



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

# Religion and Belief Guide

## 2019/20





*Dr Georgette Bennett of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding speaking at the Faith Centre.*

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# Welcome



Religion continues to be present in the public sphere today in ways that many had not anticipated, shaping lives, communities and nations dramatically all around our world. In a university that gathers

people from 150 countries and every imaginable faith tradition, the LSE Faith Centre models an accommodation of robust religious pluralism within our staff and student bodies, as well as setting a strong agenda for developing the religious literacy and interfaith understanding that is so urgently needed in the wider world.

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 look forward to welcoming you during your time at the School.

**Revd Canon Dr James Walters**  
Chaplain and Director of the Faith Centre



# Interfaith Ambassadors



Interfaith Ambassadors runs throughout Michaelmas and Lent and is a chance to plan and lead on interfaith activities, events and social action. Our ambassadors work in a diverse team across faiths, backgrounds, courses and genders to expand the conversation on faith and belief across campus.

Highlights of last year included planning Interfaith Week in November, running social activities across student faith societies, and creative feedback sessions on how we can improve the experiences of students of faith at LSE. Ambassador roles include coordinating, communications and facilitation.

If you are interested in applying to be an Interfaith Ambassador, email [faithcentre@lse.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentre@lse.ac.uk) or look at the Programmes page of the Faith Centre website: [info.lse.ac.uk/currentstudents/Faith-Centre/Programmes](http://info.lse.ac.uk/currentstudents/Faith-Centre/Programmes)

# Interfaith Buddies

If you are new to LSE and interested in making new friends from different backgrounds and from all around the world then Interfaith Buddies is the programme for you! It is a great opportunity to meet fellow students and embark on interfaith dialogue around topics on anything from worship to food, and religion in current affairs today. The programme involves informal dialogue in small facilitated groups on campus on a weekly basis

and is designed to fit around your schedule throughout the Michaelmas term. It is open to everyone of all faiths and none.

This introductory programme is all about exploring views within and between faiths in order to build relationships and transform attitudes. Interested? Email the Faith Centre team on [faithcentre@lse.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentre@lse.ac.uk)



# Scriptural Reasoning

During term time the LSE Faith Centre runs weekly Scriptural Reasoning sessions. Scriptural Reasoning is a developing global practice where people of different faiths come together to read and reflect on their scriptures side-by-side.

Reading, listening to, and reflecting on scripture is something many do naturally within their own worshipping communities. Participants in Scriptural Reasoning are not asked to leave that behind, rather to share those reflections and practices with those who hold different assumptions and perspectives.

It is not about seeking agreement but rather learning to “disagree well”. The result is often a deeper understanding of one’s own and others’ scriptures, as well as the development of strong personal friendships across faith communities.

If you would like to participate in Scriptural Reasoning please email [c.howes@lse.ac.uk](mailto:c.howes@lse.ac.uk) for more information.



# Faith and Climate Action

Faith and Climate Action is new this year. Running throughout Michaelmas, the programme seeks to develop faith-inspired, student-led initiatives across religious differences which will address the major issue of our time. If you are passionate about the environment, worried about the climate crisis and interested in learning more about how faith resources can inform action, apply for this programme.

The programme will include:

Six 2-hour seminar sessions run weekly in Michaelmas covering:

- The environmental crisis and why faith is important in this conversation

- The wisdom we can gain from faith resources across religious difference
- The causes of the crisis and the alternative systems
- Mapping faith and interfaith initiatives locally and globally
- Addressing controversies, scepticism and accountability.

For more information on these programmes and on other opportunities taking place at the Faith Centre, take a look at the Programmes pages on the Faith Centre website.



Credit: UN Photo/Martine Perret

# Interfaith Encounter

Interfaith Encounter brings together students from different backgrounds for a unique experience of understanding and addressing interreligious conflict. The purpose of the trip is to look at the three religious traditions of this highly contested region of the world to see how they underpin today's conflict, but also how they might contribute to its resolution.

During the week-long trip to Israel-Palestine we visit major sites of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths, and meet with local people working for peace across religious divides.

