Master’s in Theology and Religious Studies

Spirituality and Religion

uva.nl/ma-spirituality-and-religion
In today’s world there is a growing presence of spiritual practices and ideas alongside more traditional forms of religion. How are we to make sense of this development? This Master’s focuses on spirituality and religion as they manifest themselves in the most diverse areas of culture and society, both in the past and in the present. It is possible to specialise in either Spirituality and Esotericism in Western Culture, the study of Religion and Spirituality in Contemporary Societies, or Spirituality and Religion in Islam. You will be trained to use historical methods in tandem with social-scientific ones to study the changing role of religion and spirituality in contemporary societies and their historical roots. You will learn to conduct research from a critical perspective. Also, you will learn to work with archival and other primary sources, and to present your results in an elaborate, coherent way.

‘We cannot understand transformations of society and culture without having a clear grasp of the fascinating relationship between spirituality and religion. Like two opposing forces they have shaped history and continue to play a major role today. No other tension has inspired human creativity over the centuries in the same way.’

Dr Marco Pasi
Career prospects
Upon completion of this Master’s programme you will have gained insight into a wide variety of religious phenomena from different time periods within Europe and have acquired the ability and skills to analyse them. Your skills are relevant for a career in the field of religious studies, as well as for a range of employment opportunities where a critical, curious, and academically-trained mind is essential, such as a job in education, journalism or another writing profession, scientific research, cultural management and positions that require expertise in the field of religious diversity.

Spotlight on a course

Introduction to Western Esotericism and Spirituality
By engaging with topics such as magic, alchemy, astrology, the Christian Cabala and Theosophy, Paracelsianism and Rosicrucianism during the Renaissance and Early Modern Period, you will develop your ability to critically reflect on the interplay of science, religion and esotericism. You will study and analyse scholarly literature and historical sources (including such famous names as Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Paracelsus, and Dee) pertaining to these subjects and communicate their insights in presentations and discussions.
Entry requirements

The Master’s in Religion and Spirituality is open for application to students with a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited university in:
• humanities or social sciences with a minimum of 30 ECTS taken in the field of Religious Studies or any other area (such as history, cultural studies or art studies) that is pertinent to the study of Spirituality and/or Religion. You are expected to have an awareness of basic theoretical notions in the study of religion and religious traditions.

If you do not meet the entry requirements above, for example if you have a degree from a Dutch University of Applied Sciences (hbo) or an equivalent thereof, you may be eligible for admission after completing the pre-Master’s programme Spirituality and Religion (taught in Dutch). Please check:
[uva.nl/ma-spirituality-and-religion > Application and admission](uva.nl/ma-spirituality-and-religion > Application and admission)