



R'nTease The Religions and Theology Student Newsletter

Message From Above (last one for 2009/10!)

Dear Everyone,

... And as the sun comes out we all have to get our heads down to exams – you writing them and us marking them! Just a note then to say GOOD LUCK and I hope you all do very well this year, whether they are first, second or final year exams. Don't forget to take breaks in your revision, fresh air, sleep, breathing. Planning's everything. Any problems arising, don't forget you can always contact your Academic Adviser, Student Support, or even ... me, for advice.

Those of you who will be graduating on Wednesday July 7th (at 12.15pm) please come to our Graduation party afterwards when you can bring along your folks to say goodbye and celebrate your success with us. We'll wish you all the best then, but again, for now good luck in your finals!

Those of you who are coming back into years 2 and 3 next year, have a good time in the exams – I am not being funny – exams can be enjoyable! And have a fantastic summer.

Best of luck to each and every one of you.

Alan Williams
Head of Religions and Theology

Message From the NSSSCRT*

Dear all (not just third years)

First of all, very very many thanks to all those of you fast approaching "The End" who took the time to fill in the National Student Satisfaction Survey. And many apologies for the constant bombardment of your email by me and Betty-Ann for trying to encourage you to do so. We really are grateful and hope that the next set of statistics sent out from the School will show we have far exceeded the magic 50% return rate we need to get to appear in the published results.

For those of you who didn't catch up with this, or have the pleasure to look forward to at the end of your third year, the NSSS is sent out by an independent polling organisation in February of your last year (when you are shell-shocked from exams, miserable with the weather, and starting new courses) for you to complete by the end of April (when you are shell-shocked from submitting your dissertation, miserable with the heat (?) and starting to revise (???))! This then provides information which the pollsters publish for the government enabling new applicants to university to judge which departments offer the best deal so far as students are concerned. It is also one of the factors employers may look at when

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considering the value of your degree. And that the University looks at when making decisions about which subject areas are providing 'value for money' in the current economic climate.

So it did matter!

But actually (ssssh!) we can do the most about things when we work together here. So very very many thanks to all those of you who are involved in staff-student liaison work, peer mentoring, PASS and so on. And as many to those of you who do collect your feedback, see Advisors, pass your comments to your reps, and tell us constructively how we could improve things from your point of view. Or just get on with uni, when you have other things to contend with behind the scenes.

Finally, many thanks to the third years and staff who were able to come to the post-dissertation party last Wednesday. This is definitely a spot to watch for next year. And I will try to make sure that the legendary chocolate oatcakes are advertised via Facebook next time, as they really are worth coming for!

All the best. Jackie.

*Going for the longest acronym possible! National Student Satisfaction Survey Czarina for Religions and Theology, aka NDAOREPNR [Non-] Departmental Annoyance Officer for Repetitive Emails, and Posters No-one Reads!

PS There will be a **prize** of a bag of the same choc oatcakes for the person who manages to spot the most grammatical errors or casual usages in the journalistic piece above! (i.e. the ones I, or some other pedant on the staff who would like to help you write correctly, would have underlined in a formal essay!).

To enter:

Print out this page, use a big red pen, and submit your entry under my door, WLG21, or on-line to jacqueline.hirst@manchester.ac.uk, and have the satisfaction of marking yourself!

Message From the MA Programme Director

For more details on any of this, contact me (peter.oakes@manchester.ac.uk) or lecturers in a specialist area you are interested in... MA Religions and Theology, etc, 2010-11

The timetable for the coming year's MA courses has been finalised (as far as one can ever finalise things at this stage). The MA is the gateway to PhD study, or a way to further pursue some interests, or a way to give you an edge in the jobs market, or a combination of the above. Among the highlights for 2010-11 is the amalgamation of Michael Hoelzl's political and Peter Scott's theological core courses to form a new one in Religion and Civil Society. Following that in semester two is another new course, Religion, Politics and the Media. Casts of several are also involved in two other reorganised courses: Bible and Early Judaism in Context, and Jews among Christians and Muslims. The first of these puts Bible together with Jewish texts up to the rise of Islam. The second takes the story on from there. Atreyee Sen is taking the lead this year on the South Asian Studies core course and backing that with her popular course on Contemporary Society and Politics in South Asia. Two courses centre on using some of the amazing primary resources at John Ryland's, Deansgate. Jeremy Gregory

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looks at Religious Revivals in Britain and Kate Cooper tackles the social nature of books across the medieval period.

