

Culture, Politics and Religion in Pluralist Societies

Degree conferred

Master of Arts in Social Sciences: Culture, Politics and Religion in Pluralist Societies

Options

For information on the optional award of the distinction «Bilingual curriculum, French/German», please contact the relevant Department (see Contact).

Three options available:

- Social and Cultural Dynamics
- Political and Normative (Dis)order
- Religion and Society

Languages of study

Possibility to study in French, in German or in French and German. Some courses are offered in English.

Commencement of studies

Commencement of studies in the Autumn Semester (September) or in the Spring Semester (February)

Access to further studies

Ph.D.

This interdisciplinary master programme is unique in Switzerland. It offers original and innovative training that combines the disciplines of sociology, social anthropology and religious studies. It aims to study developments in diverse and globalised societies resulting from socio-economic changes, the transformation of nation-states and population mobility. Students acquire the knowledge and skills to explain changes in the political, legal and religious spheres and to understand recent developments in social relations. The programme offers three options. Students select one option upon registering for the course: 1. Social and Cultural Dynamics: this option studies the rules and challenges of «living together» and diversity in all its dimensions (social, cultural, economic, political, etc.), equipping students with the skills to manage these issues in their future careers; 2. Political and Normative (Dis)order: in this option students address a wide range of contemporary issues focused on politics, norms and law; 3. Religion and Society: this option investigates and analyses religion as a defining element of contemporary societies from an interdisciplinary Religious Studies perspective.

This course of study, which promotes field research and unique learning experiences, can be taken in French, German or both languages to obtain the «Bilingual curriculum, French/German» distinction.

Profile of the study programme

This master programme is cross-cutting: it combines methods of sociology, social anthropology and religious studies in an innovative way, making it a unique course of study in Switzerland. Composed of interdisciplinary modules and one option (to be selected), it provides the analytical and methodological tools which are key to understanding developments in diverse and globalised societies.

Fribourg profile

In addition to the interdisciplinary modules, students follow specialised modules in their selected option.

1. Social and Cultural Dynamics option

This option focuses on knowledge and analytical tools, derived mainly from sociology, to study social plurality. It trains students to study the most visible aspects of this diversity: migration phenomena, interethnic relations, cultural standardisation and diversification, social and economic inequality, new forms of citizenship and their effects on individuals. More broadly, this option looks at the lifestyles and values which are emerging in various areas of society: families, social networks, groups of young people, associations, migrant communities, public institutions, professional groups and businesses. It considers new means of «living together» and relationships between individuals and groups, such as interethnic, intergenerational, interprofessional and gender relations. Students acquire the skills to decipher issues in the public arena and in the media, to analyse interactions and communication within political, legal and health institutions, and to evaluate changes in the labor sector. Interactive sessions and qualitative empirical research techniques conducted within institutions and with the populations under study train students in the use of individual interviews, focus groups and life stories, institutional document analysis and audio-visual techniques.

2. Political and Normative (Dis)order option

This option is largely inspired by social anthropology. Students consider a wide range of contemporary issues dealing with politics, norms and law. The interlinking of these different dimensions in the production of social order and disorder is examined comparatively and critically in colonial and postcolonial contexts. The political economy of space, access to the types of resources (economic, cultural, symbolic, etc.) and various regimes throughout the world are studied, along with protests, public policy and institutional and non-institutional frameworks. The sessions identify the multiplicity of power dynamics at work, which have repercussions for individuals and collective entities alike. Drawing from different case studies, the analyses take into account different types of issues (political, economic, social, etc.) to which conflicts and negotiations refer. Combining empirical studies and theoretical reflections, and favouring ethnographic methods, this option also tackles a critical analysis of anthropological knowledge and the anthropologist's position in the processes of observation and analysis.

3. Religion and Society option

The objective of this option is to further the study of religion

and its related challenges in modern and contemporary societies, particularly in Europe and Switzerland. Using methods and theories from social sciences such as sociology, anthropology and history, the option promotes understanding and analysis of religion at the level of individuals, groups, organisations, institutions as well as societies as a whole. Issues relating to religious diversity, pluralism and social integration are central to this option, with a focus on globalisation-linked trends. It takes an interdisciplinary, cross-cutting approach to examining the intersection of religion and questions involving youth, the media, gender issues, transnationalisation, economics, politics, identity, recognition, health, education and the role of religion in the public sphere, in the West and elsewhere. Teaching units address theoretical and empirical approaches, with an emphasis on group discussions and individualised seminar papers.

Career prospects

Given its interdisciplinary focus, this master programme provides access to a variety of professional contexts, and the knowledge and skills acquired meet the needs of today's labour market. Graduates have a command of the organisational, relational, cultural, identity and communication issues that arise within different types of groups and institutions:

- Non-governmental organisations and charities;
- Social and cultural institutions (prevention, project management, promotion, museums);
- Associations, interest groups, political parties;
- Private companies (human resources, communication, training);
- Public, cantonal and federal administrations (scientific collaborations, evaluation);
- Journalism and the media;
- Public relations, diplomatic services;
- Training;
- Research and scientific expertise, academic careers.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

90 ECTS credits + 30 ECTS credits as an option in a minor study programme freely chosen or in a specialisation programme, 3 to 4 semesters

Curriculum

<https://studies.unifr.ch/go/qN68x> (French)

<https://studies.unifr.ch/go/A0cJ8> (German)

Admission

Master's degree programmes are built on the knowledge and abilities that were acquired when obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university are admitted to a master's degree programme without any preconditions if they have earned 60 or 90 ECTS credits – depending on the chosen master's degree programme – within the corresponding discipline. However, additional requirements can be

required. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss or a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg, who do not fulfil this condition can be admitted to a master's degree programme with preconditions (which must be successfully completed before starting the master's degree programme) and/or additional requirements (which can be completed during the master's degree programme). The preconditions and/or additional requirements may not exceed 60 ECTS credits in total. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university of applied sciences, according to existing agreements.

The respective conditions of admission for each master's degree programme are reserved.

Alternatives

Also offered as a minor study programme and as a specialisation programme (30 ECTS credits).

Contact

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Social Sciences

Dr Ansgar Joedicke

ansgar.joedicke@unifr.ch

<http://studies.unifr.ch/go/fr-socialsciences> (French)

<http://studies.unifr.ch/go/de-socialsciences> (German)