



CHTH111

Doing Theology

Distance Course Outline 2018

SEMESTER 1 2018

Lecturers:

Rev Assoc Prof Chris Holmes
christopher.holmes@otago.ac.nz
 Phone: 03 479 5394

Dr André Muller
andre.muller@otago.ac.nz

Office hours: Please email me.

Welcome to **CHTH 111: Doing Theology**, an 18-point, core paper in Christian Thought and History that forms an essential part of studies in theology. The course is concerned with issues, questions, and themes that are of enormous significance for the study and practice of theology in the contemporary world.

What does the course aim to do?

The course seeks to introduce you to some essential themes involved in the study and practice of Christian theology. It aims to enable you to think wisely, faithfully, and constructively about the major

questions that affect the process of thinking 'Christianly' about God and God's relationship to the world. The course consists of a mixture of biblical and practical reflection, and of a discussion of how some of Christian faith's great thinkers understand the basics.

Theology has always been 'done' in a wide variety of ways. The basic 'method' taken in this class is that of 'open hands'. This is to approach God and God's purposes as made known in the Bible (Holy Scripture) with a teachable spirit. It is to look to God as revealed in Jesus Christ in order to determine how best to talk about God and what life in relationship to God looks like. The basic questions of the course are: 'What and Who is God, What is God doing, and how does the good news of God impact human life?'

In the present context the primary aim is not to attempt a superficial survey of as wide a range of contemporary theological approaches as possible, but to pay attention to core questions and themes with which Christian theology of *any* kind has to grapple.

The main aim of the course is not to try to do everything, but to offer an explicitly 'theological' approach to theology. Thus the course will consider the essential content of Christian belief about the nature of God, Jesus Christ, the human being, salvation, and the last things, all of which are arguably basic to an intelligent grasp of Christian theology. In this cause, our resources will be drawn from a wide range of both historical and contemporary material.

LECTURER'S INTRODUCTION

Your lecturer for this paper is Associate Professor Christopher Holmes, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Otago and an Anglican Priest in the Diocese of Dunedin. He studied Historical and Systematic Theology at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto. Chris is the author of several journal articles and book chapters as well as four books. His latest book is *The Lord is Good: Seeking the God of the Psalter*, published by IVP Academic.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course you should have acquired:

1. A sound grasp of the major questions and themes that Christian theology raises and answers, and be able to describe some of the essential ingredients in responsible theological thinking.
2. An understanding of some essential aspects of a number of core Christian teachings, notably the doctrines of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, creation, the human being, sin, salvation, the church, and the last things.
3. A capacity to discern the connections between these core teachings and the overall logic of Christian thought and practice, and thus to recognize the practical and pastoral character of theological thinking.
4. An ability to engage in a critical yet respectful fashion with diverse opinions, and to articulate informed and coherent theological arguments in the contemporary context.

How will these Learning Outcomes be achieved?

1. By systematic reflection upon foundational concerns in Christian theology.
2. By exploring the key determinants in the emergence of classical Christian themes, biblically and historically.
3. By identifying the logical relationships that naturally exist between Christian claims about God, Christ, and salvation, and asking how such claims may appropriately take shape in practical as well as theoretical ways.
4. By becoming aware of the major phases through which Christian theology has passed historically, and especially the challenges generated by the rise and fall of the 'modern' world.
5. By participating in group discussions of complex issues during the videoconferences and online discussion forums, and by composing written responses to challenging questions in the essay and in the final examination.

TEACHING

- Six videoconference sessions using Zoom
- Online discussions using Blackboard

ASSESSMENT

For this course you must complete **one compulsory written assignment**, three Windows of **online discussion** (each contributing 5% of the final mark), and the **3-hour final examination** at the end of the semester. The first assignment will be worth **25%**, online discussion **15%**, with the examination counting for the remaining **60%**

