

Overview of modules on the MTh Theology in Scriptural Context Programme

TH7802 The Doctrine of Scripture

Through a study of set texts from the Church Fathers to the twenty-first century the module aims to:

- i) evaluate critically a range of attempts to understand the nature of Scripture;
- ii) assess various ways in which the Bible has been interpreted in various historical and theological contexts;
- iii) consider how social and historical contexts can influence biblical exegesis.

TH7804 The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity

The module discusses the relationship between classic statements of the doctrine of the Trinity and its origins in the Old and New Testaments. The development of the doctrine is considered in both the early and mediaeval church, 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 the Eastern and Western traditions. Particular attention is given to the writings of Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Augustine, John of Damascus, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin, Barth, Rahner and Moltmann. Recent revisionist assessment of Augustine and the relationship between Latin and Greek doctrines of the Trinity are considered. The module also considers 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?

TH7823 Biblical Theology

The module aims to:

- i) equip you with a critical understanding of various approaches to biblical theology;
- ii) understand and evaluate the history of biblical interpretation and consider recent achievements and challenges of modern biblical theological scholarship;
- iii) enable you to undertake biblical theology by exploring biblical themes or examining the biblical theology of a New Testament book;
- iv) enable you to engage critically with scholarly debates on the exegesis of biblical texts.

TH7821 & TH7822 Research Methods 1 & 2

The modules provide instruction on the necessary skills for postgraduate study and academic research, in particular theological research.

In summary, the modules:

- Provide guidance on skills required for both researching and academic writing;
- Give practice in a variety of writing tasks typical of a scholarly researcher, such as book reviews, encyclopaedia articles and research proposals;
- Consider general philosophical approaches to research;
- Discuss quantitative and qualitative approaches to research;
- Consider some distinctives of theological research methodology;
- Consider ethical and 'political' issues surrounding research.

The assignments for Research Methods 1 are:

i) an essay on research methodologies; ii) an encyclopaedia article.

The assignments for Research Methods 2 are:

i) a book review; ii) a dissertation proposal.

TH7818 Dissertation

The module entails the preparation of an extended piece of writing on a selected topic which is identified in the context of study for the Research Methods modules.

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.