Interreligious Studies

Degree conferred
Master of Arts in Interreligious Studies

Options
Option of an award bearing the distinction «Bilingual curriculum, French/German».

Languages of study
Possibility to study in French, in German or in French and German.

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

Access to further studies
Ph.D.

The Master of Arts in Interreligious Studies offers broad-based advanced training in religion, its role and its evolution throughout history and society. Special attention is focused on Christianity, interreligious and intercultural dialogues and self-reflection in other religions.
The main programme is currently being offered in German or as part of a bilingual programme (German and French), in which case the resulting degree will carry the distinction «Bilingual curriculum, French/German».

Profile of the study programme

It is at the crossroads of ethics, spirituality and interreligious dialogue that religious convictions become practical commitments. Thus, within a religious tradition, ethics does not derive purely from premises based on norms. We understand spirituality on the one hand as traditional religious reflection on personal experience, and on the other as the spiritual dimension of institutionalised religions. Since the beginning of the 20th century spirituality has played an increasingly important role in the way religions and peoples understand themselves. Ethics ceases to be understood as the enforcement of rules established by a given religious tradition. Rather, the direction of each action is increasingly determined — both by society and within self-defined spiritual communities — through prior negotiations among all members. In this context, individual consent and the balancing of interests are vital.

For these reasons, the 20th century marked a change in the relationship between spirituality and ethics. The relationship is no longer understood as one in which ethics could take the place of spirituality and vice versa. Moreover, this poses new challenges for interreligious dialogue, which is no longer simply perceived as a simple comparative exchange of predetermined positions. Today, interreligious dialogue is characterised not only by the normative texts of each tradition, but also — and especially — by the communication of personal experience. Consequently, historical agreements and differences no longer function as they did in the past. In the light of personal experiences, some differences between religious experience may diminish; at the same time, new conflicts often arise.

The field described here by the intersection of ethics, spirituality and interreligious dialogue is the focus of this programme of study. This approach opens new avenues to understanding the increasing abundance of religious landscapes not only as a consequence of structural transformations but also as the result of a broadening field of spirituality.

In this context, the course aims to transmit both knowledge considered in an existential context and the tools for dealing with fundamental problems relating to interreligious dialogue. The course's main aim is to communicate knowledge for analysing religions and their theologies as key factors in the construction of contemporary sociabilities. While all existing religions will be studied in this course, significant emphasis will be placed on Christianity, Judaism and Islam alongside major Asian religions.

This programme of study is thus conceived as a network connecting Faculties, while being integrated mainly within the Faculty of Theology. The course is deliberately interdisciplinary and open to students from any discipline as a minor programme. The Swiss Centre for Islam and Society (CSIS) accordingly plays an important role in the programme.

Career prospects
The programme offers career prospects for the following target groups, among others:
– Theologians seeking to specialise in political studies of religions so as to work within or outside the Church;
– Experts and interreligious/intercultural mediators needing to acquire new knowledge about religions and their impact on social life (managing communities, working in the media/culture, adult training, national or international trade, NGOs etc.);
– Teachers in state-run secondary schools may offer their pupils one module of this study course.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

90 ECTS credits + 30 ECTS credits in a minor study programme freely chosen, 4 semesters

Curriculum

https://studies.unifr.ch/go/28 *(French)*
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/29 *(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 (30 ECTS credits).

Contact

Faculty of Theology
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http://studies.unifr.ch/go/fr-theology *(French)*
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