RESOURCES

- The *Study Guide*, which is in the first half of the Course Book, and is organised into six modules, each of them linked to essential reading. It provides introductory material on each topic, questions and points to ponder, and some suggestions for further study of each topic.
- The *Readings*, printed in the second half of the Course Book. In the modules the readings are numbered according to their order in the readings section. They were selected from a range of authors whose theological contributions and styles of communication are accessible and complementary to the direction adopted in the course.
- This *Course Outline*, which contains information on how the course will be taught and assessed.
- The handbook *Distance Learning: Information and Support, 2018*. (You may download the PDF from the 'Essential Information' web page).
- Blackboard, which is the online learning environment used by the University of Otago. The Blackboard site provides additional resources. Please see the 'Essential Information' webpage for instructions on accessing and using the features of Blackboard.
- The Department's *Study and Style Guide*, which gives guidance on writing assignments, and is available on the 'Essential Information' web page.
- Electronic readings will be available for individual download from the Library's course reserve system, eReserve, and posted in a complete PDF file on Blackboard.
- The Department's '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 Department's 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 *Study and 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.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

Students are strongly encouraged to have their own copy of the following highly recommended text:

Alister E. McGrath, *Theology: The Basics*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2017).

A copy is also available on Close Reserve at the Central Library, and on eReserve.

Alister McGrath is a prolific author of books on Christian theology, both academic and popular. This particular work is among the best introductory texts currently available internationally on the subject. McGrath's book is written in a lucid, well-organized, and inclusive fashion, and contains an excellent overview of virtually all key topics in the study of theology today. It provides very helpful historical surveys of major periods in theology, summaries of key developments and movements, questions for reflection, and a glossary of basic theological terms. The text's sister work (McGrath's larger volume *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2017) is also quite helpful. It is basically an expanded version of *Theology: The Basics*.

A second highly recommended work, of great value for a range of topics covered, which provides a different approach from McGrath is:

Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014). A copy is also available on Close Reserve and eReserve in the Central Library.

The Bible. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books (London: Collins, 1989) is recommended by the Department. This translation attempts to stay reasonably close to the original Hebrew and Greek text, while using contemporary and gender-inclusive language. **(Note that Distance students may not bring an eBook of the Bible into the exam)**

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

1. **What is Theology?** (VC #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?
2. **Who is Jesus?** (VC #2)
 - 2.1 Jesus in the New Testament
 - 2.2 Fully Human
 - 2.3 Fully Divine
 - 2.4 One Person
3. **The Trinity** (VC #3)
 - 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
4. **Salvation and the Church** (VC #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
5. **Creation** (VC #5)
 - 5.1 God the Creator
 - 5.2 Humanity as Created
 - 5.3 Humanity and Sin
 - 5.4 The Doctrine of Providence
6. **Last Things** (VC #6)
 - 6.1 Salvation in the End
 - 6.2 The Hope of Heaven

Each Module consists of the following elements:

1. Introductory orientation
2. A series of additional readings to broaden your engagement with the issues.
3. A number of questions to help to focus your thinking and to encourage close engagement with the substance of the essential arguments.

4. A series of questions specifically for discussion at the videoconferences.
5. Some suggestions for additional reading which you may like to pursue with the aid of library resources.

Note that the questions asked throughout the Course Book are printed in *italics*.

WORKLOAD

Although it is difficult to give a general estimate of overall study time commitment to the paper, it is suggested that you should allow the equivalent of around 8-10 hours per week, averaged over the semester as a whole, for reading, note-making, the preparation of written work, and revision for the final examination. A Work Timetable has been provided as the last page in this outline, which you may tear out and pin to the wall if you wish to.

VIDEOCONFERENCES

Interactive videoconferences enable immediate response from the teacher and other students. They are an excellent forum for discussing the issues raised in each unit and for clarifying any problems you may encounter as you work through the material. For the method to be successful, however, it is essential that everyone participates fully. Videoconferences are not lectures, where the teacher delivers a monologue, nor are they a dialogue with one person in the group. They are intended to be similar to the tutorial meetings that on-campus students attend, and will involve you in both careful listening and appropriate participation. It is essential that you work through the relevant material beforehand.

What will we do at the Videoconferences?

- Your lecturer will give overviews of the key issues and will 'walk' you through study units indicated using some of the questions in *italics* as the basis of discussion.
- You will have an opportunity to clarify anything that is not clear and you will also be given guidance on how to prepare for the examination.

