



CHTH 233/333

Public Theology: Faith in the Public Square

Distance Course Outline 2018

SEMESTER 1 2018

Lecturer:

Professor David Tombs

(03) 479 8450

david.tombs@otago.ac.nz

Videoconferences:

Tuesday; 27/2

7:10-8:00 pm

Tuesday; 27/3, 17/4, 15/5

6:10-8:00 pm

This paper offers you an introduction to the discipline of 'Public Theology' and encourages you to engage in a critical study of the nature of Christian theology as public discourse.

The sort of questions we shall explore are:

- What does it mean to talk of doing theology in the 'public square'?
- How can theology contribute to thinking about current issues?
- What resources for a public theology do we discover in Scripture and the teachings of the Church?
- What challenges arise when seeking to do public theology in Aotearoa/ New Zealand?

There are six main components to this paper, and we shall explore these during our teaching day and our videoconferences. These are:

- What is Public Theology?
- Public Theology and Scripture
- Public Theology and the Church
- Principles for theological engagement in the public square
- Making Theology engage: a case study
 - Globalization and the Global Economic Crisis
- Going global, going 'glocal'.

LECTURER'S INTRODUCTION

Your lecturer for this paper is Professor David Tombs, Howard Paterson Professor of Theology and Public Issues, and Director of the Centre for Theology and Public Issues. David studied theology and philosophy at Oxford University, Union Theological Seminary (New York), and London University.

His research focuses on public, contextual and liberation theologies, and their engagement with political, social, cultural, economic and environmental issues. He is interested in the interface of faith, values and public life in theology, and how theology can contribute to a common good in a shared society and in a connected world. Previously David taught theology at the University of Roehampton (1992-2001), and then taught conflict resolution and reconciliation in Belfast for the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin (2001-2014).

He can be contacted by email on david.tombs@otago.ac.nz and by phone on (03) 479 8450.

Students taking this paper at the **200-level** will be able to:

- Describe what scholars mean by 'public theology' and show how it draws upon the central tenets of the Christian faith
- Construct an argument to show that theology has an inherently 'public' dimension
- Develop skills in showing the relevance of Scripture and Christian tradition to matters of contemporary public concern
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relation between the church and public theology

Students taking this paper at the **300-level** will be able to:

- Describe what scholars mean by 'public theology' and show how it draws upon the central tenets of the Christian faith
- Construct an argument to show that theology has an inherently 'public' dimension
- Develop skills in showing the relevance of Scripture and Christian tradition to matters of contemporary public concern
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the church and public theology
- Develop a more critical analysis of the principles underpinning theological engagement around contemporary issues
- Demonstrate self-critical reflection on one's own arguments

TEACHING

- Four videoconference sessions using Zoom
- A teaching day held in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin (you need only attend the one nearest to you).

ASSESSMENT

Assessment comprises three compulsory assignments, worth a total of 100% of the final mark. There is **no final examination** for either paper.

RESOURCES

- Blackboard, the University's online learning tool;
- This Course Outline and the Course Book
- eReserve, a resource for electronic readings, which you can access via Blackboard;
- The Department's "Study and Style Guide" which recommends students use the 16th edition of the Chicago citation style when writing essays. It is available online at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>
- The handbook *Distance Learning Information and Support 2018*, providing advice on administrative matters not covered in this course book 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 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.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is divided into four Modules, as shown below in the Videoconference Schedule. Module 1 is the subject of the Teaching Day. Modules 2, 3, and 4 are covered in Videoconferences.

VIDEOCONFERENCES

The videoconferences and teaching days are interactive sessions and will involve you in careful listening and appropriate participation.

I will start by reminding us of the topic we are considering, and then lead into a discussion by raising questions prompted by the readings or inviting people to share the thoughts they had about issues raised in the podcast lectures or readings. I might ask if someone had strong views about anything they heard or read, or found something particularly thought-provoking. I might highlight a particular point made by an author and ask how you responded to that. We shall also refer to the 'Questions for Reflection' section of the topic, so it would be useful to think about these in advance of the session. The videoconferences and teaching days are also valuable opportunities for you to raise any difficulties you had understanding the readings, or tackling the assignments, and to ask questions about any aspect of the topic under discussion.

