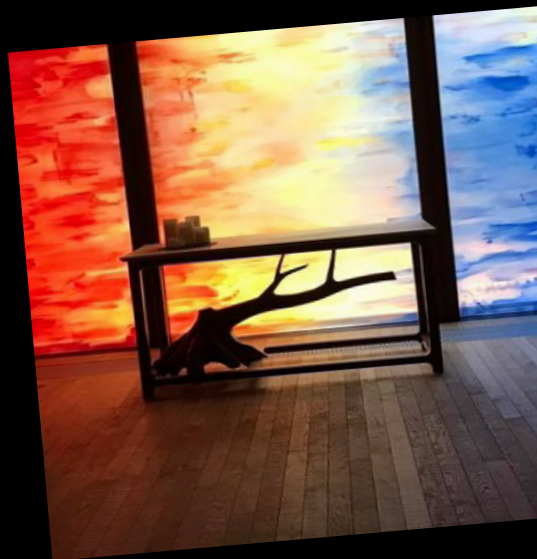




Religion and Belief Guide 2023-2024



Contents

Welcome	2
About the Faith Centre	3

Ways to get involved

The Beecken Faith & Leadership Programme	4
Module 1: Religious Imaginations in Today's World	5
Module 2: Religion & Climate Change	6
Module 3: Conflict Transformation	7
Our Programme Alumni	8
Our Research Unit	9
Wellbeing	10
Worship	10
Volunteering	11

Faith Centre Spaces

The Desert Room	12
Islamic Prayer Rooms	13
The Cave	14

Your time at LSE

The Faith Centre Team	15
Associate Chaplains	16
LSE SU Faith Societies	17
Faith Inclusion at LSE	18
Finding support	19

More information about religions

Buddhism	20
Christianity	21
Hinduism	22
Islam	23
Judaism	24
Atheism & Humanism	25
Sikhism	26
Interfaith Calendar 2023-24	27

Welcome

The contemporary university is realising that knowledge and wisdom do not come from one culture or one way of seeing the world. De-colonising the curriculum and the drive for inclusivity reflect the belief that once-sidelined identities and perspectives now need to be brought to the fore in a truly universal learning community.

One such identity, or way of viewing the world, is religion. For most of its history, LSE didn't take religion very seriously, following the consensus of Twentieth Century social science that religion was in terminal decline or at least would be relegated to the private areas of spiritual life. But today over 80% of the world population continues to follow a faith tradition, and the opening of the LSE Faith Centre represented a significant turning point. Not only do we provide spaces for religious observance for the first time in LSE's history, but our presence and activities recognise the importance of religion to a large proportion of our very international staff and student body.

The Faith Centre is a space for all during their time at LSE. From transformational leadership programmes seeking to build relationships and transform attitudes within and between faiths, to weekly wellbeing classes, and activities for student faith societies, there is something here for everyone. This guide offers information on

the Faith Centre's work, and an overview of the beliefs and practices of six of the largest religious groups on campus, and humanism and atheism. This is both for adherents of these traditions, and to educate us all in the worldviews present on our diverse campus.

We hope this guide, and the whole work of our centre, helps everyone to bring their whole selves onto campus and enrich the diverse global learning community that makes this such an amazing place to work, research and study.

Revd Canon Professor James Walters
Director and Chaplain, LSE Faith Centre



About the Faith Centre

Building relationships and transforming attitudes

The Faith Centre is home to the LSE's diverse religious activities, transformational interfaith leadership programmes, and quiet, reflective spaces for all staff and students.

Our Centre is more than a physical space, we seek to bring religious identities from the margins of campus life to the centre of student experience and learning.

Starting university can often be overwhelming. It may be the first time you are interacting with people beyond your neighborhood or community, and this is especially the case at LSE where students from every corner of the world gather.

The Faith Centre offers you a real opportunity to meet, explore and work with a diverse range of students, enriching your LSE experience.



Stay in touch
@LSEfaithcentre



Ways to get involved

Join our extra-curricular Beecken Faith & Leadership Programme

BFL is the LSE Faith Centre's flagship extra-curricular student programme, designed to enable the next generation of leaders to positively engage with religious difference and build a more peaceful global society.

By drawing on the expertise of secular and religious contributors, you will cultivate dialogue skills and imaginative religious literacy whilst critically addressing issues of global concern, including climate change and conflict.



