



CHTH111

Doing Theology

Distance Course Outline 2022

SEMESTER 1 2022

Course Coordinator:

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Welcome to CHTH111: Doing Theology, an 18-point, core paper in Christian Thought and History that forms an essential part of studies in theology. The course introduces you to the essential themes of Christian theology. It should help you to think wisely, faithfully, and constructively about God and all things as they relate to God.

LECTURER'S INTRODUCTION

Your paper coordinator for this paper is Chris Holmes, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Otago. Chris is the author of many book chapters and scholarly articles on various Christian doctrines and theologians, as well as the author of five books. His most recent book is *A Theology of the Christian Life: Imitating and Participating in God* (Baker Academic, 2021).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. A sound grasp of the main themes of Christian theology, notably Jesus Christ, the Trinity, salvation, creation, and the last things;
2. Recognition of the difference Christian faith makes for all aspects of life;
3. Appreciation of the moral and spiritual dimension of theological study.

How will these Learning Outcomes be achieved?

1. By exploring a “big picture” view of Holy Scripture and the Christian tradition in dialogue with Alister McGrath’s text *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.);
2. By contemplating the shape of a good life;
3. By participating in discussions in (1) the videoconferences, (2) three online discussion windows, and (3) by writing responses to challenging questions in the essay and in the final examination.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course consists of **six modules** as follows:

1. **MODULE 1, What is Theology?** (VC #1, Reading: McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.), xviii-xxviii & ch. 1, pp. 1–18, & ch. 2, pp. 19–38; Studyguide, Module 1)
 - 1.1 What is theology?
 - 1.2 ‘God-talk’ and Revelation
 - 1.3 Faith Thinking
 - 1.4 Natural and Revealed Knowledge: What is the Difference?

Scriptures to be read for Module 1: Matthew 22:34-40; Exodus 20:1-21; Psalm 19
2. **MODULE 2, Who is Jesus?** (VC #2, Reading: McGrath, *Theology: The Basics*, ch. 4, pp. 61–81; Studyguide Module 2; & Calvin, “Christ Assumed the True Substance of Human Flesh” and “How the Two Natures of the Mediator Make One Person” in *Calvin’s Institutes: Abridged Edition*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 52–55. **You will find this reading from Calvin in eReserve on Blackboard.**)
 - 2.1 Jesus in the New Testament
 - 2.2 Fully Human
 - 2.3 Fully Divine
 - 2.4 One Person

Scriptures to be read for Module 2: John 11:1-44; 20:1-28

3. **MODULE 3, The Trinity** (VC #3, Reading: McGrath, *Theology: The Basics*, ch. 6, pp. 105–126 & ch. 7, pp. 127–149; Studyguide Module 3; & John Calvin, “In Scripture, From the Creation Onward, We are Taught One Essence of God, Which Contains Three Persons,” in *Calvin’s Institutes: Abridged Edition*, ed. Donald McKim (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 16–21. **You will find this reading from Calvin in eReserve via Blackboard.**)
- 3.1 Who is the Holy Spirit?
 - 3.2 The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life
 - 3.3 Rethinking God: the Trinity
 - 3.4 4th Century Trinitarian Theology

Scriptures to be read for Module 3: John 14:15-31; Genesis 18:1-15

4. **MODULE 4, Salvation and the Church** (VC #4, Reading: McGrath, *Theology: The Basics*, ch. 5, pp. 82–104 & ch. 8, pp. 150–169 & ch. 9, pp. 170–190; Studyguide Module 4)
- 4.1 Salvation and Jesus Christ
 - 4.2 Images of Salvation
 - 4.3 Salvation and the Christian Church
 - 4.4 Salvation and the Sacraments

Scriptures to be read for Module 4: 2 Kings 5:1-19; Ezekiel 37:1-14

5. **MODULE 5, Creation** (VC #5, Reading: McGrath, *Theology: The Basics*, ch. 3, pp. 39–60; Studyguide Module 5; Winston Halapua, *Waves of God’s Embrace: Sacred Perspectives from the Ocean*, ch. 7, pp. 79-95; Māori Marsden, *The Woven Universe, Rangatiratanga me te Kāwanatanga*, pp. 106-18)
- 5.1 God the Creator
 - 5.2 Humanity as Created
 - 5.3 Humanity and Sin
 - 5.4 The Doctrine of Providence

Scriptures to be read for Module 5: Acts 17:16-133; Isaiah 42; Hosea 11

6. **MODULE 6, Last Things** (VC #6, Reading: McGrath, *Theology: The Basics*, ch. 10, pp. 191–209; Studyguide Module 6)
- 6.1 Salvation in the End
 - 6.2 The Hope of Heaven