Find out more information on our social media and Programmes pages of the Faith Centre website or ask at the Faith Centre reception.



# Faith and Leadership

Keen to improve your knowledge of world faiths, reflect on your own faith and leadership, and receive practical leadership training? Our flagship Faith and Leadership course runs on eight Monday evenings throughout Lent Term, including one residential weekend.

It involves:

- Short, creative introductions to the main world faith traditions from expert scholars and community leaders.

- Consideration of the changing dynamics of religion in the world today and evolving models of secularism and religious pluralism.
- Training in conflict skills, reflective practice, community organising, communications and situational mapping.
- Sessions with leaders in different sectors from business, law, politics and the media and from a range of different faith backgrounds.



# Our Programme Alumni



## **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.



## **Josephine Chitra**

Communications Specialist  
at the World Resources Institute

**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.



## **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!



## **Esohe Uwadiae**

Faculty Administrator at Regent's  
University 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.

# Faith Centre Spaces

## SACRED DESERT

The theme of the LSE Faith Centre is the “sacred desert”. The desert is a place of spiritual significance in nearly all the world religions. From the ancient Hindu traditions of the Thar Desert of Rajasthan to the origins of the Judeo-Christian tradition at Sinai, the desert has been experienced as a place of profound religious intensity. Crucially, the nomadic tradition of the desert reflects the need for space to be shared and not colonised.

But the desert has also been a place of interreligious encounter, not least through commerce along trade routes. So our “sacred

desert” is a place of stillness for all people, a place where different religious groups can “set up camp” for a while, but also a place for all to encounter people of other faiths, to hear their stories, to share hospitality and to converse about the issues of the day.

The Faith Centre is home to the Desert Room for bookings by student faith societies, Islamic prayer rooms and the Cave for silent reflection and prayer.

Check out our website for further details:  
[info.lse.ac.uk/Current-Students/Faith-Centre/Faith-Centre-Spaces](http://info.lse.ac.uk/Current-Students/Faith-Centre/Faith-Centre-Spaces)



# Wellbeing in the Faith Centre

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.

The Cave in the Faith Centre is also available to LSE staff and students who need a quiet place on campus for reflection or prayer. This space cannot be booked but is open to all throughout the week.

## HATHA YOGA

Hatha yoga is a classic yoga style to get fit and encourage a healthy mind-body connection aiding with relaxing the body and fighting stress.

Open to LSE staff and PhD students.

Cost is £8 per session.

Contact: Yan Hinrichsen  
[Y.Hinrichsen@lse.ac.uk](mailto:Y.Hinrichsen@lse.ac.uk)

## ASHTANGA YOGA

This method of yoga involves synchronizing the breath with a progressive series of postures to purify and detoxify muscles and organs. The result is improved circulation, a light and strong body, and a calm mind.

Open to LSE students and staff.

Cost is £5 per session.

Contact: Dimitris Thomopoulos  
[londonashtanga@gmail.com](mailto:londonashtanga@gmail.com)

