

Overview of modules on the MTh Theology in Scriptural Context Programme

TH7802 The Doctrine of Scripture

The module consists of an evaluation of different approaches to Scripture, in relation to tradition and reason, and in terms of its interpretation. It covers both historical and contemporary questions; this it does in an historical-progressive manner.

TH7804 The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity

- As an introduction, classic statements of the doctrine of the Trinity are presented and reflected upon, leading to an exploration of the origins of the doctrine in New and Old Testaments.
- The development of the doctrine from Scripture in the early and mediaeval church is considered, examining various hermeneutical models deployed, the development of Trinitarian vocabulary and the important complementary roles of cataphatic and apophatic knowledge of God.
- The significance of distinctive developments of the doctrine are surveyed as they appear in representative theologies of historical Evangelicalism, Eastern Orthodoxy, the Western tradition, Roman Catholicism and contemporary theologians—for example there will be consideration of the contributions of Calvin, Owen, Edwards, the Cappadocian Fathers, Augustine, Hilary, Bonaventure, von Balthasar and other authors whose works are cited in the accompanying bibliography. The module leads to a consideration of the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for personal spirituality, ecclesial worship and practical ministry.

TH7805 Scriptural Studies in Christology and Soteriology

The module consists of an examination of Christology and Soteriology in the context of biblical theology. The module begins with an introduction to the distinctive methods and skills of biblical theology. By doing so, an understanding is given of the differences between a confessional approach and a biblical approach. The chosen topics are interrelated in that the person of Christ is defined by his work and therefore they are mutually beneficial to study together. These two doctrines

are considered and the methods and outcomes of two leading representatives of the biblical theology movement are then examined in some detail.

TH7806 Creation and Ecology

The doctrine of Creation continues to be a theological matter needing its own presentation. Reformed evangelicalism, having emphasised the priority of soteriology, has often overlooked this key doctrine. Also, biblical principles relating to environmental care and responsible ecosystem development have been articulated only recently, and not often at church level. This module seeks to address these two matters.

Biblical references concerning both Creation and living responsibly as a Christian believer within it are explored. Various interpretations of these references are evaluated, and some attempt is made to systematise them. A historical survey yields the close relationship existing between the doctrine of Creation and other key **doctrines, such as 'regeneration', 'new creation', 'new heaven and new earth'**. A biblical doctrine of Creation is developed and assumptions underlying both biblical and non-biblical (world-) views of origins are discussed, considering also scientific and philosophical issues, such as design and purpose, space and time, and current ideas of origins. Two workshops are led by visiting lecturers who have had input into these fields. Emphasis, however, is placed upon developing a Creation theology sensitive to ecological issues, and answering questions like, does Scripture suggest value in biodiversity, ecological reclamation, regeneration, development and conservation? Which biblical principles might serve to shape an ecological stewardship? How are the principles of stewardship to be implemented practically? Which biblical principles regulate the exploitation and management of organic, inorganic, animate and human systems?

TH7808 Biblical Law

The focus is on biblical law (the law of the Old Testament, or Hebrew Bible), and includes such landmark figures as Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus of Nazareth. It explores the nature of biblical law, legal thinking and legal institutions by setting the biblical texts in their ancient Near Eastern literary, social and theological context. In doing so, it considers what it means to see biblical law as an integration of different instructional genres which together express a vision of a society accountable to God. The unit critically examines much of biblical law and narrative that has formed the basis of Western civilisation, including the Ten Commandments, and explores differences between biblical law and modern legal concepts and legal assumptions. Close attention is paid to the relationship between biblical law and biblical narratives. There will be 10 seminar topics from among the following: (1) Making sense of biblical law; (2) Covenant; (3) Natural Law; (4) Judges and Courts; (5) Humanity and the Environment; (6) People and Land; (7) Social Welfare; (8) Homicide and Vengeance; (9) Theft and Burglary; (10) Marriage and Divorce; (11) Sexual offences; (12) Law in the Second Temple Period; (13) The Trials of Jesus.

TH7823 Biblical Theology

The module:

- Provides an in-depth review of the history of biblical interpretation and considers recent achievements and challenges of modern biblical theological scholarship.
- Explores the relationship of the Old and New Testaments in terms of Prophecy and Fulfilment; Messianic Expectation of the Old Testament in the context of Israel's redemptive history; The use of Typology as a hermeneutical method.
- Examines the First Century Jewish Christian social setting and the interpretation of Scripture emanating from that milieu.
- Focuses on New Testament Christology which includes critical biblical exegesis of passages with Christological focus.
- Reflects critically on the early Christian understanding and development of key Christological titles such as Son of God, Son of Man, and Son of David.
- Discusses the application of biblical theology to the modern contemporary Church context.

TH7824 Reformed Spirituality

The module explores key themes in Reformed spirituality. Although it touches on topics like sanctification and soteriology, its focus is on Christian experience and how people live in relationship with God, as understood within the Reformed tradition from the magisterial Reformers to the present day. It combines historical theological enquiry with biblical studies and in so doing provides exposure to primary sources.

The module begins by outlining a Reformed anthropology with a focus on the role of the affections. It then looks at the relationship between what God has done in Christ and the response of believers. On this foundation it explores a trinitarian understanding of Christian experience. It looks at the role of the means of grace, before exploring the missional outworking of spirituality.

TH7821/TH7822 Research Methods

The modules provide instruction on the necessary skills for academic research, in particular theological research, as well as academic writing skills.

In summary, the modules:

- Provide guidance on skills required in both researching and academic writing.
- Give practice in a variety of writing tasks required of a professional writer.
- Consider general philosophical approaches to research.
- Discuss quantitative and qualitative approaches to research
- Consider some distinctive of theological research methodology
- **Consider ethical and 'political' issues surrounding research**

TH7818 Dissertation

The module entails the preparation of an extended piece of writing on a selected **topic. The topic, which will relate to the student's programme aims and learning outcomes**, is identified in the context of study for the Research Methods module. The dissertation is based upon largely independent research, albeit under the supervision of a tutor.

TH7825 The Theology of the Early Church Fathers

The module explores key themes in the theology of the post-apostolic Early Church Fathers. Engaging with such thinkers as Augustine, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian and the Cappadocians, as well as the Apostolic Fathers, it provides considerable exposure to primary sources.

The module focuses on areas such as:

- The Christological debates of the time
- How the Fathers defended the faith in the face of pagan, Jewish and heretical challenges
- The anthropology of the Fathers (as well as that of their interlocutors, such as Julian of Eclanum)
- The soteriology of the Fathers, in dialogue with various opponents
- The spirituality of the post-apostolic early Church, both before and after the conversion of Constantine.