Scriptures to be read for Module 6: Revelation (all of it ☺); Habakkuk 3

- Six Modules taught over six videoconferences

ASSESSMENT

- One written assignment (35%), online discussions (15%), and a 3-hour final examination (50%)

RESOURCES

- Blackboard, the University's online learning tool;
- This Course Outline and the Study Guide;
- eReserve, a resource for electronic readings, which you can access via Blackboard; all the readings for this course are found on eReserve
- The Programme's "Style Guide" which recommends students use the 16th edition of the *Chicago Style Guide* when writing essays. It is available online at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>
- The handbook *Distance Learning Information and Support 2020*, providing advice on administrative matters not covered in this Course Outline and on the Distance Library Service. (You may download the PDF from the 'Essential Information' web page).

THIS IS IMPORTANT!

Please Note: You **must have access to Blackboard and your University email address** in order to complete this paper. You will receive access once your enrolment is complete. Communications from your lecturer regarding teaching matters will be provided only through Blackboard and your University email address, as outlined in the University's Student Communications Policy, so you must check these emails regularly. eVision will also send important messages through your University email. If you have any concerns about your access to Blackboard or to other course resources, please contact the lecturer or administrative staff immediately so that these can be resolved.

You will find there is a lot of helpful information and resources on the Theology Programme website. In particular, we require you to read the section called "Essential Student Information." You will find it here:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

This page provides a number of useful resources such as the Style Guide and the Plagiarism Declaration Form you must attach to your assignments. It supplies detailed information on assessment and student support. In particular, it contains guidance on the topics of plagiarism and deadlines, both of which can incur penalties if not heeded. This also is where you will find instructions for making online discussion posts and submitting assignments electronically. So it is very important you make yourself familiar with this material. Our assumption is that you have read it.

We will make reference to information on the website in the following pages, so do take the time to follow the links and absorb the material. It will save you from making costly mistakes and help to make the practical experience of distance study a straightforward one.

VIDEOCONFERENCES

Distance study requires students to accept a high level of responsibility for their own study. Success is most easily achieved by students who are self-motivated, who engage readily in self-directed study, and who prepare well for the videoconferences. The videoconferences will not cover all the material in each module. Instead, they will focus on some of the key themes and provide opportunity for interaction between students and the course teacher. Much of the learning will take place as you work through the Study Guide modules and readings on your own.

Accessing the Videoconferences

Please see the 'Zoom Information' link on Blackboard and the 'Essential Information' web page for instructions on how to access Zoom and join in the videoconference sessions. The URL you need to join the sessions is posted under 'Zoom Information.'

Schedule of Videoconferences

Videoconference sessions will be held on Mondays as below:

| SESSION | DATE & MODULE | TIME |
|---------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 28-February/Module #1 | 18:10-19:30 |
| 2 | 14-March/Module #2 | 18:10-19:30 |
| 3 | 28-March/Module #3 | 18:10-19:30 |
| 4 | 11-Apr/ Module #4 | 18:10-19:30 |
| 5 | 9-May/Module #5 | 18:10-19:30 |
| 6 | 23-May/Module #6 | 18:10-19:30 |

Attendance at the Videoconferences

Attending videoconferences is a requirement of taking this course. If you are obliged by circumstances beyond your control to miss one, you may find a recording of the proceedings of the Videoconference on Blackboard under the Zoom Videoconferences Link.

Online Activities (in three 'windows')

For all of these online activities you will use the discussion board function on Blackboard, but as you will see not all of these activities are simple discussions. In

each of the three 'windows' you will choose one of two activities, and in that activity you will make two substantive posts that will be assessed. (Note you must choose only one activity.)

Even though you will be assessed individually, do think of yourselves as working as a group to create something that is worthwhile and effective. You might think of this as a virtual tutorial in which you discuss the issues at hand with your classmates.

A post of around 150 words is perfectly acceptable; please don't go over 300 words. Each window will be marked out of 5. Here is a guide to how your posts will be marked; it will indicate what I am looking for...

| Mark | Description |
|------|---|
| 5 | This is exceptionally good. I can tell that you have done some excellent reading and thinking. Your post is relevant, creative, intelligent, and accurate. |
| 4 | This is a solid post. It doesn't have quite the flair or the intuition of a 5, but it is still good. It is accurate and knowledgeable, with no errors or misunderstandings. |
| 3 | This is certainly passable. You have shown good effort but the post may contain an error or misunderstanding, something that suggests you haven't fully grasped the subject. |
| 2 | Your post is either too brief to do justice to the subject or it is badly wrong in at least one aspect. It is not convincing. It does not convey much in the way of independent reading or critical thinking. |
| 1 | I'm sorry to say that this is substandard. It is severely off-track, or inadequate in its content, or fundamentally mistaken. It conveys that you haven't understood the subject very well at all. |

Once each round of posts has been assessed you will find your mark in the 'Grade Centre' section of Blackboard.