## TAI CHI

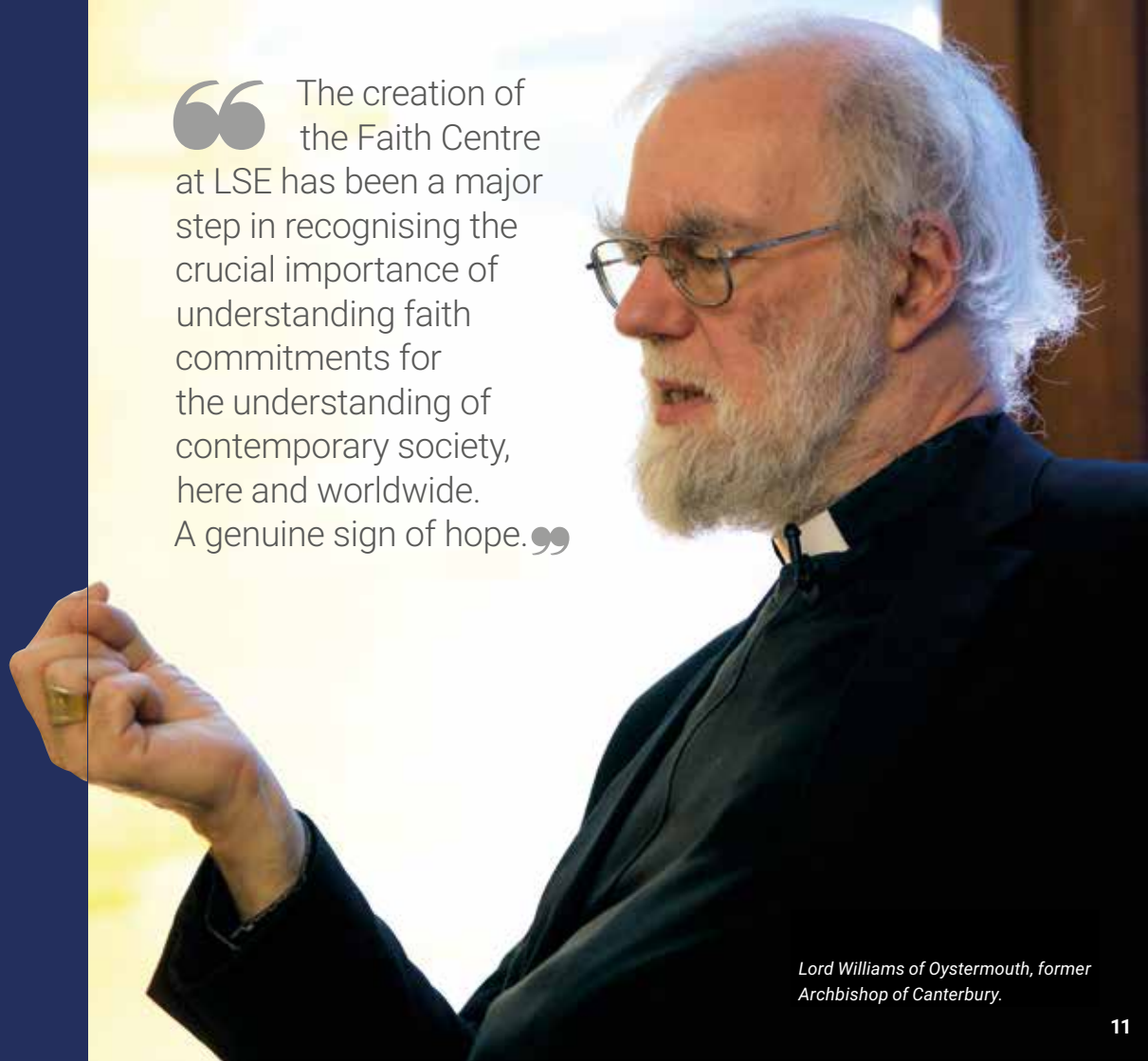
Tai chi is a classic Chinese method of exercise for health, self-defence and spiritual growth, the practice improves posture, coordination, flexibility and balance.

Open to LSE staff and students.

Cost £5 if a minimum of 4 sessions is booked or £7 ad hoc.

Contact: Ines Alonso-Garcia  
[i.alonso-garcia@lse.ac.uk](mailto:i.alonso-garcia@lse.ac.uk)

“ The creation of the Faith Centre at LSE has been a major step in recognising the crucial importance of understanding faith commitments for the understanding of contemporary society, here and worldwide. A genuine sign of hope.”



*Lord Williams of Oystermouth, former Archbishop of Canterbury.*

# 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.

It 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](mailto:faithcentre@lse.ac.uk)



# Religion and Global Society

The Religion and Global Society project is the home of LSE's interdisciplinary engagement with religion.

The **Religion and Global Society** blog promotes an understanding of religion and its relevance in world affairs. We facilitate a research-led public conversation in which our contributors demonstrate how a genuine awareness and exploration of religion is of both scholarly and practical benefit, as well as the ways in which religion can either inspire or hinder positive social change.

Through our online articles and on-campus public events, academics and other experts from LSE and beyond contribute to a rich conversation which challenges our assumptions regarding religion in the twenty-first century.

