



ACCESS TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

STUDENT COURSE HANDBOOK

For Open Learning Students

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1 WELCOME

Welcome to your course of study at the Highland Theological College UHI. We hope that you will enjoy and derive great benefit from pursuing this Access Course in Christian Theology.

An electronic copy of this Access Student Course Handbook can be found on the HTC website at the following address:

<https://www.htc.uhi.ac.uk/students/handbooks-and-guides/>

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This Access Course in Christian Theology, written and delivered originally by the full-time staff of HTC, has been delivered for some years now by part-time staff who are involved in various forms of Christian ministry in the North of Scotland.

At present the Course Leader is the Mr Jonathan Fraser. A list of other staff delivering the course can be found in section 9 below.

For over a decade now, the course has been delivered in open learning format, with a rolling start date for students which enables them to begin studying at any point during the calendar year. While many students follow the course or its individual modules for personal development, it can be used as a proper Access to HE course (see below for requirements for each mode of study).

It is also available as a full-time course, although in any one session this is dependent on numbers. The full-time Access course is **not** being run in 2022-23 academic year.

3 ADMISSIONS

One of the main intentions of the Access Course is to enable people with no formal qualifications to gain the confidence, experience and qualification to enable them to proceed to Higher Education should they so wish. Consequently, we seek to remove obstacles to studying.

4 GENERAL AIMS OF THE COURSE

The general aims of the course are as follows:

- To make access level provision, embracing the core disciplines of Christian theology, available to students in the UHI region and beyond.
- To enable students to acquire the study skills required for progression to studies in higher or tertiary education.
- To enable students: to gain knowledge and understanding of the core Christian disciplines: Biblical Studies (Old Testament and New Testament), Systematic Theology, History of Christianity, and Pastoral Theology.
- To make the delivery of the provision as flexible and open as possible (within other constraints upon the college).
- To provide a basis for further learning, whether at under-graduate level or more broadly through life-long learning.
- To provide students who have no desire to prepare for a specific ministry or sphere of Christian service or for other secular employment destinations with the opportunity to pursue theological study purely out of personal interest, as part of their own personal development, thus furthering the desire for life-long learning.

The individual modules have been structured to enable you to reach these aims. Each module has a set of aims (see module descriptors towards the end of the handbook).

5 COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The Access Course comprises six modules each of which must be completed successfully if you are to gain the Access Certificate. However, it is appreciated that individual students may wish to take individual modules for their own interest and personal development.

Module descriptors for each of these modules can be found towards the end of this handbook.

All awards of certification will be approved by the Access Programme Committee before being issued to the student.

Suggested Order in which to take the Modules

It is recommended that students pursuing the course in open learning mode should take the modules in the following order: Introduction to Studying Theology; Old Testament Overview; New Testament Overview; Systematic Theology; An Introduction to the History of Christianity; and Pastoral Theology.

Speed at which Modules may be Studied

Students taking the course or its individual modules for interest are free to submit material as and when they are able. We would, however, encourage you to try to pursue a module through to its end before taking a break, though we appreciate that this may not fit in with your lifestyle, etc.

Students who are taking the course as a true Access Course, i.e., with the intention to pursue the BA Theological Studies, or another higher education programme on the back of your Access studies, will need to complete the course, with all its assignments and exams, within a two year period.

6 ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES AND REGULATIONS

General Purpose of Assessment

The overall purpose of assessment is to ensure that the aims of the course and of its components have been achieved by students.

Assessment Objectives

The objectives of assessment are:

- to certify levels of achievement and so enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the aims of the course and attained the standards required by HTC for the award of an Access Certificate;
- to give students accurate information on their strengths and weaknesses and so help them to improve their performance;
- to motivate students, by providing them with opportunities to review, demonstrate and consolidate what they have learned;
- to enable staff to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching.

Assessment Strategy

In this course we try to use the methods of assessment which will best further the learning process for you and also prepare you for some of the types of assessment you are likely to encounter in higher education.