For the MA you pick four assessed course units (assessment is usually by 6000-word essay). You then write a 12-15k dissertation. That all takes 12 months (September-September) or two years part-time. As well as assessed units you can attend any number of other MA or undergrad courses. You can even be assessed on one undergrad course unit topic, via the Directed Reading course code. As well as RELT units there are well over a hundred other course unit choices that you could include from elsewhere in the School or beyond.

For MA Religions and Theology, you pick any four courses, although they must include at least one of the core courses (starred). For MA Biblical Studies, MA Jewish Studies, MA Religion and Political Life or MA South Asian Studies, you pick the appropriate core course and focus largely in the specialist area. There are also further courses available for each of these programmes from other parts of the School or Faculty. For more details on any of this, contact me (peter.oakes@manchester.ac.uk) or lecturers in a specialist area you are interested in.

The current list of courses is:

Semester One (*core courses are starred*)

- RELT60121 – Studying South Asia*** - Atreyee Sen
- RELT60131 – The Holocaust in History** - Jean-Marc Dreyfus
- RELT60231 – New Testament in the Roman Empire** - Peter Oakes
- RELT70001 – Bible and Early Judaism in Context*** - George Brooke, Adrian Curtis and others
- RELT70061 – Questions in Indian Philosophy** - Jackie Suthren Hirst
- RELT70561 – Jews among Christians and Muslims*** - Philip Alexander, Daniel Langton and others
- RELT70901 – Religion and Civil Society*** - Michael Hoelzl and Peter Scott
- RELT71001 – Religion, Nature and Society** - Peter Scott
- SAHC72111 – Writing, Power and Memory: The History of the Book in the Middle Ages*** - Kate Cooper

Semester Two

- RELT60042 – Religious Revivals in Britain** - Jeremy Gregory
- RELT60082 – Magic in the Ancient Mediterranean World** - Dr Todd Klutz
- RELT60142 – Religion, Politics and the Media** - Michael Hoelzl and others
- RELT60242 – Constantine's Dream: Religion and Society in Late Antiquity** - Jamie Wood
- RELT60302 – Trinity and Incarnation in Modern Christian thought** - David Law
- RELT60342 – Contemporary Society and Politics in South Asia: Reason or religion?** - Atreyee Sen
- RELT70292 – Religion and Politics in Modern India: the Development of Hindu Nationalism** - John Zavos
- RELT70992 – Dead Sea Scrolls** - George Brooke

Dr Peter Oakes
R&T MA Programme Director

Message from the Peer Mentor Student Co-ordinator

Hello,

As the year draws to a close it's time to say goodbye to the peer-mentors for this year, first years have reported that their peer mentors have had a very positive impact on their first year so thank you!

I'd like to say a big welcome to our new peer-mentors for 10/11. We have big plans for our new recruits including a scavenger hunt, hoodies, coffee morning as well as the odd pub crawl. With about 28 new peer mentors I'm sure that 10/11 will be a massively successful year.

We are getting pretty close to exams and final deadlines so I will say best of luck to everyone and I'm looking forward to seeing you all again in September.

Craig Wright
Craig.Wright-2@student.manchester.ac.uk

Message from R&T Taught Programmes Administrator

I would just like to say a big thank you to those of you who nominated me for my Peer Support award.

I would also like to say thank you to all of the R&T academics for their ongoing support, those at the *Students As Partners Office* for their encouragement and help with Peer Mentoring & PASS, and of course all in the TPO – these are the people who are working very hard behind the scenes to make your student experience here at Manchester an enjoyable one!

Good luck for the exams everyone – final year students pop in to say hello & collect your dissertations on graduation day!

Betty-Ann Bristow
R&T Taught Programmes Administrator

Student Congratulations



The Morocco Hitch 2010

We made it! On Easter Sunday Eva Bindeman and Craig Wright set off from Portsmouth and headed to Morocco. It took us 12 hitches from Saint Marlo > La Rochelle > Biarritz > Spanish Border > Seville > Algecires > Morocco!

We met some crazy people including Frank, a Spanish truck driver who couldn't speak much English but could communicate perfectly through 80s power ballads (which Eva sang along to beautifully). Pierre drove us from a motorway near St. Marlo to La Rochelle and even offered us his apartment! He was a physics student who was swapping to study Business but informed me that people in France "love dancing to Lady GaGa", for some reason it seemed very important to remember at the time!