RGS has also launched the **Religion Scholars Network**, an interdisciplinary group of LSE PhD students and early-career researchers working on a broad range of topics related to the social and political scientific study of religion.

Join the debate at [lse.ac.uk/rgs](http://lse.ac.uk/rgs)



*Tobias Cremer and Dr Zubaida Haque discussing Religion and Populism at the LSE Festival 2019 chaired by Faith Centre Director James Walters.*

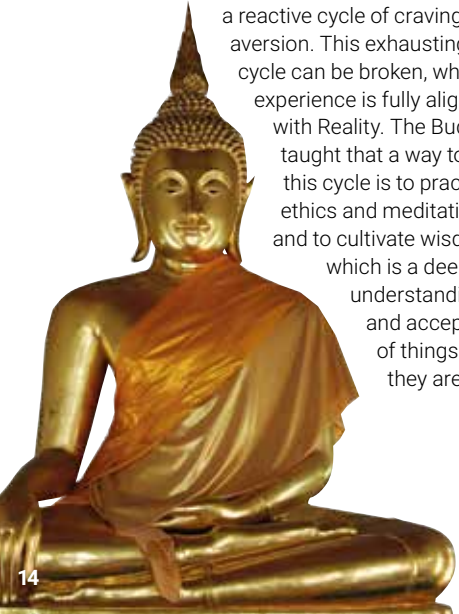


# Buddhism

## 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.



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

**Siddhārtha Gautama Buddha**

## CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES

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

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Check out current information on Buddhist groups and meditation through the Students' Union.



# Christianity

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

St Irenaeus (2nd century)

## 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 associating himself with others who were socially outcast. So Christians believe that as well as teaching others about Jesus they

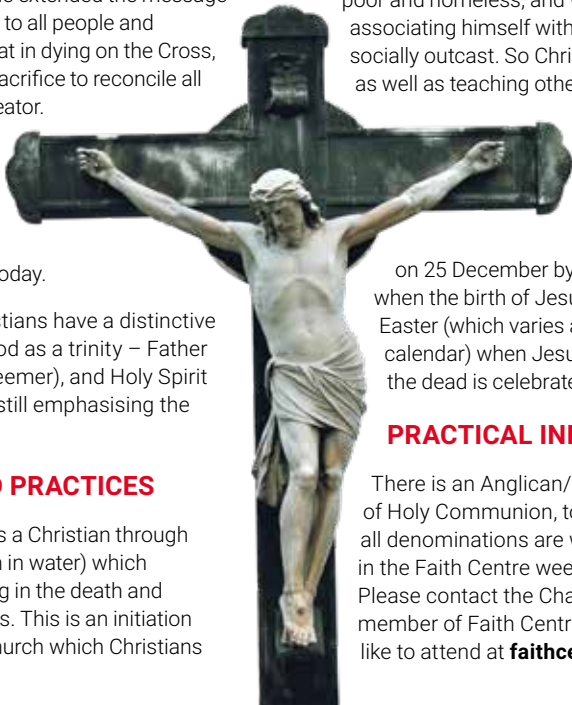
should work for peace and social justice.

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.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

There is an Anglican/Episcopalian service of Holy Communion, to which Christians of all denominations are welcome, celebrated in the Faith Centre weekly in term time. Please contact the Chaplain or another member of Faith Centre staff if you would like to attend at [faithcentre@lse.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentre@lse.ac.uk)



## CHRISTIAN UNION

The Christian Union's mission statement is to "know Christ and make Him known". We seek to give every student at LSE an opportunity to hear about the Good News of Jesus Christ. In addition to outward focused events, we meet regularly on Thursdays at 6pm in the Faith Centre for CU central meetings, designed to encourage and equip us for evangelism.

The Christian Union also holds Mandarin and Korean speaking meetings in the Faith Centre.

