**Module : Culture(s)/ Civilization(s)**

**Academic year : 2021-2022**

**Lecture Six : Religion in Britain**

**Religion in the United Kingdom**, and in the countries that preceded it, has been dominated for over 1,000 years by various forms of [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity), replacing [Celtic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Celtic_religion) and [Anglo-Saxon paganism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_paganism) as the primary religion. According to the [2011 Census](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_Census_2011), which asks the question "What is your religion?", [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) is the largest religion, followed by [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), [Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism), [Sikhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism), [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) and [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) in terms of number of adherents. Among Christians, [Anglicans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglicanism) are the most common denomination, followed by the [Catholics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholics), [Presbyterians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterians), [Methodists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodists) and [Baptists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptists)

According to the 2011 British Census, 25.1% of the British population does not affiliate with any religion.1 Of those who are religious, 59.5% are Christian, 4.8% are Muslim and 1.5% are Hindu.2 Other religions make up 1.9% and 7.2% did not give an answer. Each country within the United Kingdom has its own Church (e.g. The Church of England). Interestingly, despite the fact that almost 70% of the population claim a religion in the national Census, other recent polls have strongly indicated that less than half of the total population believes in God.

The official religion of the United Kingdom is Christianity, with the [Church of England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England) being the [state church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_religion) of its largest constituent region, England. The [Church of England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England) is neither fully Reformed (Protestant) or fully Catholic. The [Monarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy_of_the_United_Kingdom) of the United Kingdom is the [Supreme Governor of the Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Governor_of_the_Church_of_England). Some British people and organisations in the United Kingdom, such as [Humanists UK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanists_UK), hold the view that the UK should become a [secular state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secular_state), with no official or established religion.

The following table summarises the statistics of the different religions in UK.

Census 2011

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ligion** | **England**[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_Kingdom" \l "cite_note-ew2011-1) | | **Wales**[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_Kingdom" \l "cite_note-ew2011-1) | | **England and Wales**[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_Kingdom" \l "cite_note-ew2011-1) | | **Scotland**[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_Kingdom" \l "cite_note-s2011-2) | | **Great Britain** | | **Northern Ireland**[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_Kingdom" \l "cite_note-44)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_Kingdom#cite_note-ni2011-3) | | **United Kingdom** | |
| **Number** | **%** | **Number** | **%** | **Number** | **%** | **Number** | **%** | **Number** | **%** | **Number** | **%** | **Number** | **%** |
| [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity_in_Britain) | 31,479,876 | 59.4 | 1,763,299 | 57.6 | 33,243,175 | 59.3 | 2,850,199 | 53.8 | 36,093,374 | 58.8 | 1,490,588 | 82.3 | 37,583,962 | 59.5 |
| [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_Kingdom) | 2,660,116 | 5.0 | 45,950 | 1.5 | 2,706,066 | 4.8 | 76,737 | 1.4 | 2,782,803 | 4.5 | 3,832 | 0.21 | 2,786,635 | 4.4 |
| [Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_in_the_United_Kingdom) | 806,199 | 1.5 | 10,434 | 0.34 | 816,633 | 1.5 | 16,379 | 0.3 | 833,012 | 1.4 | 2,382 | 0.13 | 835,394 | 1.3 |
| [Sikhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism_in_the_United_Kingdom) | 420,196 | 0.8 | 2,962 | 0.1 | 423,158 | 0.8 | 9,055 | 0.2 | 432,213 | 0.7 | 216 | 0.01 | 432,429 | 0.7 |
| [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_United_Kingdom) | 261,282 | 0.5 | 2,064 | 0.1 | 263,346 | 0.5 | 5,887 | 0.1 | 269,233 | 0.4 | 335 | 0.02 | 269,568 | 0.4 |
| [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_in_the_United_Kingdom) | 238,626 | 0.5 | 9,117 | 0.3 | 247,743 | 0.4 | 12,795 | 0.2 | 260,538 | 0.4 | 1,046 | 0.06 | 261,584 | 0.4 |
| Other religion | 227,825 | 0.4 | 12,705 | 0.4 | 240,530 | 0.4 | 15,196 | 0.3 | 255,726 | 0.4 | 7,048 | 0.39 | 262,774 | 0.4 |
| [No religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irreligion_in_the_United_Kingdom) | 13,114,232 | 24.7 | 982,997 | 32.1 | 14,097,229 | 25.1 | 1,941,116 | 36.7 | 16,038,345 | 26.1 | 183,164 | 10.1 | 16,221,509 | 25.7 |
| Religion not stated | 3,804,104 | 7.2 | 233,928 | 7.6 | 4,038,032 | 7.2 | 368,039 | 7.0 | 4,406,071 | 7.2 | 122,252 | 6.8 | 4,528,323 | 7.2 |
| Total population | 53,012,456 | 100.0 | 3,063,456 | 100.0 | 56,075,912 | 100.0 | 5,295,403 | 100.0 | 61,371,315 | 100.0 | 1,810,863 | 100.0 | 63,182,178 | 100.0 |

[**Islam**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) is now the second largest religion in the [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_of_Great_Britain_and_Northern_Ireland), with results from the [United Kingdom 2011 Census](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_2011_Census) giving the UK [Muslim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) population in 2011 as 2,516,000, 4.4% of the total population,[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_Kingdom#cite_note-census11-1) while more recent Office of National Statistics sources have it in 2018 as 3,372,966 in [Great Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Britain) alone.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_Kingdom#cite_note-4) The vast majority of Muslims in the United Kingdom live in [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England): 2,660,116 (4.3% of the population). 76,737 Muslims live in [Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland) (1.45%), 45,950 in [Wales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wales) (1.50%). London has the greatest population of Muslims in the country.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_Kingdom#cite_note-EW_Census_2011-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_Kingdom#cite_note-Scot_Census_2011-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_Kingdom#cite_note-NI_Census_2011-7) The vast majority of Muslims in United Kingdom adhere to [Sunni Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni_Islam),[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_Kingdom#cite_note-8) while smaller numbers are associated with [Shia Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia_Islam).