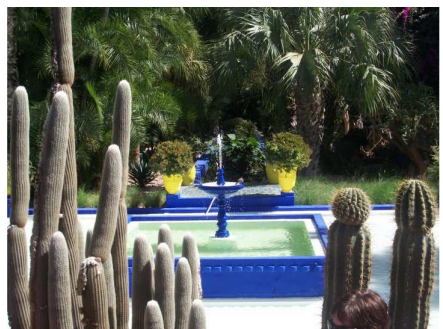
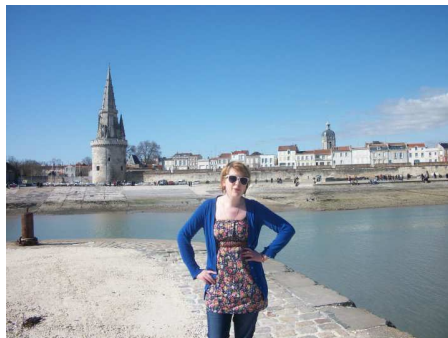
Morocco itself was great fun. We bartered for leather goods, saw some snake charmers, tried mint tea and ate lots of very good food. It was the absolute trip of a lifetime, we will never forget the generosity of the people we met and the amazing places we saw. Next year I hope you will seriously consider having a go yourselves – it really is worth it!

The reason we did the hitch was to raise awareness of the problem of education in Africa and we are still raising money for Link community development. If you'd like to help children in Africa attain a decent education you can help by donating here:

<http://www.justgiving.com/manchesterhitch>

A massive thank you to everyone who has already donated and a massive thank you to Betty-Ann for giving us the idea to do this!

Eva Bindeman and Craig Wright
(Level 2 R&T Students)



Congratulations and Thanks!

I am delighted to be able to use the facility of *Rn'Tease* to pass on some well-deserved congratulations.

Firstly to **Betty-Ann Bristow** on the excellent achievement of her Outstanding Contribution to Peer Support Award 2009 – 2010. It is great that the University has recognised what we in R&T already know! Betty-Ann's presence as the provider of administrative support to the

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SSLC and to the Peer Mentoring scheme has been invaluable – but that could be said to be part of her duties. Where she has gone beyond the call of duty has been in suggesting innovative ways of ensuring that student representation and peer mentoring operate much more effectively, and her willingness to do her best to facilitate this. She has a remarkable gift of being positive, even when there are setbacks! And, of course, another of her innovations is the development of this *Rn'Tease* newsletter – so it is fitting that our congratulations should appear in its pages.

Congratulations too to R&T staff members who have been nominated for the Best On Blackboard competition: **Katja Stuerzenhofecker, David Law and Tim Stanley.**

And thanks to all the students who have supported the above nominations, served as year reps and interns, attended SSLC meetings, Subject Fora etc during the year. You know who you are!

Have a great Summer!

Dr Adrian Curtis
Chair – R&T SSLC

Everyone's Talking About...

Are you a Student Parent or Carer?

We are setting up a new society for Student Parents and Carers and would love you to be involved!

- Would you like to meet other student parents/carers?
- Would you like to make friends and be involved in some parent/family-friendly events?
- Do you feel you could benefit from the support of other student parents/carers?

We are trying to establish a parents/carers group for students in the University and we would love to hear from you!

If you are interested in getting involved, contact me on:
emma.speake@student.manchester.ac.uk

Emma Speake
(Level 1 R&T Student)



The Awards for Inter-faith Innovation

Calling all first and second years!!!

Deadline Wednesday 30th June 2010. See Betty-Ann's email dated 4th May for further details.

Faith Youth Manchester are now delighted to announce the **Co-exist: The Awards for Inter-faith Innovation**.

If you would like anything to be considered for inclusion in the next Newsletter, please email betty-ann.bristow@manchester.ac.uk

FYM's Awards for Inter-faith Innovation are designed to encourage young people to design, develop and deliver new ideas for inter-faith projects or activities in Manchester. Any group of young people (must age 20 or under) living in Greater Manchester can apply for between £500 and £1,500 to bring young people from different faiths (and none) together to improve understanding, respect and co-operation. Projects should be planned to take place between September 2010 and March 2011. Previous Co-exist events have used arts, sport and discussion but you can use any means you think would work to best engage your peers. Between 5 and 10 Awards will be made to groups. Information on all project/activities may be published on the FN4M website at www.fn4m.org.

You just need to complete the application form, attached to the email, or contact Francesca (Francesca.Frazer@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk) and then email it to jonny@fn4m.org.