Email: [lsecu@gmail.com](mailto:lsecu@gmail.com)

## CATHOLIC SOCIETY

We bring together Roman Catholics at LSE on Wednesdays in the Faith Centre: 11am Confessions and Drop-In Session with Father Stephen; 12.15pm Mass; 1pm Lunch; 1.20pm Faith Formation and Visiting Speakers. We also hold socials, retreats, Rosary meetings and other events, and work in the local community, for example volunteering at St Patrick's soup kitchen in Soho. We work with Newman House, the Catholic Chaplaincy to London universities, which provides us with our Catholic Chaplain at LSE, Fr Stephen Wang, Senior Chaplain in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster.

Tel: 020 7387 6370

Email: [swang@universitycatholic.net](mailto:swang@universitycatholic.net)

Find the **LSESU Catholic Society** on [Facebook](#)

## THE ANCHORAGE

The Anchorage is a church for students interested in exploring the Christian faith in community, through study and worship and in acts of service. It is run by the Church of England and meets at 5pm in the Faith Centre on Sundays in term. For more information visit [theanchorage.london.org](http://theanchorage.london.org) or find us on [Facebook](#).

## LSE GOSPEL SOCIETY

We are students who love Jesus and want to know Him more. Together, we'll grow in our faith-walk at university. We meet regularly throughout the year and worship with a Spirit-focused expression. We also hold several outreach events such as our annual "Night With The Gospel" event with world-renowned gospel stars! Come and find out more by contacting the LSE Students Union, LSE Faith Centre or via the LSE Gospel Society page on [Facebook](#).

# ॐ 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



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

**Mahatma Gandhi**

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 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.

Email: [hindu@llesu.org](mailto:hindu@llesu.org)

Find the **LSE Hindu Society** on  Facebook



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

Jalal ad-Din Rumi (13th century Sufi poet)

## 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:

- **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.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Prayer facilities for LSE staff and students are located in the Faith Centre.

Jumma prayers are at 1.15pm on Fridays in the Venue (basement of Saw Swee Hock Student Centre).

## MOSQUES NEAR LSE HALLS OF RESIDENCE

- **Bankside:** Bait-ul-Aziz Islamic Cultural Centre, 1 Dickens Square (off Harper Road), London SE1 4JL
- **Rosebery Avenue:** Holborn Muslim Community Association, 33 Brookes Court, Baldwin Gardens, London EC1N 7RR
- **Passfield:** Islamic Cultural and Education Centre, 68 Churchway, Somers Town, London NW1 1LT
- **High Holborn:** LSE Prayer Room

- **Carr-Saunders:** Muslim World League, 46 Goodge Street, London W1T 4LX

## ISLAMIC SOCIETY

The award-winning LSE SU Islamic Society is one of the most active and diverse societies on campus. We offer a wide variety of services for Muslims and Non-Muslims alike – from talks, socials and sports, to interfaith and charity events, as well as mentoring and spiritual activities! Opportunities are provided to gain a greater knowledge and understanding on this much-discussed global faith.

Email: [islamicsociety@lsesu.org](mailto:islamicsociety@lsesu.org)

Find the **LSE Islamic Society** on  Facebook



# Judaism

“ 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 Rabbi)**

## 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 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.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Kosher lunches are available on the 4th floor of the Old Building and the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre. Kosher sandwiches are available in the nearby Sainsbury's and at the Daily Grind in Pankhurst House.

Most of the community life happens in North West London, in Golders Green and Hendon. There is a Chabad centre at Marble Arch.

## JEWISH SOCIETY

The Jewish Society at LSE is non-denominational and cross-communal so welcomes students of all affiliations. The society is also part of the London J-Socs which means that many events are run together with other Jewish societies throughout London.

Rabbi Gavin Broder, the Jewish chaplain to London universities, is available for one-to-one chats and welfare support and works with the Jewish Society and the UJS helping to support and run student events.