These sessions provide excellent opportunities for immediate exchange between tutor and student and between you as students yourselves. As a participant you bring a unique combination of prior experience, study and theological perspective to the videoconference or teaching day, and you are a resource for the group as a whole. We want to create a learning community as we work through this paper, and therefore it is very important that you prepare well, not only by mastering the study material provided but by being ready to bring your wisdom and viewpoints into dialogue with the whole group.

The overall aim of these sessions, then, is to tease out key issues raised by the lectures and readings – and, by discussion and interaction, gain a clearer understanding of the topic under consideration. These sessions will also be helpful in preparing you to complete the assignments set for this paper, and I will offer guidance with respect to this.

As I have said, *you will gain much more from the videoconferences if you have studied the readings ahead of time*; and on the 'Essential Student Information' webpage (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>) you will find further instructions to help you prepare for the teaching day and the videoconferences. These underline the importance of completing the reading for the teaching day and the videoconferences before you come because the discussion will focus on the readings

Accessing the Videoconferences

Please see the 'Zoom Videoconferences' 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 Videoconferences.'

Schedule of Videoconferences

Videoconference sessions will be held on **Tuesday evenings** as below:

SESSION	DATE	MODULE	TIME
1	27 February	Introduction	7:10pm – 8pm
2	27 March		6:10pm – 8pm
3	17 April		6:10pm – 8pm
4	15 May		6:10pm – 8pm

Here's how we shall proceed:

Videoconference 1

This is a 50-minute videoconference, during which we'll briefly introduce ourselves to each other and discuss the paper as a whole. This is the time for any questions you may have about the content of the paper, the readings, the assignments, the teaching day, future videoconferences, and so on.

Module 1: Teaching Day

Monday 5 March in Dunedin: 3.30 am - 9.00 pm

Monday 12 March in Wellington: 9.30 am - 4:00 pm

Tuesday 13 March in Auckland: 9.30 - 4.00 pm

This is our best opportunity for interactive work, and we shall discuss the first four components of the paper during this day, namely:

- Topic 1: What is Public Theology?
- Topic 2: Public Theology and Scripture
- Topic 3: Public Theology and the Church
- Topic 4: Principles for theological engagement in the public square

Further information about the teaching day is included in the next section.

Module 2: Videoconference 2

This two-hour videoconference will focus primarily on Topic 5, namely:

- Making Theology engage – a case study:
- Globalization and the Global Economic Crisis

Module 3: Videoconference 3

In this two-hour videoconference we shall continue our focus on 'making theology engage' and also discuss the final component of the paper, namely:

- Topic 6: Going global, going 'glocal'

Module 4: Videoconference 4

Topic 7: In this final two-hour videoconference we shall draw together the different components of the paper and reach some conclusions about what public theology is and, particularly, how it can be 'done' here in New Zealand.

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.

TEACHING DAYS

In addition to the Zoom videoconferences this course involves a teaching day/evening at one of the following venues. Although it is not compulsory to do so, students are strongly encouraged to attend ONE of the following teaching days. The same content will be repeated in each of the three venues. Students who are unable to attend one of the teaching days will be able to access a summary of the key issues covered in the teaching day.

Students should prepare for the teaching day/evening by doing the reading for the material to be covered in the Teaching Day as indicated below:

Dunedin

Date: Monday 5 March
Time: 3:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Venue: University of Otago, room to be confirmed

Timetable for Dunedin Teaching Evening:

3:30-6:00 pm	Session 1
6:00-7:00 pm	Dinner (students are responsible for providing their own dinner)
7:00-9:00 pm	Session 2

Wellington

Date: Monday 12 March
Time: 9.30 am - 4.00 pm
Venue: St Johns in the City, cnr Willis and Dixon Sts, Te Aro (unless advised otherwise on Blackboard).

For parking options, see: <http://www.stjohnsinthecity.org.nz/facilities/parking-options/>
Tea and coffee provided. Students are responsible for arranging their own lunch.