Francesca Frazer
PG Student Representative
Francesca.Frazer@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Spring Concert, 15th May at St Peter's Chaplaincy, Oxford Road



On behalf of Harmony Gospel Choir, it gives me great pleasure invite you to our Spring Concert, on May 15th at St Peter's Chaplaincy on Oxford Road. HGC is made up of students from the universities of Manchester, and we'd love you to join us as we sing, clap, click and sway our way through the gospel classics, as well as a few surprises. If you've got a soft spot for Sister Act, then you won't want to be anywhere else! And if you haven't, come along anyway and let us change your mind...

Doors open at 7pm and tickets are £5, with the proceeds going to the Kisenyi Project in Kenya, which one of our choir members has been involved in. To make a reservation, email harmonygospelchoir@googlemail.com. We look forward to seeing you there!



Kat Brealey
(Level 2 R&T Student)

Up and coming socials!

There is hopefully going to be an R&T curry night on 10th June – check your emails as there will be more details to come!

What's New Peer Mentors?

Thank you to all Peer Mentors for your hard work this year – your certificates are now available for collection from Betty-Ann's office (A5/SA).

Those of you who have trained to be Peer Mentors next year – why not consider getting involved in PASS? If you're interested, contact Betty-Ann.

R&T Student Representatives

Again, thank you to those of you who have been involved as Student Reps this year!

There's a lot of love in this month's newsletter...(!)

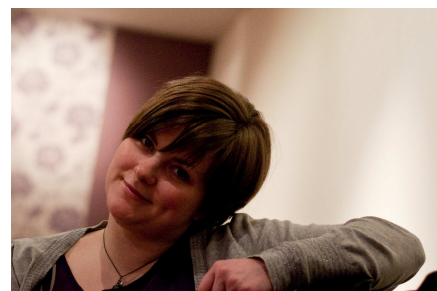
Postgraduate Socials!



R&T Postgraduate Curry Night – Al Nawaz – Friday 23rd April 2010

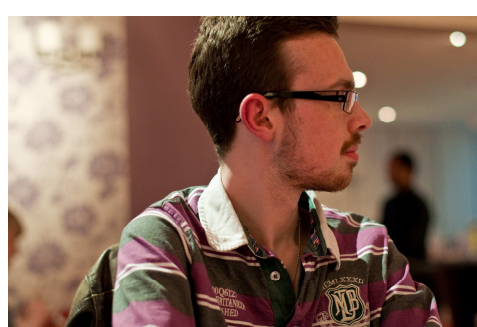
Thank you to all the postgrads, staff and partners who came along to our curry social at Al Nawaz on the Curry Mile. It was a great chance for us all to catch up on what's been happening over the Easter holidays and to meet some new faces!

A brilliant time was had by all, with lovely food and great conversation (even if we were slightly disheartened to learn our intelligent musings on the meaning of Al Nawaz proved fruitless- it's simply the name of the owner!) It was a fantastic turn out and a really enjoyable evening! Big thanks to Navin for the photos too! Please do email me with your suggestions for further outings.



I'd also like to say a big congratulations to Mrs (soon to officially be Dr.) Maria Haralambakis who passed her PhD viva earlier that day!

Francesca Frazer
PG Student Representative



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The Sherman Lectures 2010

This year's Sherman lectures (April 19-22, 2010) were delivered by Professor Bernard Jackson, Professor Emeritus of the University of Manchester and Professor of Law and Jewish Studies at Liverpool Hope University, on the topics of 'Halakhah, Inheritance and the Heritage of Israel'. This series of lectures was designed to bring together 'town and gown', and this year was no exception, from rabbis to members of the Jewish community, from Biblical Studies and Jewish studies postgraduate research students to post-doctoral researchers and members of academia, including doctors and professors from this university and beyond! The lectures were both fascinating and thought-provoking, providing more and more topics for discussion each day (although I'm not sure if we ever managed to solve the mystery of 'Novum Testamentum'!). Thank you to all those involved in organising the event (including the delicious kosher buffet!) and, of course, to Professor Jackson for such a stimulating, beautifully delivered series of lectures.

Francesca Frazer
PG Student Representative

R.A.T.S (Religions and Theology Society)

R&T Hoodies

We have a few R&T hoodies left in stock before September. Please e-mail: Craig.wright-2@student.manchester.ac.uk for details. They are £17 each and there are only about 5 left in stock.

That's all... for now

This is the last newsletter for 2009/10, and we are so very pleased that it seems to be a hit! Those of you returning in September, get your thinking caps on for what you'd like to see here in the newsletter next year.