Email: [Jewishsoc@lseu.org](mailto:Jewishsoc@lseu.org)

Find the **LSE Jewish Society** on  Facebook

Rabbi Broder

Email: [rabbibroder@mychaplancy.co.uk](mailto:rabbibroder@mychaplancy.co.uk)

Tel: 020 7388 1976





## 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.



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

**Guru Nanak**

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 10th Guru, Gobind Singh Ji, reaffirmed the abolition of distinctions of caste, colour, race and religion. He made it obligatory for initiated Sikhs to share Amrit (holy water), to adopt the same religious name of Singh (lion) for men and Kaur (princess) for women, and to wear five articles of faith, commonly known as the five Ks: Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (a small wooden comb), Kara (an iron/steel bangle), Kirpan (a short sword for defence) and Kachhera (special shorts). Although not mentioned in the five articles of faith, the Daastar (turban) is an essential accompaniment, which is worn to maintain the sanctity of Kesh and is treated with utmost respect. The Guru instructed Sikhs to abstain from tobacco, drugs and intoxicants. The Guru also instructed Sikhs to contribute a minimum one 10th of their wealth, mind and body for charitable causes.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

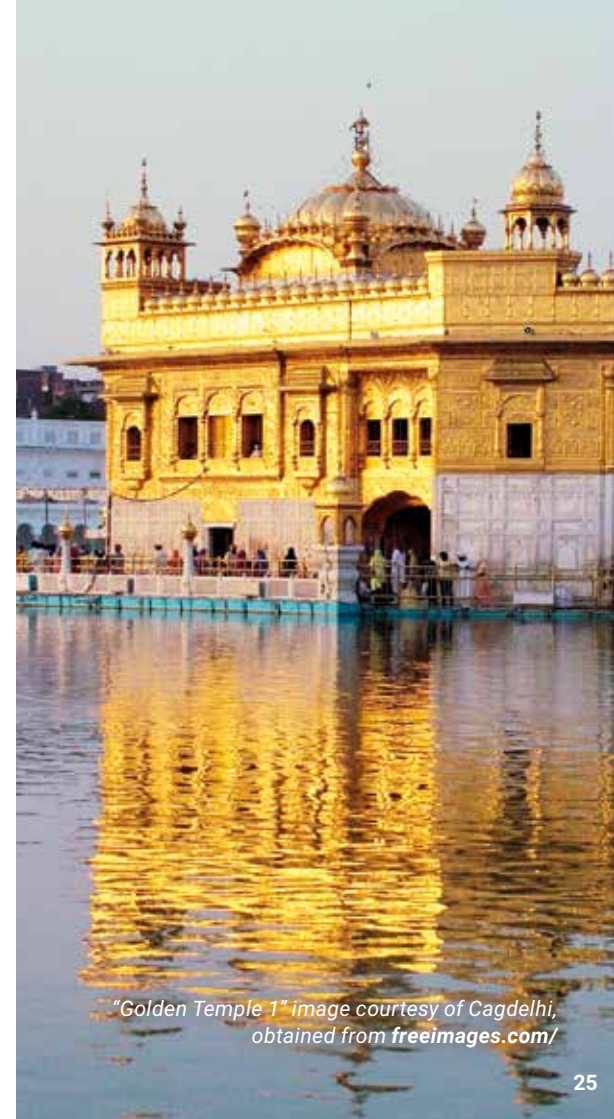
Prayer rooms change so contact the LSE Sikh-Punjab Society for more information. There is a great deal of collaboration amongst the London University Sikh societies.

Nearest Gurdwara: Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha), 58-62 Queensdale Road, Shepherds Bush, London W11 4SG.

Please note that non-vegetarian items served in the university restaurants may be halal or kosher.

Email: [sikh-punjab@lseu.org](mailto:sikh-punjab@lseu.org)

Find the **LSE Sikh-Punjab Society** on  Facebook



*“Golden Temple 1” image courtesy of Cagdelhi,  
obtained from [freemages.com/](https://www.freemages.com/)*

# Atheism and Humanism

## 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.

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

**Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, 1791**

## 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 that make someone more or less of an ASH.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Many LSE students come from places where criticism and scepticism towards religion is heavily constrained. The LSE Faith Centre is fundamentally committed to the universal right to freedom of religion and belief (including atheism) and is keen to encourage and support those who have experienced oppression in a majority religious culture and may be returning there after their studies. Non-religious students take part in all of the Faith Centre programmes.