The programme is open to all current LSE students, of any faith or belief or none, and both those that have experience of interfaith activities and those that are keen to get more involved.

By participating in the programme, you will:

- Receive short, creative introductions to the main world faith traditions from expert scholars and community leaders.
- Explore the changing dynamics of religion in the world today and evolving models of secularism and religious pluralism.
- Receive training and certification in conflict resolution skills, reflective practice, interfaith dialogue, communication and situational mapping.
- Learn from and connect with students from different faith and belief backgrounds in an inclusive, non-assessed educational space.

Module 1: Religious Imaginations in Today's World

Religion is often a contentious topic, bound up with personal experience, both positive and negative, and with the contested histories of peoples, societies, and institutions. We can, therefore, shy away from discussing it, even in the classroom. But a knowledge of world religions is essential to understanding today's world.

Through this module you will learn from expert panels of eminent faith contributors and develop skills for navigating religious plurality on campus and beyond, through participatory workshops.

- Gain knowledge of the fundamental imaginative foundations of different religious traditions and the concepts that motivate and structure religious thinking today.
- Gain understanding of the critical role faith groups and individuals of faith play in modern society.
- Develop the skills of dialogue across difference, critical decision making and polarity thinking.
- Learn from and connect with students from different faith and belief backgrounds in an inclusive, non-assessed educational space

Timetable

Session 1: October 16th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Introduction

Session 2: October 23th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
What is truth?

Session 3: November 6th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
What is justice?

Session 4: November 13th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
What is the good life?

Session 5: November 20th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
How can religion influence a fairer economic system?

Session 6: November 27th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
How should the Government engage with faith communities?

Session 7: December 2nd, 11:00am to 2:00pm
Exploring tools for leadership across difference

Find out more and apply here.

The programme is open to all current LSE students, of all faiths and none.

The deadline is Monday 9th October 2023.



Module 2: Religion & Climate Change

The window for action to turn things around and avert the worst of the climate breakdown is rapidly shrinking. Faith communities are a major but neglected source for mobilization, action, and new imaginings of our relationship with nature. Faith-based organisations own 8% of the habitable land surface, 5% of all commercial forests, 50% of the schools in the world and 10% of world's total financial institutions. These can all be mobilised in line with the theologies of stewardship and sustainability we find in all the world faiths.

This module will highlight the action of faith leaders and faith-based NGOs, explore religious teaching on themes of climate change through scriptural reasoning, and allow you to think about your modes of influence within the communities you are part of.

- Gain knowledge of the diverse ways in which faith communities and organisations can effect meaningful global change
- Gain understanding of the links between theological motivation and localised faith community action
- Engage critically with multiple spiritual perspectives and how this relates to one's own faith and inter-group engagement

- Learn from and connect with students from different faith and belief backgrounds in an inclusive, non-assessed educational space

Timetable

Session 1: January 22nd, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Introduction to Religion and Climate Change

Session 2: January 29th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Exploring climate theologies

Session 3: February 5th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Mobilising faith-based climate action

Session 4: February 12th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Spirituality in a time of eco-crisis and anxiety

Closing Session: February 17th, 2:00pm - 3:00pm
Exploring tools for leadership during crisis

Find out more and apply here.

The programme is open to all current LSE students, of all faiths and none.

The deadline is Monday 15th January 2024.



Module 3: Conflict Transformation

LSE brings together students from across the globe with diverse worldviews, faiths and experiences. This creates a space for unique collaborations but also potential for tensions. A core mission of the Faith Centre is to address religion-related conflict (note: not simply "religious conflict") that LSE students have experienced, been formed by, and continue to encounter in their futures after university.

We want to equip students to be effective peacemakers when they graduate, understanding the complexities of religion-related conflict and drawing on religious ways of seeking peace.

This module will explore some of the key tools and perspectives necessary to understand effective conflict transformation, through workshops, dialogue activities and expert panels.

- Develop skills and tools to navigate conflict effectively
- Build skills in interfaith dialogue through group discussions and engage critically with our interfaith ethos
- Recognise the importance of patience and imagination and how these apply to peacebuilding

- Gain understanding of the connection between personal conflict, religious imaginations and wider systems of conflict

Timetable

Session 1: February 26th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Introduction to Conflict Transformation

Session 2: March 4th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm

How to be an agent in your own conflict - Tools for storytelling

Session 3: March 11th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Peacebuilders panel

Session 4: March 18th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Facilitating those in conflict - Tools for negotiation

Session 5: March 23rd, 11:00am to 2:00pm

Facilitating those in conflict - Habits of a reconciler

Find out more and apply here.