An interchange of views and reactions to the study material is an important aspect of each videoconference. Each participant brings a unique combination of prior experience, study and theological perspective to the videoconference – and each participant is a resource for the group as a whole. In this kind of learning situation it is very important that participants prepare well, not only to master the study material provided but also to be ready to state and support their own viewpoints in dialogue with the whole group.

Schedule of Videoconferences

Videoconferences using Zoom will be held according to the following schedule:

Session 1	Monday February 26	6:10 – 8:00pm
Session 2	Monday March 19	6:10 – 8:00pm
Session 3	Monday April 9	6:10 – 8:00pm
Session 4	Monday April 23	6:10 – 8:00pm

Session 5 Monday May 7 6:10 – 8:00pm

Session 6 Monday May 21 6:10 – 8:00pm

Reflect on the questions in **the Questions for Videoconference** at the end of each Module in your Study Guide.

Accessing the Videoconferences

Please refer to the 'Essential Information' web page and 'Zoom Information' on Blackboard for instructions about accessing Zoom, including the URL you need to join the meetings.

Attendance at these Videoconferences

Attending videoconferences is a requirement of taking this paper. If you are obliged by circumstances beyond your control to miss one, you may find a recording of the proceedings on the CHTH 111 page on Blackboard, under a link on the left hand menu titled: 'Zoom Videoconferences'.

ASSESSMENT

For this course you must complete **one compulsory written assignment**, three Windows of **online discussion** (each contributing **5%** of the final mark), and the **3-hour final examination** at the end of the semester. The first assignment will be worth **25%**, online discussion **15%**, with the examination counting for the remaining **60%**.

The overall pass mark for this paper is 50%. All grading will follow the University's standard scale, which you will find on the 'Essential Information' web page:

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

1. 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 do not have to do both options; choose only one.)

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. In class I will give some feedback on the online activities.

A post of around 150 words is perfectly acceptable; please don't go over 300 words. Both posts 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. There is nothing discordant. 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.

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. Usually one is a standard online discussion, but the other requires more creativity. You might think of these 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 'Essential Information' webpage. Meanwhile, here are the online activities...

WINDOW 1: WHAT IS THEOLOGY?

6:00am Monday March 5th to 11pm Sunday March 11th

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: Is Scripture all you need for theology, or do tradition, the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, and reason also play a role in doing theology?

Essentially you are contemplating the question of **authority** in Theology. R1.1, R1.2, and R1.4 are essential to your being an informed participant in this discussion.

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).

John Calvin writes that "the pious mind does not dream up for itself any god it pleases . . . but is content to hold him [i.e. God] to be as he manifests himself."

Question: Is *true* knowledge of God dependent upon Holy Scripture?

Let Calvin's discussion of the knowledge of God in R1.3 function as a guide and springboard for your discussion.

WINDOW 2: SALVATION

6am Monday 23 April to 11pm Sunday 29 April

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: Does the Son of God need to assume our fallen human flesh in order to redeem it, or are human beings able to save themselves?

Let R.4.1 (an excerpt from Athanasius's 'On the Incarnation') and R.4.2 inform your thinking.

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 it possible to be a Christian apart from the Christian community, understood as a community formed by the (preached) Word and sacrament?

Let R.4.3 stimulate your discussion.

WINDOW 3: CREATION AND THE LAST THINGS

6am Monday 14 May to 11pm Sunday 20 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: Are human beings their own worst enemies?

Essentially, you are pondering the nature of sin and its origins.

I would strongly recommend that you ground your response in R.5.1.

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: Does the Gospel encourage the Christian community to “build fences around God’s grace?” (Bloesch, from R.6.2)

In short, you are wrestling with the reach of God’s saving purposes. I expect your posts to show genuine understanding of R.6.2.

2. Essay – (25%)

Length: 1250 words

Date due: 4:00pm Thursday, April 19th

Submission process: Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard.