Auckland

Date: Tuesday 13 March
Time: 9.30 am - 4.00 pm
Venue: St Johns College, 202-210 St Johns Road, Meadowbank

Morning and afternoon tea provided. **You are invited to join in lunch in the Dining Room, at no cost**, but you must email the Department at least a week in advance to confirm, otherwise we advise that you bring your own meal. Students with special dietary requirements should also bring their own food. Parking is available.

NOTE: please email admin.theologyandreligion@otago.ac.nz when you have decided on which venue you will attend. The Wellington Day is dependent on numbers, so please let us know **as soon as possible** if you wish to attend. Students are responsible for arranging their own travel and accommodation for the Teaching Days.

ASSESSMENT FOR CHTH 233 STUDENTS

Marking for all assignments will take into account:

- The clarity of your written documentation. Give your assignments interesting introductions and conclusions, a clear and logical structure, and a strong well-argued narrative.
- Your ability to demonstrate critical engagement with the readings and the discussions during the course. You should engage critically with these ideas in the body of your essay and in footnotes.
- Your ability to integrate material from other disciplines such as sociology, politics and biblical studies, and to utilise your knowledge and awareness of current affairs.
- Your ability to use what you have learned during the course and from your reading to show how theology can enrich debates around contemporary issues in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS FOR CHTH 233 STUDENTS

Assignment 1

Length	2000 words
Value	30 % of final mark
Due Date	Tuesday, 3 April 2018
Topic	Arguments for Public Theology

You have been asked by the editor of a serious religious weekly to write a piece arguing why theology should input into current debates. The editor is concerned that many of her readers interpret their faith in essentially 'privatized' and 'pietistic' terms, and thinks that a well-argued piece with strong biblical and theological arguments – and some concrete examples – will stimulate fresh thinking and lead to greater Christian impact in the 'public square'.

Write an article of 1,000 words for inclusion in the magazine (and on its website), bearing in mind that your readers, though people of faith, may not necessarily be familiar with current theological debates or terminology. You may want to search the internet for examples of what churches are (or are not) already doing, or for short quotes or other useful data. Use footnotes totaling around 500 words to indicate the scholarly sources you have used to develop your arguments and to note contrasting ideas, critical comments, and other thoughts that might not be appropriate for the article itself. Note that only the

body of the article will appear in the magazine and on the website, while the footnotes will be read only by me and will demonstrate to me that you have studied the readings and engaged in the Teaching Day.

Assignment 2

Length	2000 words
Value	30% of final mark
Due Date	Tuesday, 1 May
Topic	Critical essays on Public Theology

Write an essay under one of the following titles:

- a) What are the most important challenges for 'public theology' in a secular country like New Zealand?
- b) What impact have churches and faith organizations in Aotearoa-New Zealand had on government policy since 1945?
- c) Comment on the assertion that 'churches should be feeding people's souls and pointing them to the next world, not trying to change this one.'
- d) 'Theology can prompt us to ask profound questions about the purpose of economic activity.' What sort of questions?
- e) Why might theologies fashioned in the northern hemisphere be unhelpful in a New Zealand context? What might be the components of an indigenous 'Aotearoa-New Zealand public theology'?

You are encouraged to use footnotes as necessary.

Assignment 3

Length	2500 words
Value	40% of final mark
Due Date	Friday, 1 June
Topic	Policy submission

Choose a topic of current concern in New Zealand and write a submission to a 'committee of inquiry' set up to examine it.

You should choose your topic carefully – and it could be anything from poverty to transport to broadcasting to nuclear weapons to immigration to climate change to education and so on – and set out clearly what you see as the key issues, the distinctive contribution theology can make to the debate, a rationale for engaging theologically, and clear 'policy asks' arising from your discussion.

Your submission should not exceed 2000 words, and should be accompanied by a 500-word appendix setting out for me (not the panel of inquiry) any references, explanatory notes, additional information or other 'working' that you wish to add to cast further light on your thinking behind this project.