The programme is open to all current LSE students, of all faiths and none.

The deadline is Monday 15th January 2024.



Our Programme Alumni

Through participating in the Beecken Faith & Leadership Programme you join a global network of over 400 alumni who are extending the impact of the Faith Centre through their work, communities and leadership across difference.



Jack Palmer-White

Anglican Communion Permanent Representative to the United Nations
MSc Religion in the Contemporary World, 2015

"Having the opportunity to participate in the life and work of the LSE Faith Centre during my studies was a hugely beneficial experience. It was a space to understand and contextualise much of what I studied, and added a richness to my time at LSE."



Joseph Good

Communications Director for the UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation
MSc International Affairs, 2018

"Getting involved with the Faith Centre was unquestionably a highlight of my time at LSE. I thoroughly enjoyed the number of thought-provoking lectures put on there, the Israel and Palestine trip, and the overall camaraderie I experienced. I cannot recommend the Faith Centre highly enough!"



Josefhine Chitra

Senior Manager of Public Affairs at Gojek
MSc Development Management, 2016

"As a Buddhist minority citizen of Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, my participation in the Interfaith Encounter programme challenged my conviction about what I knew about conflict. I learnt that holding our narratives dearly without trying to understand the grievances of the opposite side is not helpful in reducing hostility."



Esohe Uwadiae

Institutional Equity Manager, Office for Institutional Equity, University of East London
LLB Bachelor of Laws, 2017

"The Faith Centre has allowed me to understand – and see first-hand – how subjects such as theology, politics and history intersect, and the impact of this intersection in the modern world. I've been able to make strong friendships with people I was unlikely to have ever met, across programmes, backgrounds and ages."

Our research unit

Religion & Global Society

Working at the nexus between research and practice, our research is contributing significantly to the social scientific understanding of religion and its applications across multiple fields and disciplines. Our team of researchers are currently working on religious pluralism, women of faith in peacebuilding, and faith and climate change. Find out more at lse.ac.uk/rgs.

RGS Blog

Our research blog is a platform for academics and other expert commentators to share their insights on this complex, wide-reaching topic. The blog platforms LSE research on religion, alongside contributions from academics, politicians, journalists, charity workers, faith leaders, and more. If you'd like to write for us, get in touch with our editor Flora at f.d.rustamova@lse.ac.uk, or find out more at blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionandglobalsociety

RGS Seminar Series

Each term we invite academics, from both within and outside LSE, who are working on religions to

deliver an interactive seminar. The series promote cross-disciplinary research and introduce new methodologies to the study of religion and global society. The seminars are open to all at LSE and upcoming events are listed [here](#).

Religion Scholars Network

The LSE Religion Scholars Network is an interdisciplinary network of LSE PhD students and early-career researchers working on a broad range of topics related to religion. We write blogs, share research ideas, host seminar series', and offer a friendly community for anyone working on religions. Find out more at lse.ac.uk/rgs/get-involved

Stay in touch



Wellbeing

LSE has a range of services to support student wellbeing. For many of the Faith Centre's users, practising their faith and spirituality is an integral part of being well and keeping life in balance. But regardless of your faith and belief, taking time away from the noise of campus to pause, tune in or pray is becoming increasingly important in our busy world.

In collaboration with various LSE staff members, Yoga sessions, Mindfulness and Tai Chi are being run in the Faith Centre.

Please click or scan here for our latest timetable for wellbeing at the Faith Centre



Worship

Every week staff and students come together for worship, such as Catholic mass on Wednesdays, ecumenical worship on Thursdays, and Jumma prayers on Fridays. We also host events for religious festivals, memorial services, and

Please click or scan here to find our latest timetable for worship at the Faith Centre



Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to develop new skills and meet new people while making a difference and the LSE Volunteer Centre is here to inspire and empower you to volunteer for causes that you are passionate about during your time at LSE.

The Volunteer Centre works with multiple organisations to provide you with short term and long term volunteering opportunities across London, the UK and internationally.

