UNIVERSITY OF LUCERNE

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIONS (THEIRS)

ONLINE MASTER'S IN PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY AND RELIGIONS (PHILTER)

Question and Answer (Q&A)

1. What is so unique about the Master's program?

The strength of the Master's program lies in providing students with a history of philosophy in its relationship to the history of the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is natively designed as an online program and can thus accommodate students from all over the word.

2. Who are the professors?

Peter Adamson (LMU Munich / King's College London), **Dario Affronti** (Lucerne), **Jehoschua Ahrens** (Lucerne), **David Giuseppe Arie Anzalone** (Lucerne), **Marienza Benedetto** (Bari), **Paul Richard Blum** (Loyola University, Maryland), **Marta Borgo** (Lucerne), **Charles Burnett** (Warburg Institute, London), **Emanuele Colombo** (Chicago), **Richard Cross** (Notre Dame, Indiana), **Simon Erlanger** (Lucerne), **Almedina Fakovic** (Lucerne), **Davide Falessi** (Lucerne), **Tyron Goldschmidt** (Rochester, New York), **Warren Zev Harvey** (Jerusalem), **Christoph Helmig** (Cologne), **Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen** (Basel), **Gyula Klima** (Fordham University, New York), **Marco Lamanna** (Lucerne), **Gary Carl (Muhammad) Legenhausen** (Qom), **Olga Lizzini** (Aix-Marseille), **Winfried Löffler** (Innsbruck), **Maria Evelina Malgieri** (Turin), **Ryan Mullins** (Lucerne), **Mostafa Najafi** (Lucerne), **Pasquale Porro** (Turin), **Santiago Ramos** (Rockhurst, Kansas), **Ulrich Rudolph** (Zurich), **Ferenc Ruzsa** (Budapest), **Ursula Schumacher** (Lucerne), **Roman Seidel** (FU Berlin), **Seyedali Taghavinasab** (Lucerne), **Erdal Toprakyaran** (Tuebingen), **Giovanni Ventimiglia** (Lucerne), **Linda Zagzebski** (Oklahoma).

3. How much are the tuition fees for the program?

The tuition fee per semester (including exams and use of the learning platform Moodle) is CHF 810 for students residing in Switzerland, and CHF 1110 for students residing abroad. There are also one-time application and enrollment fees of CHF 100/150 each.

4. I cannot afford this program. Is there a possibility of receiving a full scholarship?

Yes! Through the generous support of the Reginaldus Foundation we are happy to offer up various scholarship covering tuition fees either in part or in their entirety to qualified applicants who can demonstrate their skills in philosophy or theology. All applications (Curriculum Vitae, Letter of Motivation, Transcript of Records) must be submitted online to: info-masterphilter@unilu.ch.

5. Is this a full-time Master's degree? How much time should I expect to devote to the online master's?

The Master of Arts in Philosophy, Theology, and Religions (PhilTeR) is a full-time Master's degree program consisting of 120 credit points ideally designed to be completed over the course of two years (four semesters).

Students need to devote an appropriate amount of time during the semester to stay on track with all course components and academic activities, such as watching lectures (which usually need to be viewed more than once), completing readings, participating in the program's activities, and working on research papers. All of these interactive activities, including the tutoring (see 2, below), are designed to provide the same depth of engagement as a residential (in-presence) program – despite having lower lecture time – , and ensure that, while lectures involve individual study, students do not have to work in solitude. Nevertheless, as many of our students have experienced, the program is designed to be flexible and asynchronous, allowing you to manage your workload in a way that suits your personal and professional commitments.

6. Can I study while also working either part-time or full-time?

Yes! The program is ideally suited to students who have other major commitments which occupy much of their day-to-day schedules, such as full-time work or family responsibilities. Lectures take place entirely online and are pre-recorded. Students can thus choose the pace at which they work through the lectures. At the same time there are also online live meetings with the professors and the team, which are not compulsory.

7. What about tutoring?

At PhilTeR, students are never alone. Our tutors walk alongside them throughout their academic journey, offering regular meetings to help them with tough questions from the lectures and to guide them in drafting and finalizing their papers (see below, 3).

Specifically, every cohort has a general tutor as a first point of contact, available for any kind of question. Depending on the topic, another specialized tutor may also be involved in helping the student. Furthermore, students write two papers per semester and have one tutor assigned per paper.