Much of the summative assessment, i.e., assessment that counts towards your final grade/ mark, also provides you with opportunities for what is often called formative assessment, i.e. assessment that will help you to improve your learning as the course progresses. This will be done largely through tutor feedback on your various items of summative assessment. OL students who attend the open learning conference days held twice a year will also experience a measure of this type of learning through face-to-face interaction with tutors and fellow students.

Assessment Methods

Across the course the summative assessment instruments will differ according to the specific module aims and content. Each module descriptor will specify the particular methods of assessment to be used in that module and also the percentage of possible marks which each component of the summative assessment carries.

Summative assessment will include the following methods:

- **Course Work** involving written answers to course units. These can give the students opportunities to demonstrate:
 - knowledge and understanding of the content being studied;
 - ability to summarise content briefly;
 - ability to reflect on what they have learned.

- **Essays**, normally 1000 words in length. These give students the opportunity to demonstrate their presentation in the subject area of the module. They can demonstrate the student's ability to:
 - present a structured discussion and extended, in-depth investigation of a topic;
 - explain and use material learned;
 - analyse issues;
 - integrate material drawn from differing sources or fields of study; while the word limits demand concise expression and discernment regarding the use of sources.

- **Unseen Examinations**, of 1½ hours. These can demonstrate the student's ability to:
 - select and arrange material;
 - make specific applications of material learned;
 - make intelligent use of argument;
 - make response from memory to previously unseen questions;
 - work under pressure.

Please note that all modules are to be completed satisfactorily before progressing to other modules. If a student begins with a module other than Introduction to Studying Theology and it becomes apparent to the tutor that there is a study skills issue, the student will be asked to suspend the study of that module meantime and take up the Introduction to Studying Theology module. If students are unable to complete any module satisfactorily, they will not be allowed to continue with the Access Course.

ASSESSMENT MARKING/ GRADING CRITERIA

<i>Basic Grade</i>	Core Criteria
A	Excellent Work: a clear and logical argument; very good comprehension of theory; independent thought; very well expressed; comprehensive coverage.
B	Good Work: clear expression; logical presentation; good comprehension of theory and concepts; substantial coverage; well expressed.
C	Satisfactory Work: clear line of thought; material well organised; good use of sources; general comprehension of theory and concepts; satisfactory expression.
D	Narrow Pass: missing some of the “C” criteria; reflects some of the “F” criteria.
F	Fail: insufficient content; irrelevant material; illogical; serious mistakes or errors regarding concepts and theory; very poor expression.

Please note that the Study Skills module is not graded but will be marked with an overall Pass or Fail

CONVERSION OF GRADES TO MARKS

Letter	%	Mark/ 10	Mark/ 20	Mark/ 25	Mark/ 30	Range
F	0-44	3.7	7.4	9.3	11.1	Fail
D	45-49	4.7	9.4	11.8	14.1	Narrow Pass
C-	50-54	5.2	10.4	13	15.6	Pass
C	55-59	5.7	11.4	14.3	17.1	
C+	60-64	6.2	12.4	15.5	18.6	
B-	65-69	6.7	13.4	16.8	20.1	
B	70-74	7.2	14.4	18	21.6	Merit
B+	75-79	7.7	15.4	19.3	23.1	
A-	80-84	8.2	16.4	20.5	24.6	
A	85-89	8.7	17.4	21.8	26.1	Distinction
A+	90-94	9.2	18.4	23	27.6	
A++	95+	9.7+	19.4	24.3	29.1	

Notes:

- 1 Assignments are assessed both by letter grades and equivalent marks, as given in the table above. Students will be informed of letter grades only in the first instance, since marks may be altered under moderation.
- 2 For the final mark all marks are added and then converted to both a letter grade and a percentage (%) and recorded, e.g. 61% C+

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

- 1 Students' work will be marked and feedback given with an appropriate timescale (normally not more than three weeks from the date of submission). Where this is not deemed to be possible students should be informed as to when the work will be returned.
- 2 Students who fail the course or any of its modules shall be given the opportunity to be advised of the reasons underlying the failure/s and what they have to do to redeem the position. At the module level this will come from the member of staff who is delivering the module and at the course level from the Course Leader.

