KEBLE AT LARGE

**THEOLOGY AND RELIGION**

APPLICATION GUIDE

https://lh4.googleusercontent.com/cgzbTaKLX_mVSRL6gGJBvo9U4X4q9P4XBYsW-NO5eVS3aLlOxbmBf0TzrcFk98oARnTGozjkO7i7gTXLWCA6c3Sfq5qbCU0xIhkh8zhw6Y-6qyLOFzUwJlN7hXxYzm7KErsN2W-2

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| **Deadline for applying through UCAS** | **15th October 2016** |
| **A-Level requirements** | **AAA**  *There are no specific subject requirements for Theology. Applicants have been known to apply for Theology from straight sciences at A-Level.*  *AA/AAB in Advanced Highers* |
| **IB requirements** | **38-40 including core points** |
| **Aptitude test?** | **No**  *However, candidates are required to enter 2 essays from their A-Level course with teacher’s comments* |
| **Course length** | **3 years** |
| **Qualification** | **BA Theology** |

**UCAS Application**

* You can find the UCAS website at https://www.ucas.com/
* Bear in mind that applying to Oxford for any subject has an earlier deadline than the UCAS deadline in January.
* Teacher’s references: Your teacher will submit a reference about you to UCAS. It is a chance for them to say positive things about your attitude to learning and your performance as a student. Although some colleges dismiss the importance of the reference, they do get read.
* All of your academic and extracurricular achievements get entered into UCAS. This will include your GCSE and A-level grades.
* Remember that academic results are considered in light of your school’s performance. For example, tutor’s will take note of GCSE results that outperform the average from your school, even if you have a lower number of A\*s than other applicants.
* Therefore, there is no specific GCSE grade requirement for an Oxford place, although all applicants must meet an: AAA offer at A level (or equivalent)
* There is no work experience requirement for Theology – although Work experience may offer something exciting to discuss on your personal statement or interview, do not worry if you can’t find any.

**Personal Statement**

* The first thing to say about a personal statement is that it is not the most important thing in the world. The tutors will be conscious that some applicants will have a lot more help than others in compiling their statements and therefore will see them within the context of results and interview.
* In Theology, your personal statement is your opportunity to show that you love your subject and would love your degree. Tutors look for an individual who has taken independent steps to follow their passion for theology. Therefore you should use your personal statement to discuss books and experiences beyond your syllabus
* Books- sometimes people wrongly think that the way to get into Oxford is to put many, many books on their personal statements. (This is not necessary, I put 2 or 3). The important thing with the books on your statement is that you have read them thoroughly, as you could be asked questions on them in your interview (therefore, it could be better to keep them short). On top of this, when mentioning a book in your personal statement do not merely name drop but describe what you personally gained and thought about it. Tutors want to have individual thinkers and you should show that.
* Do not be afraid of showing off- your personal statement is one of the only moments in your life when it is completely justified to show off about everything! It is not the place to be humble or self-deprecating. The tutors will only know how wonderful you are if you tell them.
* There are many ways to write a personal statement and so I won’t suggest one way is superior to another. The best advice I got, however, for mine was to have a theme throughout. This meant that my statement was not made up of distinct paragraphs but flowed succinctly. Also it is important to have a good start and end. The statements are skimmed through by tutors and these are bits that are always read!
* Extra-curricular activities- if you have done something exceptional write it on your statement. However, do not use a large portion (of very few words) to talk about your other interests. You may be on the netball team but you are applying for theology! Here though I must share the anecdote that one friend of mine finished her personal statement with the line- ‘My experience of pain and travel on gold DofE helped me understand the hardships the first wandering disciples went through.’

**Recommendations for Reading**

* Read beyond your A-Level course- every Tom, Dick and Harry applying for Theology knows about the Cosmological argument or the Problem of Evil. Use your reading time to explore something beyond your A-Level course that greatly interests you and you want to find out more about. It’s so much easier to get excited about something your interested in. Use articles to find out what this is.
* Don’t worry about reading too much- academic books are hard to read, especially round a busy sixth-form schedule. When you get to university you’ll quickly pick up the skills to read quickly and efficiently. Therefore don’t worry too much if you haven’t read every single theology book. As I said above, 2 or 3 full books is enough for your personal statement. On top of this, read parts of books just to dip your toe in and see if your interested.
* Current affairs- keep up-to-date with what’s going on in the world of religion. At the moment religion is playing a significant role in the world. Know all about it.
* Specific suggestions: The Guardian website’s Religion section; Alister McGrath’s ‘Christian Theology: An Introduction’; Original religious texts, such as the Bible or the Koran.

**Interview**

* The content: Theology interviews are comprised of one general interview and one interview discussing an extract.
* The General interview: the format of this differs between colleges and tutors. Often tutors ask questions raised or connected to subjects brought up in the candidate’s personal statement. This is where you must know everything on your statement inside out. Every book (and chapter) should be familiar. The tutors do not ask questions on facts but probe to see how you think about something. Practise talking with teachers, friends and even yourself before hand so that you can sustain speech.
* The extract interview: The candidate will receive the extract 10-15 minutes before the interview and will be asked to comment on relevant features. The extract (or extracts) will be related to theology, often from the Bible or Early church writings. You’re not expected to know the piece before. If you do, it’s a bonus but the tutors will not be asking you about factual information.
* The Tutors are not trying to catch you out! We have all heard the horror stories of Oxbridge interviews where candidates have been stumped. In reality the tutors really want to see what you are capable of and will try their best to do that. The worst thing you can do is to be silent. The best thing to do is to listen to their question, take a moment to think and answer as best you can.
* Current affairs: It is worth knowing what’s going on when you take your interview. Although the Tutors won’t be testing your factual knowledge they may ask questions on current events.

**Further Questions?**

If you have any further questions, please don’t hesitate to e-mail Keble at Large at kebleatlarge@outlook.com