ASSESSMENT FOR CHTH 333 STUDENTS

Marking for all assignments will take into account:

- The clarity of your written documentation. Give your assignments interesting introductions and conclusions, a clear and logical structure, and a strong well-argued narrative.
- Your ability to demonstrate critical engagement with the readings and the discussions during the course. You should engage critically with these ideas in the body of your essay and in footnotes.
- Your ability to integrate material from other disciplines such as sociology, politics and biblical studies, and to utilise your knowledge and awareness of current affairs.
- Your ability to use what you have learned during the course and from your reading to show how theology can enrich debates around contemporary issues in Aotearoa-New Zealand.
- Your ability to demonstrate how theological engagement with social, economic and political issues may be developed on a long-term basis.

ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS FOR CHTH 333 STUDENTS

Assignment 1

Length	2,000 words
Value	30 % of final mark
Due Date	Tuesday, 3 April 2018
Topic	Arguments for Public Theology

You have been asked by the editor of a serious religious weekly to write a piece arguing why theology should input into current debates. The editor is concerned that many of her readers interpret their faith in essentially 'privatized' and 'pietistic' terms, and thinks that a well-argued piece with strong biblical and theological arguments – and some concrete examples – will stimulate fresh thinking and lead to greater Christian impact in the 'public square'.

Write an article of 1,500 words for inclusion in the magazine (and on its website), bearing in mind that your readers, though people of faith, may not necessarily be familiar with current theological debates or terminology. You may want to search the internet for examples of what churches are (or are not) already doing or for short quotes or other useful data. Use footnotes totaling around 500 words to indicate the scholarly sources you have used to develop your arguments and to note contrasting ideas, critical comments, and other thoughts that might not be appropriate for the article itself. Note that only the body of the article will appear in the magazine and on the website, while the footnotes will be read only by me and will demonstrate to me that you have studied the readings and engaged in the Teaching Day.

Assignment 2

Length 2,000 words
Value 30% of final mark
Due Date Tuesday, 1 May
Topic Write an essay under one of the following titles:

- a) Does 'faith' as presented in the Bible have a consistently 'public' dimension?
- b) Can public theology be done without 'the church'?
- c) What language *should* public theologians use in order to make their contributions to contemporary debates in the public square effective?
- d) What contribution might theology make to a debate about the shape of the New Zealand economy in the wake of the global financial crisis?
- e) (How helpful might theologies fashioned in the northern hemisphere be in a New Zealand context? What might be the components of an indigenous 'Aotearoa-New Zealand public theology'?)

Please use footnotes as necessary.

Assignment 3

Length 3000 words
Value 40% of final mark
Due Date Friday, 1 June
Topic See options below.

EITHER:

Choose a topic of current concern in New Zealand and write a submission to a 'committee of inquiry' set up to examine it.

You should choose your topic carefully – and it could be anything from poverty to transport to broadcasting to nuclear weapons to immigration to climate change to education and so on – and set out clearly what you see as the key issues, the distinctive contribution theology can make to the debate, a rationale for engaging theologically, and clear 'policy asks' arising from your discussion.

Your submission should not exceed 3000 words, and should be accompanied by a 500-word appendix setting out for me (not the panel of inquiry) any references, explanatory notes, additional information or other 'working' that you wish to add to cast further light on your thinking behind this project.

OR:

A university theology faculty in New Zealand has appointed you to establish a 'centre for theology and public issues' and invited you to submit a paper setting out your plan of action for the first two years.

Your paper will not need to persuade the faculty that such a centre is needed, but it will need to set out the sort of issues you think it should focus on and why; how it will disseminate its findings; how it will relate to the New Zealand churches and other 'publics' like the academy and society at large; how (in general terms) it will be resourced; what events and publications it might generate; what sort of opposition and criticism it might

attract and how it will deal with it; how it will acquire public profile; and what sort of impact you envisage it making in the short- and long-term. (You should treat this list critically, adding other factors that you consider important and ignoring those that you think are irrelevant.)

Your assignment should include footnotes to a maximum of 700 words indicating that you have engaged with the readings and expanding any points you have made as appropriate.

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 **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 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