Additionally, we offer group training sessions on how to write a paper or a dissertation, how to use library resources, and how to correctly cite. We also show students how to responsibly use AI, how to present at a conference, and how to navigate PhD applications. In the Spring Semester 2025, the following 1-hour sessions are offered:

- *How to write a dissertation*, with Dr. Habil. Ryan Mullins
- *How to use library resources and cite correctly*, with David Anzalone, PhD Candidate
- *How to use AI responsibly*, with David Anzalone, PhD Candidate

8. What language competency is required? Do I need to know German?

The program is conducted entirely in English. No knowledge of German is required.

9. Do I need to have prior knowledge in philosophy or in theology?

It is important that you can prove that you have taken and passed exams in related disciplines for a minimum of 60 credit points during your undergraduate studies. If this is not the case, you will likely be admitted with conditions, meaning that you will need to complete some qualifying courses (none of which count towards the master's degree itself) before being able to receive credit for the main coursework under the program.

10. What are prior requirements for the studies?

Anyone with a Bachelor's degree recognized by the University of Lucerne in philosophy and theology within the framework of the *Bologna Declaration* can be admitted to the Master's program. Applicants with an equivalent undergraduate degree can also be admitted after a formal check by the University. Other relevant subjects are: Religious Studies, Cultural Studies, International Studies, Law, etc.

11. How do I apply for the Master's program?

You can apply online here: https://portal.unilu.ch/site/besucher/anmeldung/en-us. Please select the subcategory: *Master/Philosophy, Theology and Religions*.

All applications must be submitted online by April 30th (or late registration until August 31st) for the autumn semester and November 30th (or late registration until January 31st) for the spring semester.

12. How will the courses be structured? Are there exams or papers?

Lectures take place entirely online and are pre-recorded. Students can thus choose the pace at which they work through the lectures. Each semester is divided into two modules of 15 CPs each (please refer to the curriculum, found here).

Each semester, students are required to submit two research papers (one per module) and pass a multiple-choice examination based on the lecture content. The grade will be based on the papers and the quiz. A grade is awarded for each module. The quiz grade accounts for 25% of the final grade. The paper grade accounts for the remaining 75% of the final grade. Students will also have the chance to take part in live debates and meetings (via Zoom) moderated by the program professors, although these meetings are not mandatory.

13. Live or in-person activities?

Each semester, Dr. habil. Ryan Mullins offers one online live Block Seminar. Beyond that, we organize a student and alumni conference at least once a year. We believe that this conference is a unique opportunity to engage with our faculty and tutors, while connecting—or reconnecting—with fellow students and peers. It is also a great opportunity for students and alumni to present their research.

We are constantly on the move to find new opportunities for more in-person academic activities, such as a summer school or a longer research conference.

14. Can I start in the spring semester?

The online asynchronous nature of this Master's program enables everyone to start with the first year and first module courses, either in a Fall semester or a Spring semester.
Registration deadlines:

> • For the Fall Semester, the early registration deadline is April 30 (late registration deadline is August 31)
> • For the Spring Semester, the early registration deadline is November 30 (late registration deadline is January 31).

More information on registration deadlines and Fees is available here.

15. Could I meet the tutors in person?

> Yes! Some of our tutors work on Campus at the University of Lucerne and are happy to meet you!

16. What are the prospects after completing the program?

The program gives students expertise in philosophy, logic, theology, and cultural history, as well as fundamental methodological skills essential for academic and professional study. The broad range of topics and cultures studied in the program ensures that students have a global vision enriched by:

• **Academic formation**

The program trains students in various fields crossing traditional disciplinary lines, including history of philosophy, historical theology, philosophy of religion, contemporary analytical philosophy, and non-Western philosophy. This course of study widens the scope of possible subsequent studies at the doctoral level: graduates are in a competitive position to apply not only to programs in philosophy, but also in theology and religious studies. For instance, the Faculty of Theology of Lucerne has recently created a PhD (Dr. Phil. in Theological Studies) for which graduates of this program would be ideally suited.

• Aptitude in interreligious collaboration
In a multicultural society challenged by global migratory phenomena, the demand for professionals who are knowledgeable about history, as well as the history of philosophy and intellectual history of cultures other than their own, continues to grow. A strong command of the mentality and intellectual history of different cultures is an indispensable tool for interreligious dialogue. The specific training offered by this Master's course meets these needs.

• Non-academic professionalization
Graduates of the program will possess competitive credentials for international careers in culture, education, media, politics, public administration, consulting, church and religious services, and NGO work, such as journalism, media & publishing, public relations & marketing, personnel services, political consulting, political and cultural foundations, management consulting, high school philosophy and humanities teaching, archives/museums /libraries, church non-profit and international organizations, social employment, and asylum systems.