



CHTH 320/420

Public Theology and Social Justice

Course Outline 2020

SEMESTER 1 2020

Class Times:

9.00-10.50am on Thursday

- February 27th;
- March 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th;
- April 2nd, 9th, 23rd, 30th;
- May 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th.

Classes will be held at the Wellington Anglican Centre, 18 Eccleston Hill, Thorndon, and simultaneously live-streamed (via Zoom) to students in an AV room on campus in Dunedin, and available (via Zoom) to students located elsewhere.

Lecturer:

Dr Andrew Shepherd
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Welcome to Public Theology and Social Justice. This paper develops a critical and constructive public theology approach to social justice issues, through exploring a range of historical and contemporary justice issues emerging in local, national and global contexts.

The paper is divided into three Sections. The first (Theological and Theoretical Background), covers basic terms and concepts in theology, philosophy, politics, and ethics. These include things like public theology, social justice, culture, civil society, the state, etc. The second section (Historical Examples), considers two significant events from the middle of the twentieth century: the German Confessing Church's resistance to Nazi fascism (c.a., 1930-1945) and the African American Church's resistance to Jim Crow racism (c.a., 1950-1968). The third section (Contemporary Issues), focuses on current challenges for public theology and social justice (e.g. human rights and human trafficking; terrorism and the war in terror). These issues – along with the global economic and ecological crises, which are covered in other courses I teach – are, arguably, among the greatest

challenges facing church and society today.

LECTURER'S INTRODUCTION

Dr Andrew Shepherd is the Theology Programme Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues, based in Wellington. His working life has alternated between academic teaching roles and leadership responsibilities in Christian and non-profit organisations. His research interests include:

- Ecological Theology and Environmental Ethics
- The Ethics and Practice of Hospitality
- Theology and Phenomenology
- Theology and Economics
- Peace Theology

- Contemporary theologies of social transformation – including social movements & neo-monasticism

For further information, see: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/staff/otago720307.html>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing this paper at 300-level will be able to:

- Display knowledge for understanding a selection of contemporary social justice issues
- Explore the principles and process of an effective and academically robust approach to public theology
- Construct evidence-based arguments to apply a creative public theology approach to selected social justice issues
- Demonstrate an informed and critical understanding of academic literature for both social analysis and theological reflection on social justice themes
- Interpret contemporary social issues in the light of relevant biblical material and vice-versa

In addition, students completing this paper at 400-level will be able to:

- Research and present an investigation on a social justice issue as an in-depth case study in public theology

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDY HOURS

Public Theology and Social Justice is offered as either a 300-level or 400-level paper. The University expects students to put in 12 hours of study per point. As an 18-point paper, CHTH320 requires 216 hours of study over the 13-week semester. As a 20-point paper, CHTH420 requires 240 hours of study over the 13-week semester. This averages out to 16 and 18 hours per week respectively. Please plan accordingly.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course consists of two elements: *independent* learning and *collaborative* learning.

Independent learning involves doing the necessary pre-reading before classes, additional reading, and research and writing for assessment tasks. Day to day, the bulk of your study hours will be spent completing the course readings (**All reading material for the course is available on e-Reserve via Blackboard**) alongside the accompanying course Study Guide. “Completing” the reading means, first, carefully and attentively reading the assigned texts for each week/topic; second, using the Study Guide to ensure that you understand these texts; and, third, clarifying *what* you *don't* understand about the texts.

NOTE: this third task is *especially* important. Each Topic in the Study Guides concludes with Final Thoughts questions. These are meant to help you review and assess your learning for that Topic. They are also meant to prompt your preparation for the Videoconference in which that Topic will be covered. Being “prepared” for class discussions during our Videoconferences includes being able to identify things that remain unclear or uncertain to you and also sharing your critical thoughts/reflections about the readings.

There are 12 class sessions/video-conferences scheduled during the course. These are scheduled for:

9.00-10.50am on Thursday

- February 27th
- March 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th
- April 2nd, 9th, 23rd, 30th
- May 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th.

NOTE: There are thirteen dates above. Should we, unexpectedly, have to cancel a class, we have assigned May 28th as a reserve teaching day.

Students located in the Wellington region are encouraged to join Andrew in a seminar room located at the **Wellington Anglican Centre, 18 Eccleston Hill, Thorndon** (in close proximity to the Wellington Anglican Cathedral) for these class times. Dunedin-based students will gather in the assigned AV room on University of Otago campus and participate via Zoom. Distant students will also utilise Zoom to participate in these class times.

The class sessions/video-conferences are an opportunity for *collaborative* learning. In each of the twelve sessions, I will usually open the class with introductory material to help frame the theme and focus attention on some of the key issues that need addressing. However, primarily these sessions will be of an interactive nature, *reflecting* critically upon the readings and study guide, and *responding* to the flow-on questions that students want to explore.

Outside of class times I will be available for meetings with students, either in person (in Wellington) or by phone or Zoom. To arrange a meeting time, contact me by email: andrew.shepherd@otago.ac.nz

RESOURCES

- Blackboard, the University’s online learning tool;
- This Course Outline and the Topic Study Guides available for each Topic on Blackboard;
- 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 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

Information and instructions about accessing Zoom can be found on the Department webpage (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>). This will also be posted under the Course Information page of our Blackboard site. This is also where you will find the URL needed to join the sessions.

ASSESSMENT

The University identifies two forms of assessment: *formative* and *summative*. Formative assessment takes place day to day, week to week through your engagement with the readings and the Study Guides for each topic. This paper provides *summative* assessment through the writing of three essays. The first engages the basic theological and theoretical background covered in Topics 1-2. The second engages with the historical examples covered in Topics 3-6. The third engages with the contemporary issues discussed from Topic 7 onwards.

ESSAY 1

Value: 30%
Word Count: 2,000 words for CHTH320, 2,500 words for CHTH420
Due Date: 20th March, 2020

What is “social justice,” and what contribution (if any) can “public theology” make to it? This is your initial reflection upon this big question and therefore your response can be a tentative hypothesis rather than a conclusive thesis. You may argue for or against the view presented by one or more of the readings from Topics 1-2. Although I am most interested in *your* initial thoughts on this question, be sure to draw upon (cite) at least three readings from Topics 1-2 in your essay.

ESSAY 2

Value: 30%
Word Count: 2,000 words for CHTH320, 2,500 words for CHTH420
Due Date: 24th, April, 2020

How has the Church historically engaged in public theology in order to pursue social justice? You may formulate your response in one of two ways. (1) You may respond by assessing either the German Confessing Church’s resistance to Nazi fascism or the African American Church’s resistance to Jim Crow racism. (2) You may respond by comparing and contrasting the resistance of the Confessing Church and the African American Church. Be sure to cite at least three readings from either Topics 3-4 and/or Topics 5-6.

ESSAY 3

Value: 40%
Word Count: 3,000 words for CHTH320, 4,000 words for CHTH420
Due Date: 29th May, 2020

Pick one of the contemporary issues from Section 3: How can theology offer a new way of framing and understanding this issue? How might theology shape thinking, policies and practices in seeking social justice in regard to this issue? You should cite at least four readings from the assigned course readings and at least two other additional readings not included in the course 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 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>

<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** 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