They also provide one-off volunteering opportunities and run programmes such as the Community Engagement Programme and Student-Led Volunteering Projects scheme.

In addition, students often volunteer through an LSESU society or within their own faith

communities. This may happen independently of the LSE Volunteer Centre but they can still provide excellent resources to support this work. They can help measure the impact of your work, identify funding resources, or promote external charities you work with to raise their profile on campus.

You can find out more, as well as advice and support, at lse.ac.uk/volunteercentre or by following [@LSEVolunteering](https://twitter.com/LSEVolunteering).

If you are interested in finding out more ways you can get involved with volunteering with the LSE Faith Centre as well, particularly around National Interfaith Week in November, contact faithcentre@lse.ac.uk



Faith Centre Spaces

The Desert Room

A multi-faith space for events, worship, and more.

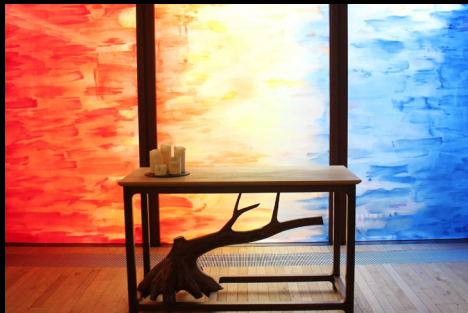
This is a shared space for all LSE staff and students (it is not a space for sleeping, studying, or eating lunch).

The Desert Room is available for booking by LSE faith society officers and LSE staff. Currently it is used for a wide range of activities including:

- Faith society meetings
- Devotion and worship
- Wellbeing programmes, including yoga, mindfulness and tai chi
- Memorial services
- Transformational programmes including our Beecken Faith & Leadership programme
- One-off speaker events and panel discussions

Find us: 2nd floor, SAW Building, 2.02

Please click or scan here
to find the latest Desert
Room timetable and
information about how
to book the space



Faith Centre Spaces

Islamic Prayer Rooms

The prayer rooms are available for our Muslim staff and students to perform their five daily acts of prayer.

Staff and students will be able to use the prayer and ablution facilities as normal, with unrestricted capacity, but we do ask all users of the Faith Centre to continue to wear a face covering (unless medically exempt) throughout the Reception Area, Cave, Ablution Facilities, and Prayer Rooms.

Please get in touch with the Faith Centre team with any questions.

Email: faithcentre@lse.ac.uk

Find us: 2nd floor, SAW building

We regret that the prayer rooms are not for public use. The closest mosque to LSE is Holborn Mosque.



Please click or scan here
for more information
about the Islamic Prayer
Rooms



Faith Centre Spaces

The Cave

The Cave is a silent room for meditation, prayer and reflection located in the Faith Centre.

This space cannot be booked but it is open to all throughout the week.

Users are requested not to take electrical equipment, food or drink into the space. The use of headphones for meditative music is permitted. We ask that the quiet status of the space is respected; it should not be used for sleeping, spoken prayer, singing or conversations.

"I have come and sat in the individual contemplation room when I've needed to think away from the constant hubub of the campus."

Please get in touch with the Faith Centre team with any questions.

Email: faithcentre@lse.ac.uk

Find us: 2nd floor, SAW building



Please click or scan here
for more information
about The Cave



The Faith Centre Team



Revd Canon Prof James Walters

Faith Centre Director and
LSE Chaplain



Jessica Hazrati

Faith Centre and Religion
& Global Society Manager



Flora Rustamova

Communications Officer and
Religion & Global Society Editor



Dr Hanane Benadi

Research Officer, Faith &
Climate Change



Dr Lindsay Simmonds

Research Officer, Women
of Faith & Peacebuilding



Dr Chris Chaplin

Assistant Professorial Research
Fellow



Cameron Howes

Project Manager, Global Religious
Pluralities



Kristian Noll

Project Officer, Global Religious
Pluralities



Manmit Bhambra

Affiliate Consultant



Find out more about our
team [here](#) or get in touch
with faithcentre@lse.ac.uk
for general enquiries

