to the body of human knowledge. As a PhD candidate you will spend three to four years researching a topic under the supervision of one of our academic staff. At the end of your candidature you will produce a 70,000 to 100,000 word thesis that will be examined by three experts in the field from around the world. A PhD graduate is regarded as among the leaders in their field of research, and we encourage our candidates to be active participants in the research cultures their work contributes to.

These research degrees are obtained by thesis only. Please consult the departmental website for advice on areas where we offer research supervision, and on how to prepare a thesis proposal.

**Master of Philosophy (MPhil)**

The two-year Master of Philosophy requires candidates complete an original research project of 40,000-60,000 words length under the supervision of one of our academic staff. Like the MA it offers you a chance to demonstrate your research skills, but the extra word length demands a more comprehensive research project, and often serves as a precursor to a PhD.

**Master of Arts (Research)**

The one year full-time Master of Arts (Research) program gives you the opportunity to undertake a supervised research project of 30,000-35,000 words length. Students who complete Masters degrees are generally interested in developing postgraduate research skills within a small timeframe. Such degrees prove your credentials as an independent researcher and demonstrate your skill and fluency with your chosen field.
Professor Carole M Cusack
carole.cusack@sydney.edu.au

Carole trained as a medievalist and her PhD was published as Conversion Among the Germanic Peoples (Cassell 1998). She continues to research and teach on medieval subjects, including European paganisms, and Christianity in the Middle Ages. However, since being appointed to the Department of Studies in Religion in 1996 her teaching and research interests have shifted to incorporate new religious movements, and contemporary religious and spiritual trends. She has published on medieval missionaries, holy trees, invented religions, and the ways in which new and alternative religions produce culture (art, architecture, music, and so on). She is editor of the journal Fieldwork in Religion (with Rachelle Scott, University of Tennessee, Knoxville). She teaches units including RLST 2626 Witchcraft, Paganism and the New Age, RLST 2631 Celtic and Germanic Mythology, and RLST 2605 Christianity and the Medieval World, RLST 3603 Contemporary Australian Religion, and contributes to RLST 1002, RLST 1005, RLST 3601 and Honours units.

Professor Iain Gardner
iain.gardner@sydney.edu.au

Iain was trained in early Christian literature and the history of religions at the University of Manchester, undertaking research work on ancient manuscripts in Berlin and Vienna, and had extensive experience teaching in both Britain and Western Australia before coming to the University of Sydney. He works on a number of major international research projects in areas as diverse as Egypt and south China, and has edited many original manuscripts in ancient languages, such as Coptic, from collections around the world. Though he is fascinated by all areas of the history of religions, his research interests are particularly in the world of late antiquity, in the many spiritual practices and religions of the ancient world. He is especially interested in those alternative forms of Christianity represented by apocryphal and gnostic literature that often flourished in places like the monasteries of the Egyptian desert or spread along the trade-routes of Asia and Africa.

Dr Christopher Hartney
christopher.hartney@sydney.edu.au

Chris teaches and writes principally on the intersection of culture, politics, and religion in the twentieth century. His doctoral research was on the Vietnamese new religion, Caodaism, and how it has developed a presence in Australia as a result of the Vietnamese diaspora community when an influx of refugees and migrants arrived from the mid-1970s onwards.
Chris is also interested in multiculturalism in Australia and in the rituals of civil religion, particularly those related to Anzac Day and other forms of military commemoration, in both Australia and New Zealand. Chris teaches a range of thought-provoking units in the department including RLST 2620 Religion and Violence: Faith and Blood, RLST 2625 Creativity, Art and the Spiritual, and RLST 2628 Religion and Film.

**Associate Professor Jay Johnston**
jay.johnston@sydney.edu.au

Jay Johnston (B.A., M.ArtAdmin., M.Litt(Dist), M.A.Hons, PhD) is an interdisciplinary scholar who investigates ritual and its use in identity formation, healing practice and cultural exchange. She is particularly interested in the role of material objects, animals and the natural environment in these practices. Trained in religious studies, continental philosophy, gender studies, art history, and Scottish and Nordic studies, Assoc. Professor Johnston’s research examines concepts of materiality, embodiment, image agency and epistemology. Central to this research is her conceptualisation of ‘subtle subjectivity,’ and its interrelation with beliefs about the body, senses, desire, aesthetic experience (cultivation of perception) and ethics. These theoretical concerns are articulated via several research projects strongly grounded in the evaluation of lived experience including ritual practice and cultural exchange in Late Antiquity and in Scottish and Norse cultures pre-1400; complementary and alternative medicine and its historical precedents; and human–animal–environment relations.

**Academic Coordinators for 2017**

Chair of Department  
Professor Carole Cusack

Undergraduate Coordinator  
Dr Christopher Hartney

Honours Coordinator  
Associate Professor Jay Johnston

Postgraduate Research Coordinator  
Professor Iain Gardner
Key dates for 2017

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<td>31 Mar</td>
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Prizes, Scholarships & Financial Assistance

Information on Departmental prizes and scholarships can be found on the Department’s website. Other scholarships and financial assistance available through the University can be found at: sydney.edu.au/arts/future_students/scholarships.shtml.

Policies

For information on policies that apply to current students, please visit: sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/policies.shtml.

Summer & Winter Schools

Students can accelerate their program, catch up on a failed subject, balance their timetable, or study subjects outside their current program. Recent high school graduates can enrol in first year subjects. More Information can be found at: sydney.edu.au/summer.