As you construct your posts, please observe the following guidelines, and refer if need be to the 'Essential Information' web page for guidance with the online discussion tasks:

1. Keep your posts relevant, focused and to the point. You don't have to write everything you know about a topic. The purpose is to engage with your fellow

students to build a fruitful conversation together. Try not to dominate the discussion; give others space.

2. Electronic discussion is prone to misunderstanding, and it is reasonably easy to cause offence without intending to. So, choose your words carefully and precisely, giving thought to how they might be received. Feel free to use emoticons – they are an important way of conveying tone. And don't take offence too quickly – perceived slights may not be real or intended. If you don't understand what someone has said online, ask them to clarify it. If that doesn't resolve the matter, contact me directly.
3. I welcome and encourage humour, but please make it in good taste. Your posts can be informal in their tone, creative and fun.

In each 'window' there are two activities to choose from. You might think of these studies as an exercise in creative writing. Even though it is not academic prose, it still conveys to me whether or not you have understood the doctrine and the focus of the activity. Let me clearly signal, then, that I will reward creative writing. What I want to see is that you have engaged with the issues and understood them, so you have lots of room to move around in and be creative.

You will find the technical instructions you need for making your posts in the next section: Course Administration. Meanwhile, here are the online activities...

WINDOW 1 (Module #1): THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY IN THEOLOGY? (5%)

6:00am Monday, 7 March to Sunday, 13 March

Choose ONE of the two options:

Option #1

Consider the following question and post a response to the question (maximum 300 words) on Blackboard. Furthermore, write a reply to a post written by someone else (maximum 300 words).

Question: Māori Marsden writes in his essay *Rangatiratanga me te Kāwanatanga*, "As we think we live." How and why should the Bible (the sacred Scriptures of Old and New Testaments) determine theological thinking and living?

Essentially you are contemplating the question of **authority** in Theology. Xxvi–xxviii and ch. 1 of McGrath's *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.) are essential to your being an informed participant in this discussion. Please refer to McGrath in your post(s).

Option #2

Consider the following question and post a response to the question (maximum 300 words) on Blackboard. Furthermore, write a reply to a post written by someone else (maximum 300 words).

Question: In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” How does theological study help us to fulfil these two commandments?

Please refer to Module #1 of the Studyguide in your post.

WINDOW 2 (MODULE #4): SALVATION (5%)

6am Monday 2 May to 11pm Sunday 8 May

Choose ONE of the following two options:

Option #1

Consider the following statement and post a response to the statement (maximum 300 words) on Blackboard. Furthermore, write a reply to a post written by someone else (maximum 300 words).

Discussion: St Augustine (354–430), Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, wrote: “If Christ had not been put to death, death would not have died.” Discuss this statement. See McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.), 103.

Essentially you are contemplating the doctrine of salvation. Ch. 5 of McGrath’s *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.) as well as Module #4 of the Studyguide are essential to your being an informed participant in this discussion. I would strongly encourage you to refer to them in your post(s).

Option #2

Consider the following question and post a response to the question (maximum 300 words) on Blackboard. Furthermore, write a reply to a post written by someone else (maximum 300 words).

Question: Is the church necessary for Christian life?

Let Module #4.3 of the Studyguide and chs. 8 & 9 of McGrath’s *Christian Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.) inform your discussion. Indeed, refer to them in your post(s).

WINDOW 3 (MODULE #6): CREATION AND THE LAST THINGS (5%)

6am Monday, 23 May to 11pm Sunday, 29 May

Choose ONE of the following two options:

Option #1

Consider the following question and post a response to the question (maximum 300 words) on Blackboard. Furthermore, write a reply to a post written by someone else (maximum 300 words).

Question: Māori Marsden in his essay *Mātauranga Māori, Mātauranga Pākehā* writes, “An unchanging constant [in the modern urbanized world] is the idea that the most important thing in life is achievement. We no longer ask *who* a person is but what is he in his work/calling/status/position. . . . All-round ability became the supreme virtue; profit, the objection of ambition/struggle/worship; and achievement, the law of the modern efficiency-oriented society.” How does the Christian vision of humanity disrupt the secular vision as described by Marsden?