The Faith Centre Associate Chaplains



Rabbi Gavin Broder

Jewish Chaplain

rabbibroder@mychaplancy.co.uk

020 7388 1976



Fr Alexander Fostiropoulos

Orthodox Chaplain

fostiropoulos@clara.net

020 7722 1663



Fr Philip Miller

Catholic Chaplain

frphilip@universitycatholic.net

020 7387 6370



Izabela Hanifah Was

Trainee Muslim Chaplain

freedomee2@gmail.com



Rev Janet Legro

Christian Chaplain

j.legro@lse.ac.uk



Our associate chaplains can help with
pastoral support and spiritual guidance



Find out more about our
team [here](#) or get in touch
with faithcentre@lse.ac.uk
for general enquiries



LSE SU Faith Societies

We are delighted to have strong relationships with the many LSESU Faith Societies. Under the supervision of the LSE Student Union, they run some fantastic student-led initiatives from organising opportunities for collective worship, running social action projects, talks and seminars with experts and faith leaders and celebrations of faith festivals.

We encourage you to explore their social media accounts and webpages listed below.

AhlulBayt Islamic Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/16846/>

Catholic Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/lsecatholicsociety/>

Christian Union

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/christianunion/>

Hindu Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/lsehindusoc/>

Islamic Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/6800/>

Jewish Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/6840/>

Krishna Consciousness Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/6880/>

Redeemed Pillar of Fire Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/19246/>

Sikh Society

<https://www.lsesu.com/communities/societies/group/sikhpunjabsociety/>

We are always seeking opportunities to work with students to run interfaith initiatives and often host faith society committees' meetings. Do get in touch if you have an idea for cross society events or projects by reaching out to faithcentre@lse.ac.uk.



New LSE SU societies may form each year. Please check the [SU website](#) for a full and up-to-date list of societies.

Faith Inclusion at LSE

The Faith Centre is working with teams across LSE to create a fully faith-inclusive campus. This includes delivering requested training aimed at staff and students in positions of responsibility wanting to create a culture of curiosity and engagement around faith and belief at LSE.

The training covers common myths and misconceptions around religious practices, interfaith relations, and the practicalities within halls, responding to challenges on campus and

signposting to relevant services so that every student, regardless of faith or belief, feels safe and supported at LSE.

If you are interested in finding out more, get in touch with the Faith Centre team at faithcentre@lse.ac.uk

The following pages give an overview of the religions that represent students at LSE (listed alphabetically) and an interfaith calendar which can help you plan events and timetables throughout the year.



You may also wish to review the school's religious observance policy, click or scan here for the full list of policies.

Finding support

Finding a new faith community or place of worship to visit

There are many students focused places of worship in London and you may wish to explore a few communities to find one that fits. Faith Centre members of staff are on hand to signpost you to places of worship we have relationships with, and faith societies are often a good source of information – letting you know what is popular with other students.

The LSE Student Counselling Service

The LSE Student Counselling Service sees students from all different backgrounds and recognises the importance and value of faith for many students. The service also recognises that some students may have difficulties as a result of conflicts between their upbringing and current lifestyle and beliefs.

Tel: 020 7852 3627 or ext. 3627

Email: student.counselling@lse.ac.uk

Web: lse.ac.uk/counselling

Report It Stop It

At LSE we want everyone to feel safe and supported on campus. Bullying and harassment of any kind should not be tolerated. If you have experienced an incident of harassment or bullying of any nature on campus, including religiously-motivated harassment either against yourself or someone you know, you can report this

confidentially using LSE's dedicated online form or come and talk to the Faith Centre team.

Find out more at www.info.lse.ac.uk/making-a-choice/report-an-incident

Inform

Inform is an independent charity that aims to help people by providing information about minority religions and alternative, spiritual and esoteric movements that is as accurate, balanced and up-to-date as possible. Inform aims to alleviate unnecessary anxiety about alternative religious movements, while raising awareness of issues that may be problematic. Inform was founded by Professor Eileen Barker in 1988 with the support of the British Home Office and the mainstream churches. It is based at the Theology and Religious Studies Department at King's College,

Buddhism

Beliefs

Buddhism teaches that life is unsatisfactory. Life can be experienced as painful and frustrating, impermanent and fleeting, or insubstantial. When we experience life as unsatisfying, we tend to crave pleasant experiences and avoid disappointing ones. We do this more or less habitually. Our habits tie us into a reactive cycle of craving and aversion. This exhausting

cycle can be broken, when our experience is fully aligned with Reality. The Buddha taught that a way to break this cycle is to practise ethics and meditation, and to cultivate wisdom, which is a deep understanding and acceptance of things as they are.