# Finding Support

At LSE we take a positive view of the role religion can play in individual and community life. But religion can also have a damaging effect. There are a number of sources of support beyond the Faith Centre team if you are having concerns or difficulties in relation to a religious community:

## 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](mailto:student.counselling@lse.ac.uk)

Web: [lse.ac.uk/counselling](http://lse.ac.uk/counselling)



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, London.

Tel: 020 7848 1132




Email: [inform@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:inform@kcl.ac.uk)

## 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 [lse.ac.uk/makingachoice](http://lse.ac.uk/makingachoice)

# Interfaith Calendar 2019/20

|                              |  Buddhism |  Christianity   |  Hinduism  |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| August – November 2019       |  | <b>Assumption/Dormition</b><br><b>15 August</b><br><i>Commemorates glorification of Jesus' mother</i>  | <b>Navaratri</b><br><b>29 September – 8 October</b><br><i>Symbolises triumph of good over evil</i><br><br><b>Dussehra</b><br><b>7 October</b><br><i>Rama's victory over evil</i><br><br><b>Diwali</b><br><b>27 October</b><br><i>Festival of lights</i> |
| December 2019 – January 2020 |  | <b>Christmas Day</b><br><b>25 December</b><br><b>(7 January Orthodox)</b><br><i>Birth of Jesus</i>   |   |
| February – April 2020        | <b>Parinirvana Day</b><br><b>15 February</b><br><i>Anniversary of Buddha's death</i>         | <b>Ash Wednesday</b><br><b>26 February</b><br><i>First day of lent</i><br><br><b>Good Friday</b><br><b>10 April</b><br><i>Death of Jesus</i><br><br><b>Easter Sunday</b><br><b>12 April</b><br><i>Resurrection of Jesus</i><br><br><b>Easter (Orthodox)</b><br><b>19 April</b><br><i>Resurrection of Jesus</i> | <b>Holi</b><br><b>9-10 March</b><br><i>Spring festival</i><br><br><b>Ram Navami</b><br><b>2 April</b><br><i>Birth of Lord Ram</i><br><br><b>Swaminarayan Jayanti</b><br><b>2 April</b><br><i>Birth of Swaminarayan</i>                                  |



|                              |  Islam  |  Judaism   |  Sikhism   | Other notable dates  |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| August – November 2019       | <p><b>Hajj</b><br/>9-14 August<br/><i>Annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca</i></p> <p><b>Eid al-Adha</b><br/>11-15 August<br/><i>Festival of Sacrifice</i></p> <p><b>Ashura</b><br/>9-10 September<br/><i>Day of fasting (esp Shia)</i></p> | <p><b>Rosh Hashanah</b><br/>29 September – 1 October<br/><i>Jewish New Year</i></p> <p><b>Yom Kippur</b><br/>8-9 October<br/><i>Day of Atonement</i></p> <p><b>Sukkot</b><br/>13-20 October<br/><i>Feast of Tabernacles</i></p> | <p><b>Bandi Chhor Divas</b><br/>27 October<br/><i>Day of Liberation</i></p> <p><b>Birthday of Guru Nanak</b><br/>12 November<br/><i>The founder of Sikhism</i></p>    | <p><b>Remembrance Day</b><br/>11 November</p> <p><b>Interfaith Week</b><br/>10-17 November</p> |
| December 2019 – January 2020 |  | <p><b>Hanukkah</b><br/>22-30 December<br/><i>Festival of Lights</i></p>   | <p><b>Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh</b><br/>2 January<br/><i>10th Sikh Guru</i></p>   | <p><b>Holocaust Memorial Day</b><br/>27 January</p>  |
| February – April 2020        |  | <p><b>Purim</b><br/>9-10 March<br/><i>Jewish people saved by courage of Esther</i></p> <p><b>Pesach</b><br/>8-16 April<br/><i>Commemorates liberation from Egypt</i></p>  | <p><b>Hola Mohalla</b><br/>10 March<br/><i>Reminding people of valour and defensive preparedness</i></p> <p><b>Vaisakhi</b><br/>13 April<br/><i>Sikh New Year</i></p> | <p><b>International Women's Day</b><br/>8 March</p>  |