Marking of Assessed Work or Examination Carried Out Under Special Arrangements.

1 Adjustments may be made to assessments, or the mode of delivery of assessments, to enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their achievement of the academic standards. Adjustments should be made prior to the assessment date rather than during the marking process. Where assessment or examination has been undertaken under special arrangements, examiners should mark the work without regard to the fact that special arrangements were made for the assessment. Any necessary consideration of the candidate's circumstances will be undertaken by the Access Course Committee as appropriate.

2 Normally, all assignments should be completed by the final day of each semester (i.e. the Friday of week 14) for FT students.

ASSESSMENT PROVISIONS

1 Students with disability

Students, by reason of disability proven by acceptable evidence, may be assessed by methods other than those approved for the programme. Alternative methods shall be contracted between the Course Leader, student adviser and the student, and be reported to the Course Committee. Requests to be assessed by methods other than those approved for the programme should normally be made by the student to the Course Leader at least 6 weeks prior to the date of the submission of an assessment or the sitting of an examination.

The following will be taken into account when dealing with students with significant learning and support needs:

- The advice of UHI to follow the SQA regulations in this area having in view the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (SENDA) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA.)
- What the college is entitled to in order to protect its academic standards and at the same time provide reasonable tutorial support in such cases.

A careful note will be taken by the tutors of the time involvement in such cases.

2 Mitigating Circumstances

If by reason of absence, failure to submit work or poor performance, students fail course modules, and it is established, to the satisfaction of the Course Committee, that this was due to proven illness or other circumstances found valid on production of evidence, the Course Committee shall use its discretion to ensure that the students are not disadvantaged (nor advantaged) as a result.

In exercising its discretion the Course Committee may decide to allow students to be assessed as for the first time and to vary the form of assessment to be used.

Where a student has submitted work, either on time or late, the preparation of and/or submission of which has been affected by mitigating circumstances, a letter should be submitted by the student setting out these circumstances. The internal examiner should mark the work without regard to these circumstances and the student informed that these will be made known to the Course Committee.

3 Academic Misconduct

As study skills are acquired during this Course, it will become apparent that students will need to be aware of practices that are not regarded as acceptable in education, and which, therefore, should be avoided. Such academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating and/or collusion as defined below:

- i **Plagiarism:** unacknowledged incorporation in a student's work either in an examination or assessment of material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another. Plagiarism may therefore include:
 - a the use of another person's material without reference or acknowledgement

- b the summarising of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without acknowledgement
 - c the use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source
 - d copying of the work of another student with or without that student's knowledge or agreement

- ii **Cheating:** a student will be deemed to be cheating as a result of any of the following:
 - a deliberately acquiring advanced knowledge of the detailed content of an examination or obtaining a copy of an 'unseen' written examination paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release
 - b communicating with or copying from another candidate during an examination
 - c permitting another candidate to copy from his/her examination script
 - d being found in possession of any printed, written or electronic material or unauthorised material during an examination which may contain information relevant to the subjects of the examination
 - e communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff
 - f impersonating another examination candidate or permitting himself/herself to be impersonated
 - g undertaking any other action with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage over other candidates.

- iii **Collusion:** collusion may exist where a student:
- a is in complicity with another student in the completion of work which is intended to be submitted as either that student's or the other student's own work
 - b knowingly permits another student to copy all or part of his/her own work and to submit it as that student's own work.

To avoid such misconduct students should:

- a complete their assigned work by themselves, in their own words and using their own notes, figures or rough workings (except where group work specifically forms part of the assignment)
- b endeavour to ensure that their work is not available to copy by other students (with or without permission)

7 STUDENT SUPPORT

Overall Student Support Strategy

The overall strategy employed by the course committee is to identify and provide the student support services and activities which will facilitate student learning and enable students to progress towards successful completion of their course.

These student support services and activities fall into two broad categories, academic and non-academic, which are reflected, for example, in the provision of both module tutors and student advisers.