Customs and Practices

Meditation practices can be divided into Samatha and Vipassana practices. Samatha practices develop calm, concentration and positive emotion

“Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule.”

– Siddhartha Gautama Buddha

and are practised as Mindfulness of Breathing and Development of Loving Kindness (Metta Bhavana). Vipassana practices aim at developing insight into Reality. Developing and cultivating wisdom happens through studying and reflecting the Dharma, the Buddha's teaching. Through study and reflection we deepen our understanding of what Reality is and how we can best live our lives according to that. understanding. Buddhist ethics is an ethics of intention in which the key principle is non-violence.

Buddhists celebrate a number of festivals timed to the full moon: Parinirvana Day in February, Buddha Day (Wesak), Dharma Day in July, Padmasambhava Day and Sangha Day. All are important events to celebrate together and to contemplate key teachings of the Buddha.



Christianity

Beliefs

Christians believe that God became fully present in the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. A Jew himself, he summarised the law as loving God and neighbour. But he extended the message of God's redemption to all people and Christians believe that in dying on the Cross, he made himself a sacrifice to reconcile all humanity with its creator. They believe he rose from the dead and has sent the Spirit of God to renew and inspire people in the world today.

Consequently, Christians have a distinctive understanding of God as a trinity – Father (Creator), Son (Redeemer), and Holy Spirit (Sustainer) – while still emphasising the unity of God.

Customs and Practices

Somebody becomes a Christian through Baptism (immersion in water) which symbolises a sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is an initiation into the life of the Church which Christians believe to be the body of Christ in the world today. Christians pray, worship and read the Bible together. They also follow Jesus' instruction of taking bread and wine, and declaring it his body and blood offered in sacrifice for all. Jesus was poor and homeless, and was criticised for

“The glory of God is a human being fully alive.”

– St Irenaeus (2nd Century)

associating himself with others who were socially outcast. So Christians believe that as well as teaching others about Jesus they should work for peace and social justice.

The principal Christian festivals are Christmas (celebrated on 25 December by most Christians), when the birth of Jesus is remembered, and Easter (which varies according to the lunar calendar) when Jesus' resurrection from the dead is celebrated.



Hinduism

Beliefs

The term “Hinduism” was coined as recently as the 19th century to cover a wide range of ancient creeds, textual traditions and religious groups. Thus Hinduism has no single founder, doctrine or religious authority. Hinduism is best understood as a complete way of life, a path of sanctification and discipline that leads to a higher level of consciousness. This path is known as Dharma, the ancient law.

Hindus are often thought to be polytheists but most claim to believe in one supreme god who is incarnated in many forms. Hindus

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

revere a body of texts as sacred scriptures known as the Vedas. Veda is a Sanskrit word meaning knowledge and many of these scriptures are concerned with Dharma. Other important texts include the great epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana. The Bhagavad Gita (part of the Mahabharata) is very popular in the West.

Hindus believe that existence is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth, governed by Karma, a concept whereby beneficial effects are derived from past beneficial actions. Hindus believe that the soul passes through a cycle of successive lives and its next incarnation is always dependent on how the previous life was lived.

Customs and Practices

Hindus follow the lunar calendar and particular days are set aside during the week and month to honour particular manifestations of God. The main festivals are celebrated in different ways by different communities. The most commonly celebrated festivals are Diwali, the Festival of Lights, and Navaratri, nine nights which celebrate the triumph of good over evil.



Islam

Beliefs

Islam is an Arabic word which means willing submission to God. The root of the word Islam comes from a word meaning peace and Muslims believe it is the way of peace as laid down in the Quran. The Arabic word Allah means One God, and at the heart of the Muslim faith is belief in the unity and universality of God. Muslims also believe in the unity of mankind, under one father, Adam, and have a strong sense of the Muslim community or Ummah and an awareness of their solidarity with all Muslims worldwide.

Muslims believe that God has sent a succession of prophets such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Jesus, and see Mohammed as the last and final prophet. Mohammed was born in Mecca in 570 CE and received revelations from God through the Angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years. These were recorded in Islam's Holy Book known as the Quran, which is regarded as the literal word of God. Muslims are taught to recite the Quran in Arabic as any translation of the Holy Book is seen as inadequate. Around one fifth of the world's population practises Islam.