|                       |  Buddhism  |  Christianity   |  Hinduism  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|
| May – July 2020       | <p><b>Wesak or Buddha Day</b><br/>30 April<br/><i>Celebration of the Buddha's birthday</i></p> <p><b>Dharma Day</b><br/>5 July<br/><i>Buddha's first teaching</i></p> | <p><b>Ascension</b><br/>21 May<br/><i>Jesus's ascension into heaven</i></p> <p><b>Pentecost/Whitsun</b><br/>31 May<br/><i>Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church</i></p> |   |
| August – October 2020 |   | <p><b>Assumption/Dormition</b><br/>15 August<br/><i>Commemorates glorification of Jesus' mother</i></p>  | <p><b>Navaratri</b><br/>17-25 October<br/><i>Symbolises triumph of good over evil</i></p> <p><b>Dussehra</b><br/>25 October<br/><i>Rama's victory over evil</i></p> |

# Religious Observance Policy

|                       | Islam  | Judaism  | Sikhism  | Other notable dates                          |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| May – July 2020       | <p><b>Ramadan</b><br/>23 April – 23 May<br/>Month of fasting</p> <p><b>Eid-ul-Fitr</b><br/>23-24 May<br/>Celebrates end of Ramadan</p>   | <p><b>Shavuot</b><br/>28-30 May<br/>Harvest Festival</p>   | <p><b>Guru Arjan</b><br/>16 June<br/>Martyrdom of Guru Arjan</p> | <p><b>World Humanist Day</b><br/>21 June</p> |
| August – October 2020 | <p><b>Hajj</b><br/>28 July – 2 August<br/>Annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca</p> <p><b>Eid-ul-Adha</b><br/>30 July – 3 August<br/>Festival of Sacrifice</p> <p><b>Ashura</b><br/>28-29 August<br/>Day of fasting (esp Shia)</p> | <p><b>Tisha B'Av</b><br/>29-30 July<br/>Day of Mourning</p> <p><b>Rosh Hashanah</b><br/>18-20 September<br/>Jewish New Year</p> <p><b>Yom Kippur-</b><br/>27-28 September<br/>Day of Atonement</p> <p><b>Sukkot</b><br/>2-9 October<br/>Feast of Tabernacles</p> |  |  |

Festivals in the Jewish Calendar begin on the sunset of the previous day.

Islamic festivals begin with the sighting of the moon.

If you are planning an event or timetabling a lecture/class at LSE and are concerned that a religious festival might impact on attendees, you are welcome to contact the team for advice ([faithcentre@lse.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentre@lse.ac.uk)).

Timetabling is always a tricky business! But we do our best not to disadvantage those who have religious obligations at particular times. This policy has been agreed to help ensure that.

The School must have due regard to the removal or minimising of disadvantage suffered by people with a relevant protected characteristic and foster good relations between people protected by the Equality Act. Although timetabling is done in a neutral fashion, it may potentially disadvantage certain students because of the obligations of their religion and belief. LSE is therefore required to redress this unless it can be justified as a proportionate means to achieving a legitimate aim eg, it is the only time slot without any clashes.

1 There are three categories of events which the policy addresses:

- timetabled teaching events;
- timetabled examinations;
- other events organised by the School or Department, eg, awards ceremonies, orientation or public events.

2 As far as practicable, teaching and assessment or School-wide events should not be scheduled at the following times:

- Friday lunchtimes – Muslim prayer time, 1-2pm.
- Friday afternoons after 3pm in Michaelmas and Lent terms – Jewish Sabbath.

3 Where events are scheduled at these times alternative methods of accessing the information should be provided eg, classes or seminars at alternative times, lecture capture, podcasts or notes and handouts. Lecture capture remains at the discretion of individual faculty members and is not affected by this policy.

4 Where examinations are scheduled during religious festivals students are encouraged to inform Registry so that alternative arrangements can be investigated and implemented where possible (ie, current practice should apply).

5 Those students who wish to observe the Jewish Sabbath but who have a long journey which means they may not get home before sunset may submit a request for an adjustment.



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

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**[info.lse.ac.uk/Current-Students/Faith-Centre](http://info.lse.ac.uk/Current-Students/Faith-Centre)**