Tutor Support

Student Adviser

At the beginning of your studies you will be assigned a student adviser for the duration of your course. Your student adviser will be Mrs Cathy Steed. She will deal with general academic matters, learning skills, course guidance, and any personal problems which you may have. The student adviser will be responsible for generally encouraging you in your learning experience; providing a 'listening ear' etc. To contact your student adviser either e-mail to cathy.steed@uhi.ac.uk or call HTC on 01349 780000.

Module Tutor

Each module has its own designated module tutor who will have overall responsibility for all aspects of the delivery, assessment and monitoring of that module and of the progress of students taking it.

If you have any questions about the content of a module, please bring that to the attention of your module tutor as soon as possible.

On-going guidance

Students on the course may at any time arrange, through the Academic Office or by e-mail, to speak to the Course Leader, to their student adviser or to any of their module tutors.

Careers' Guidance

From time to time representatives of a variety of Christian missionary and other agencies are invited to address the students and make them aware of vocational opportunities.

Also, literature from a variety of Christian and other organizations is placed on the notice-boards in the college, and information on further opportunities for study is available in the library.

In addition, a wide range of information is available on the UHI web-site. You ought to try the following addresses:

<https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/students/careers/>

<http://myworldofwork.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>

Library and ICT Support

In addition to the support provided by the academic staff, Access students are also supported directly by the Librarian, Geordie Cryle.

The Librarian manages all aspects of the library work on a daily basis and is willing to help students with their library needs at all times. In particular he

helps to manage the availability of books for assignments, etc.

HTC provides ICT support for the maintenance of the college's electronic systems, including the networked PCs. This includes the provision of induction to ICT for students, and also continuing support to students requiring help with ICT at all times.

Special Needs

Students with special needs, such as dyslexia, are asked to make these needs known to the college administration at the outset of their course so that appropriate arrangements can be put in place, e.g., for examination purposes.

8 TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Our concern has been to identify the teaching and learning methods which will most effectively meet the course aims and deliver the course content while enabling you to achieve the aims of each module, and enabling the tutors to facilitate the learning experience. Since the intended learning outcomes differ from module to module and since individual students learn best in different ways, a variety of methods is used to facilitate and enhance the overall learning experience.

Because of the nature of open-learning, the learning packages are central to the teaching and learning strategies employed. Designed to facilitate student-centred learning, these packages are characterised by clarity, interactivity and variety. Normally, these packages consist of at least a series of written course units. Open Learning packs will be sent to students electronically. If you would prefer a hard copy instead, please contact the course administrator Samantha Oxby.

Conference Days

These are an important part of the student experience, particularly for open learning students. Two such conference days are held at the college each academic year, normally in October and March. These days are normally on a Saturday from 10.30 am to 4.00 pm. A typical programme includes opening worship; a one hour lecture; time with module tutors and peer groups and a panel discussion with College staff; as well as a brief tour of the college, and library time for those who wish it. These are usually shared also with BA students, and have often been a great means of encouragement and support to students. Lunch is provided. Information will be made available about the timetables for these Conferences near the beginning of each semester to enable students to plan ahead.

9 COURSE MANAGEMENT

The delivery of the course will be overseen by the Access Course Committee which is responsible to the Academic Board of HTC to which body it reports regularly.

Membership

All staff who are teaching modules of the Access Course are members of the Course Committee. One student may serve on the committee. The Course Leader is Mr Jonathan Fraser who also acts as Chair of the Course Committee.

In addition the HTC Secretary and administrative staff are members of the committee.

This course is administered in conjunction with UHI Outer Hebrides.