Customs and Practices

Islam has five pillars that represent the foundation of Islamic worship and practice:

“Let yourself be drawn by the stronger pull of that which you truly love.”

– Jalad ad-Din Rumi (13th Century Sufi poet)

Shahadah: “There is no God but the one true God and Mohammed is his messenger”. Reciting this with intention three times makes someone a Muslim.

Salat: Prayer five times a day at given times.

Zakat: Two and a half percent of a Muslim's assets over a given specified amount is given in welfare tax to benefit the poor.

Hajj: An annual pilgrimage to Mecca which is a requirement at least once in a lifetime for those who can afford it.

Sawm: During the month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar), Muslims are required to abstain from food, drink and sexual acts from dawn until sunset.



Judaism

Beliefs

The Jewish people believe themselves to be descended from a Semitic tribe that originated in the land of Canaan in the Middle East. Their early history is told in the Hebrew scriptures which recount how God promised to Abraham, a trader and leader of a nomadic tribe, that his descendants would be the father of a great nation. Abraham's grandson Jacob had 12 sons who became ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were enslaved in Egypt and the book of Exodus tells how they were liberated under the leadership of Moses. For many years they wandered in the wilderness, during which time God revealed to Moses the Torah, or Law, which constitutes the Jewish way of life. After Moses' death the tribes eventually conquered the Promised Land with the help of God.

Study and interpretation of the Torah is an integral part of Jewish life. It covers family relationships, social interaction and good commercial practice,

as well as setting out the religious rituals that are still celebrated today. In the modern world the vast majority of

“The pure righteous do not complain of the dark, but increase the light; they do not complain of evil, but increase justice; they do not complain of ignorance, but increase wisdom.”

– Rav Kook (20th Century)

Jews are less than fully observant and there is a broad spectrum within the Jewish community from orthodox, to reform, to entirely secular.

Customs and Practices

The Jewish Sabbath begins on Friday evening at sunset and is an important time when families gather for the Shabbat meal. Orthodox Jews will not drive or carry out domestic chores during the Sabbath.

There are five festivals on which observant Jews are forbidden to work. The New Year (Rosh Hashanah) falls in the autumn and is followed ten days later by the most solemn day of the year, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The other major festivals are known as the three pilgrim festivals: Passover (Pesach) in the spring, Pentecost (Shavuot) which occurs seven weeks later and Tabernacles (Sukkot) which takes place in the autumn.



Atheism & Humanism

“My country is the world, and my religion is to do good.”

– Thomas Paine, The Rights of Man, 1791

Beliefs

Atheism is the absence of belief in a god or gods. Atheist perspectives vary from those who may practice a religion but not believe in God (including most Buddhists) to those who take a thoroughly materialist view of life and see the universe as an exclusively natural phenomenon requiring no ultimate explanation.

Atheist humanists adopt a set of moral and ethical standpoints which hold that humanity flourishes best when people abandon transcendent beliefs and trust only in the scientific method to understand the world. They seek to build common values founded in autonomy and moral equality.

Secularism is a set of arrangements to accommodate religious and non-religious diversity which often requires that religious commitments remain purely private and do not impact in any way on non-believers. LSE is a secular university in the sense that it

seeks not to privilege or discriminate against any group on the grounds of their religious beliefs or lack of them.

Customs and Practices

Atheists, secularists and humanists (ASHs) think that an ethical way of life comes from within all of us and extends to all people, irrespective of their chosen lifestyles or personal decisions. Therefore, customs and practices of ASHs are determined on a personal basis, with the foundations of reason and compassion at the centre. Thus, there are no practices



Sikhism

Beliefs

The Sikh faith was revealed through the teachings of the ten Gurus, the first of whom was Guru Nanak Dev Ji, born in 1469 CE in the Punjab. In 1708 the 10th and the last Guru in human form, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, vested spiritual authority in the Holy Sikh scriptures known as the Guru Granth Sahib Ji and temporal authority in the community of initiated Sikhs, the Khalsa Panth.

Sikhs strictly believe that there is one God. While being absolute and beyond human comprehension, God can be realised and experienced through contemplation and service. The object of a Sikh's life is to develop God consciousness and ultimately to receive God's grace.

Customs and Practices

The Sikh faith was revealed through the teachings of the ten Gurus, the first of whom was

“Without contentment, we are never fulfilled. Like vapid dreams, our goals and efforts are in vain.”

– Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, born in 1469 CE in the Punjab. In 1708 the 10th and the last Guru in human form, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, vested spiritual authority in the Holy Sikh scriptures known as the Guru Granth Sahib Ji and temporal authority in the community of initiated Sikhs, the Khalsa Panth.

Sikhs strictly believe that there is one God. While being absolute and beyond human comprehension, God can be realised and experienced through contemplation and service. The object of a Sikh's life is to develop God consciousness and ultimately to receive God's grace.



Winter Term 2023-24 Religious Festival Dates

We encourage you to share greetings with your students when there is a festival they are participating in.

If you have any questions or you'd like some more information, get in touch with us at faithcentre@lse.ac.uk

[Click here for a printer-friendly version of the calendar](#)

September 2023

Friday 15th - Sunday 17th September
Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)

Sunday 24th - Monday 25th September
Yom Kippur (Judaism)

Friday 29th September - Friday 6th October
Sukkot (Judaism)

October 2023

Sunday 15th - Monday 23rd October
Navratri (Hinduism)

Tuesday 24th October
Dussehra (Hinduism)

November 2023

Sunday 12th November
Divali/Deepavali (Hinduism)

Sunday 12th November
Divali/Bandi Chhor (Sikhism)

Sunday 12th - Sunday 19th November
Interfaith Week

Monday 27th November
Birthday of Guru Nanak (Sikhism)

December 2023

Sunday 3rd December
Advent Sunday (Western Churches)

Thursday 7th - Friday 15th December
Hanukkah (Judaism)

Monday 25th December
Christmas Day (Western Churches)

Spring Term 2023-24 Religious Festival Dates

We encourage you to share greetings with your students when there is a festival they are participating in.

If you have any questions or you'd like some more information, get in touch with us at faithcentre@lse.ac.uk

[Click here for a printer-friendly version of the calendar](#)

*Some dates are subject to change depending on the lunar sightings

January 2024

Saturday 6th - Sunday 7th January
Christmas Day (Orthodox Churches)

Sunday 14th January
New Year (Orthodox Churches)

Wednesday 17th January
Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikhism)

March 2024

Monday 11th March - Wednesday 10th April*
Ramadan (Islam)

Sunday 24th March
Purim (Judaism)

Monday 25th - Wednesday 27th March
Hola Mohalla (Sikhism)

Friday 19th March
Good Friday (Western Churches)

Sunday 31st March
Easter Sunday (Western Churches)

February 2024

Wednesday 14th February
Ash Wednesday (Western Churches)

Thursday 15th February
Nirvana Day (Buddhism)

April 2024

Monday 11th March - Wednesday 10th April*
Ramadan (Islam)

Saturday 6th April*
Laylat-ul-Qadr (Islam)

Tuesday 9th/Wednesday 10th April*
Eid al-Fitr (Islam)

Saturday 13th April
Vaisakhi/Baisakhi (Sikhism)

Friday 14th April
Good Friday (Orthodox Churches)

Sunday 16th April
Easter Sunday (Orthodox Churches)

Monday 22nd - Tuesday 30th April
Pesach/Passover (Judaism)

Summer Term 2023-24 Religious Festival Dates

We encourage you to share greetings with your students when there is a festival they are participating in.

If you have any questions or you'd like some more information, get in touch with us at faithcentre@lse.ac.uk

[Click here for a printer-friendly version of the calendar](#)

May 2024

Thursday 9th May
Ascension Day (Christianity)

Sunday 19th May
Pentecost (Christianity)

Wednesday 22nd May
Wesak Day/Buddha Day (Buddhism)

Thursday 23 May
Guru Arjan Shaheed (Sikhism)

July 2024

Friday 19th July
New Year (Islam)

Sunday 21st July
Dharma Day (Buddhism)

Sunday 28th July
Day of Ashura (Islam)

June 2024

Wednesday 12th June
Shavout (Judaism)

Friday 21st June
Shavout (Judaism)

Wednesday 26th June - Monday 1st July
Hajj (Islam)

Thursday 27th June
Day of 'Arafah (Islam)

Friday 28th June
Eid al-Adha (Islam)

August 2024

Monday 12th - Tuesday 13th August
Fast of Tish'a B'Av (Judaism)