



CHTH 233/333

Public Theology: Faith in the Public Square

Distance/Campus Course Description

Lecturer: Prof David Tombs

Brief Introduction

How can theology speak into the public square on public issues in ways that are both faithful and effective? We will look at the challenges faced by a public theology in Aotearoa and some of the resources available to meet these challenges. We will explore how Eleanor Catton's *The Luminaries* can help raise past and present public issues and examine contemporary issues including #MeToo, #Church Too, and the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care. The sort of questions we shall explore are:

- What does it mean to talk of doing theology in the 'public square'?
- What challenges arise when seeking to do public theology in Aotearoa?
- How can theology contribute to thinking about past and present public issues?

Assessment

This paper is fully internally assessed. There is no examination.

CHTH 233: Two essays or projects (2,000 words, 30% each); a third essay or project (2,500 words, 40%).

CHTH 333: Two essays or projects (2,000 words, 30% each); a third essay or project (3,000 words, 40%).

Teaching schedule

The **campus class** will be taught through 2hr classes each week.

The **distance class** will be taught through 5 video-conferences, plus a teaching day. Most video-conferences are 1 hr 50 mins but the first is just 50 mins. The teaching day is either in-person in Wellington, or online (depending on travel restrictions).

Timetable details are available at <https://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/timetable>

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the paper at 300-level should be able to:

- Describe what scholars mean by 'public theology' and show how it draws upon the central tenets of the Christian faith
- Develop skills in showing the relevance of Scripture and Christian tradition to matters of contemporary public concern.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relations between the church, context, and public theology.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how theology can contribute to public debate around an issue of current concern in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Students who successfully complete the paper at 400-level should be able to:

- Develop a more critical analysis of the principles underpinning theological engagement around contemporary issues
- Demonstrate self-critical reflection on one's own arguments

For more information

Please direct any administrative enquiries to the Theology Administrator:

theology@otago.ac.nz Phone: 03 479 863