I would strongly encourage you to refer to Module #5 of the Studyguide and ch. 3 of McGrath’s *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.). Let those readings inform your response.

Option #2

Consider the following question and post a response to the question (maximum 300 words) on Blackboard. Furthermore, write a reply to a post written by someone else (maximum 300 words).

Question: The American theologian (Donald Bloesch) once wrote, “We may perhaps allow for the possibility of universal restoration of the lost, but we must also equally admit the possibility of the fall of unbelieving humanity into nothingness.” Discuss.

I would strongly encourage you to refer to Module #6 of the Studyguide and ch. 10 of McGrath’s *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.), allowing those readings to inform your response.

ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS

Essay (35%)

Length: 1500 words

Due date: Thursday, April 14, midnight

Submission process: via Blackboard

Write an essay, responding to ONE of the following bullet points:

- Working with Reading #4, module 2 of the Studyguide, and ch. 4 of McGrath’s *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.), discuss the scriptural and creedal mystery of the one person of Christ as both truly human and truly divine. Also, discuss how these readings inform and challenge **your** understanding of Jesus Christ.
- Working with Reading #6 (see eReserve), module 3 of the Studyguide, and chs. 6 & 7 of McGrath’s *Theology: The Basics* (4th ed.) discuss the scriptural mystery of the oneness and threeness of the triune God. Also, discuss how the doctrine

of the Trinity **shapes** Christian devotional practice.

Marking Criteria:

Engagement with the topic (Approximately 40%)

The essay should maintain a clear focus on the topic throughout. Begin by introducing the topic; identify the key issues to be considered; develop your discussion of them in a clear and coherent way and draw appropriate conclusions.

Quality of Argument (Approximately 40%)

Ensure that your argument makes sense and is developed in a clear and logical way; ensure that you provide appropriate evidence for your claims and engage intelligently with the study guide and the required readings.

Presentation (Approximately 20%)

Sentence structure and grammar matter. They create an impression of care and intelligence. Moreover, a good essay will acknowledge and reference the sources appropriately.

REFERENCING SYSTEM

For writing essays, the Theology Programme requires that you use the 16th edition of the *Chicago Style Guide*, which is the norm for many academic journals in the humanities and is often recommended for theses in the humanities. The Programme has prepared a Style Guide, which outlines the Chicago Style and offers other advice on essay presentation. You may find it via the Theology Programme's "Student Resources and Information" page:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

SUBMITTING WRITTEN WORK

All assignments shall be submitted **electronically** via the "Assignment" feature on Blackboard by **midnight** on the due dates notified. Please do not submit paper copies. For full instructions about how to submit assignments electronically via Blackboard as well as other important information on plagiarism, grading, and deadlines, please see the "Essential Information" web page.

All Assignments submitted in the Theology Programme must be prefaced with a student Plagiarism Declaration Form (or the plagiarism declaration on Blackboard must be ticked). They will not be deemed to have been submitted unless and until the Plagiarism Declaration Form has been submitted or box ticked. The form can be downloaded from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

It is also on the Blackboard site for this course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity means being honest in your studying and assessments. It is the basis for ethical decision-making and behaviour in an academic context. Academic integrity is informed by the values of honesty, trust, responsibility, fairness, respect and courage. Students are expected to be aware of, and act in accordance with, the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

Academic Misconduct, such as plagiarism or cheating, is a breach of Academic Integrity and is taken very seriously by the University. Types of misconduct include plagiarism, copying, unauthorised collaboration, taking unauthorised material into a test or exam, impersonation, and assisting someone else's misconduct. A more extensive list of the types of academic misconduct and associated processes and penalties is available in the University's Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.

It is your responsibility to be aware of and use acceptable academic practices when completing your assessments. To access the information in the Academic Integrity Policy and learn more, please visit the University's Academic Integrity website at www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity or ask at the Student Learning Centre or Library. If you have any questions, ask your lecturer.

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116838.html>

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116850.html>

STUDENT SUPPORT

The "**Essential Information**" web page provides helpful information on how to access the University Library's resources, as well as a guide to the support services available to students at the University of Otago, including the Student Learning Centre and Disability Support. See <https://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

For all **administrative** enquiries, please contact the Theology Administrator:

Email: theology@otago.ac.nz Phone: 03 479 8639

We recommend that you contact the Programme as soon as possible if you have any problems participating in the course or accessing resources. Please

remember to check your University email account regularly for updates and announcements.

THEOLOGY PROGRAMME

University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand
www.otago.ac.nz/theology