10 RESOURCES

Human Resources

The Access Course teaching staff members are as follows:

Module Name	On-Campus Tutor	OL Tutor
Introduction to Studying Theology	To be confirmed	Miss Shona Gillies Mrs Cathy Steed Rev Alan Wells Mrs Margaret Whyte
Old Testament Overview	To be confirmed	Rev Mike Lind Rev Alan Wells Mrs Margaret Whyte Dr Heather Major
New Testament Overview	To be confirmed	Rev Mike Lind Rev Alan Wells Rev Robert Jones Mrs Margaret Whyte
An Introduction to the History of Christianity	To be confirmed	Rev Sandy Finlay Mrs Margaret Whyte
Systematic Theology	To be confirmed	Rev Sandy Finlay Mr Josh Hamilton
Pastoral Theology	To be confirmed	Rev Robert Adair
Supported Learning	Mrs Cathy Steed	Mrs Cathy Steed

Administrative support is provided by:

Kathryn Stewart Samantha Oxby

MODULE DESCRIPTORS

Introduction to Studying Theology

What is this module about?

This module focuses on the methods of study needed for higher education in general, and theological education in particular. It does so using theological texts and Biblical materials. This means that, while the module is of particular benefit to anyone who has been out of the habit of study for some time, it still has its own "free standing" benefit because of the reading it requires.

The module aims:

- to help you assess what you understand by "study"
- to give you some tools and pointers that will help you with your study, *and*
- to give you first-hand experience of using these tools in a theological environment

What text books will I need?

As well as the supplied notes you will need:

- a Bible (preferably with a good cross referencing system)
- EITHER a copy of *Learn How to Study: A Realistic Approach*.
- *D Rowntree (Warner Books 1998)] OR How to Study Effectively [G. R. Freeman & J. Meed (Collins Educational 1996)].* An updated edition of Rowntree is now available on Kindle.
- a copy of *The New Birth: What "Born Again" Really Means*
Rev. Dr. A. T.B. McGowan (Christian Focus Publications) available from Amazon or Ebay

Assessment/ Feedback for this module

This module is designed to teach you basic study *skills*. For this reason the content of the module cannot be assessed in the same way as other modules. To complete the module successfully you need to submit to your tutor all written work requested, and complete a 1,000 word essay. Your tutor will comment on these, *but they will not be graded*. However, credit will be given for the module only when all written work has been submitted.

Old Testament Overview

What is this module about?

Although the Bible tells us about many people, places and events, it is really telling one story, which some have called His-story i.e. the story of God and his acts. This module introduces you to the themes of the first part of that story by giving you a thematic introduction to the Old Testament.

The module aims:

- to familiarise you with the broad sweep of biblical history, particularly as seen in the Old Testament
- to identify most of the key themes of the Old Testament
- to enable you to understand something of the historical background to these themes, *and*
- to enable you to see some of the links between the Old Testament story of God's people and the New Testament story of God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

What text books will I need?

As well as the supplied notes you will need:

- a Bible (preferably with a good cross referencing system)
- compact form of the *New Bible Dictionary (IVP)*
- a copy of Old Testament Survey (second edition) [William Sanford La Sor et. al. (Wm. B. Eerdmans & Paternoster Press 1996)]

Assessment for this module (Access Level):

Course work submitted to tutor as and when indicated - 30%

1,000 word essay to be submitted to tutor by the end of the module - 30%

A 1.5 hour examination (see Unit 15) - 40%

Assessment for this module (Interest Level):

Course work submitted to tutor as and when indicated - 50%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module - 50%

An Introduction to the History of Christianity

What is this module about?

Church history is, as the name implies, the study of the history of the Church. The parameters of this study are enormous, spanning the last 2,000 years and touching all parts of the earth. This module gives us a "broad brush" picture of this remarkable story in a way that is readable and informative without being daunting.

This module aims:

- to give you an overview of the history of Christianity from the first century AD until today
- to introduce you to some of the major eras in the Christian story to provide you with tools to help you examine current issues

What text books will I need?

- a copy of *The New Lion Handbook The History of Christianity*; (Jonathan Hill, Lion Hudson plc, Oxford, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 7459 5156 0))
- a copy of *New Dictionary of Theology* (SB Ferguson et. al. eds., IVP, Leicester, 1988)
- EITHER a copy of *Strength of the Hills*; Jenny Robertson, The Bible Reading Fellowship, Oxford, 2001 (ISBN 1 84101 125 8)
OR a copy of *A Church History of Scotland*: JHS Burleigh, Edinburgh Hope Trust, 1988.

