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.

We will examine the principles behind public theology and also explore illustrative examples. 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?

**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. 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.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

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
Theology Programme CHTH233/333 Distance Course Outline

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is divided into ten topics. Topics 1-4 examine principles in Public Theology, and topics 5-10 explore issues in Public Theology.

- **Introductory videoconference.**
- **Topics 1-2: The Teaching Day.**
  - 1. What is Public Theology?
  - 2. Public Theology and Scripture
- **Topics 3-10: The Teaching Videoconferences**
  - 3. Public Theology and the Church
  - 4. Principles for theological engagement in the public square
  - 5. #MeToo
  - 6. #MeToo and the Bible
  - 7. #ChurchToo
  - 8. ‘You did it to me too’
  - 9. Globalization and the Global Economic Crisis
  - 10. Going global, going ‘glocal’.

The dates of the videoconferences are shown in the schedule below.

TEACHING

The teaching typically involves discussion of your readings, so it is important to complete the required reading in advance whenever possible.

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 Study Guide
- eReserve, a resource for electronic readings, which you can access via Blackboard;
- 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 2018*, 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/](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 **Monday evenings** as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24 February</td>
<td>6:10pm – 7.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23 March</td>
<td>6:10pm – 8.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 April</td>
<td>6:10pm – 8.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20 April</td>
<td>6:10pm – 8.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11 May</td>
<td>6:10pm – 8.00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 in Wellington. It is not compulsory but it is really worthwhile if you are able to come and it is great way to meet up in person. Students should prepare for the teaching day/evening by doing the reading for the material to be covered in the Teaching Day as indicated in the Study Guide.

Wellington

Date: Monday 9 March 2020

Time: 9.30am-3.30pm

Venue: Anglican Centre, 18 Eccleston Hill (off Hill Street), Thorndon, Wellington.

Please provide own lunch, or there are opportunities to purchase locally.
Assignments for CHTH233

CHTH233 Assignment 1
Length 2,000 words total
Value 30 % of final mark
Due Date Friday 3 April 2020
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 (in addition to the 1,500 word article) 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. You can include discursive (i.e. explanatory) material in the footnotes if you wish.

CHTH233 Assignment 2
Length 2000 words total
Value 30% of final mark
Due Date Friday 1 May 2020
Topic Policy submission

Choose a topic of current public 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 to family violence to euthanasia 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 1,500 words, and should be accompanied by an
additional 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.

**CHTH233 Assignment 3**

**Length** 2500 words

**Value** 40% of final mark

**Due Date** Friday 29 May 2020

**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, and how might these be best addressed?

b) 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.’

c) What challenges do movements like #MeToo and #ChurchToo raise for the
churches and how should churches respond to these?

d) ‘Theology can prompt us to ask profound questions about the purpose of economic
activity.’ What sort of questions? And what sort of answers can theology offer?

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.

**Assignments for CHTH333**

**CHTH333 Assignment 1**

**Length** 2,000 words total

**Value** 30 % of final mark

**Due Date** Friday 3 April 2020

**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 an additional 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.

**CHTH333 Assignment 2**

Length 2,000 words  
Value 30% of final mark  
Due Date Friday 1 May 2020  
Topic Policy submission

Choose a topic of current public 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 to family violence to euthanasia 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 1,500 words, and should be accompanied by an additional 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.

**CHTH333 Assignment 3**

Length 3000 words  
Value 40% of final mark  
Due Date Friday 29 May 2020  
Topic Critical essay 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, and how might these be best addressed?

b) 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.’

c) What challenges do movements like #MeToo and #ChurchToo raise for the churches and how should churches theologically respond to these?

d) ‘Theology can prompt us to ask profound questions about the purpose of economic activity.’ What sort of questions? And what sort of answers can theology offer?
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.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Marking for all assignments will use the programme grade criteria and 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 and public issues.
- 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.

For CHTH333 there will be an additional expectation on:

- Personal reading and research beyond the set readings.

**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. 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

All Assignments submitted in the Theology Programme must be prefaced with a student Plagiarism Declaration Form.

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 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
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 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.