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

- John Calvin understands John 1:14 in the following way: (see R.2.2): “It [John 1:14] means that, because he who was the Son of God became the Son of man—not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we affirm his divinity so joined and united with his humanity that each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, and yet these two natures constitute one Christ.” Discuss the importance of Calvin’s statement for understanding the person of Jesus Christ.
- How do the following texts from John’s Gospel—John 10:30, 14:26, and 15:26--inform Christian thinking about the unity of the divine essence (the oneness of God) and the Trinity of persons (the threeness of God)?

Note that a deep knowledge of the readings from Module 2 & 3 as well as the Study Guide for Module 2 & 3 are essential if you are to earn a good/excellent grade. I expect you to properly cite from the study guide and these readings in your essay.

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 course book (both the study guide and the required readings).

Presentation (Approximately 20%)

Sentence structure and grammar matter. They create an impression of care and intelligence, and will put your marker in a happy and generous mood. Moreover, a good essay will acknowledge and reference the sources appropriately.

3. Examination

The date for the three-hour examination (comprising **60%** of your mark) will be given as soon as it has been set by the Examinations Office. All arrangements for examinations are handled by the Examinations Office as outlined in the handbook *Distance Learning: Information and Support 2018*. When set, the date, time and location of the examination will appear on your eVision timetable. It is your responsibility to check eVision and make a note of these.

Please note that the venues for Distance exams are set according to your Semester Address in eVision so you must ensure this is kept up to date. An email will be sent to you by Examinations to confirm your venue. Please contact them if you have any questions or concerns: examinations@otago.ac.nz

The exam will have ten questions to choose from. You must answer **four** questions in total.

FURTHER READING AND LIBRARY RESOURCES

All of the required primary readings for the course are contained in the Course Book and as electronic files on Blackboard. Some **suggestions for further reading** can be found below and at the end of each module. These are not essential to the course, nor – of course! – are you expected to read all of them, but they are designed to be hints for exploring particular themes further, especially for the purposes of assignments. They will also serve to give you further ideas for reading on each topic beyond the course itself. The McGrath website also offers extensive further resources.

See: <http://www.alistermcgrathwiley.com>

Should you wish to read more, you may seek material from the University Library, using the guidelines in Distance Learning: Information and Support 2018.

REFERENCING SYSTEM

For writing essays, the Department 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 Department has prepared a *Study and Style Guide*, which outlines the Chicago Style and offers other advice on essay presentation. You may find it via the Department'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 **4:00pm** on the due dates notified. 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 Department of Theology and Religion must be prefaced with a student *Plagiarism Declaration Form*. They will not be deemed to have been submitted unless and until the Plagiarism Declaration Form has been submitted. It 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.

For all **administrative and distance learning enquiries**, please contact:

The Administrative Assistant for Theology and Religion.

Email: admin.theologyandreligion@otago.ac.nz

Phone: 03 479 8516

We recommend that you contact the Department 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.

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

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

SUGGESTED WORK SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATES	READING	ASSESSMENT
1	26 February – 2 March	Module 1.1, 1.2 (Reading 1.1, 1.2)	
2	5 March – 9 March	Module 1.3, 1.4 (Reading 1.3, 1.4)	Online Discussion Window #1 5-11 March
3	12 March – 16 March	Module 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 (Reading 2.1)	
4	19 March – 23 March	Module 2.4 (Reading 2.2)	
5	26 March – 29 March	Module 3.1, 3.2 (Reading 3.1)	
Mid-Semester Break			
6	9 April – 13 April	Module 3.3, 3.4 (Reading 3.2)	
7	16 April – 20 April	Module 4.1, 4.2 (Reading 4.1, 4.2)	Essay Due on Thursday 19 April
8	23 April – 27 April	Module 4.3, 4.4 (Reading 4.3)	Online Discussion Window #2 23 – 29 April
9	30 April – 4 May	Module 5.1, 5.2 (Reading 5.1)	
10	7 May – 11 May	Module 5.3, 5.4 (Reading 5.2)	
11	14 May – 18 May	Module 6.1 (Reading 6.1)	Online Discussion Window #3 14 – 20 May
12	21 May – 25 May	Module 6.2 (Reading 6.2)	