Note: both *Strength of Hills* and *A Church History of Scotland* are out of print but copies can be borrowed from the college library.

Assessment for this module (Access Level):

Coursework submitted to tutor as and when indicated – 60%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module – 40%

Assessment for this module (Interest Level):

Coursework submitted to tutor as and when indicated – 60%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module – 40%

Introduction to Pastoral Theology

What is this module about?

Theology is not simply an academic discipline. Theological reflection takes place in the "rough and tumble" of life. It relates to the real world in which people are born, live, and die. It is our theological reflection on God's dealings with us in this "real" world which gives us the raw material for pastoral theology.

This module aims:

- to introduce you to some of the aims and methods of pastoral theology
- to provide an elementary biblical basis and rationale for the pursuit of pastoral theology
- to give you the opportunity to see some of the relationships between biblical and theological studies, and the life issues which we must face day by day
- to give you the chance for some personal reflection on some issues of pastoral relevance, *and*
- to give you the chance to explore some of the fundamental issues involved in grief and bereavement

What text books will I need?

As well as the supplied notes you will need:

- a Bible (preferably with a good cross referencing system)
- a copy of the 3 volume *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [IVP], or its more compact form simply called the *New Bible Dictionary*.
- *Sinclair B. Ferguson et. al. (Eds) New Dictionary of Theology* [IVP, Leicester, 1988]

Assessment for this module (Access Level):

Coursework submitted to tutor as and when indicated – 60%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module – 40%

Assessment for this module (Interest Level):

Coursework submitted to tutor as and when indicated – 60%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module – 40%

Introduction to Systematic Theology

What is this module about?

Systematic theology draws together the different strands of teaching found in the Scriptures in an attempt to systematically, coherently and meaningfully expound the Christian faith.

This module aims:

- to familiarise you with tasks and methods of systematic theology
- to identify the key themes of systematic theology
- to enable you to trace the links between these themes, *and*
- to show how the Person and Work of Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures, is the key to understanding them all

What text books will I need?

As well as the supplied notes you will need:

- a Bible (preferably with a good cross referencing system)
- ***Sinclair B. Ferguson et. al. (Eds) New Dictionary of Theology [IVP, Leicester, 1988]***
- *Bruce Milne, Know the Truth [IVP, 1982]*
- ***J. I. Packer, Knowing God [Hodder & Stoughton, many editions]***

Assessment for this module (Access Level)

Coursework submitted to tutor as and when indicated – 60%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module – 40%

Assessment for this module (Interest Level):

Coursework submitted to tutor as and when indicated – 60%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module – 40%

New Testament Overview

What is this module about?

This module takes up the story we began in Old Testament Overview – the story of the acts of God in history. Where Old Testament Overview focused on the story of God and his actions as told in the Old Testament, this module focuses on the content and meaning of the New Testament. The books of the New Testament focus on the life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the consequences of these events both for the people of God and the history of the world. The books of the New Testament cover only a relatively small number of decades, but they bring to fulfilment the themes developed over centuries of Old Testament history.

This module aims:

- to familiarise you with the major divisions of the New Testament
- to acquaint you with some of the historical background to the New Testament
- to enable you to identify the development of key themes as introduced in Old Testament Overview (e.g. grace, covenant, sin etc.)
- to let you see that these are fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ, *and*
- to help you see the significance of these things for personal faith

What text books will I need?

As well as the supplied notes you will need:

- a Bible (preferably with a good cross referencing system)
- a copy of the compact form of the *New Bible Dictionary (IVP)*
- a copy of *A Survey of the New Testament (Fourth Edition) [R. H. Gundry (Zondervan, 2003)]*
-

Assessment for this module (Access Level):

Course work submitted to tutor as and when indicated - 30%

1,000 word essay to be submitted to tutor by the end of the module - 30%

A 1.5 hour examination (see Unit 15) - 40%

Assessment for this module (Interest Level):

Course work submitted to tutor as and when indicated - 50%

A 1,000 word essay to be submitted by the end of the module - 50%