



Queensland
Theological College



TH401/601

The Knowledge of God

Unit Outline

About this Unit Outline

This unit outline contains information essential to finding your way around the unit **The Knowledge of God**. It provides a structure for your learning, giving details of lecture topics, assessment requirements, and key resources.

SEMESTER 1 2017

Important notice

While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the information given below, **it is the personal responsibility of each student to check the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook**, copies of which may be found in the Library or online at www.actheology.edu.au

It is very important that students plan their time carefully to ensure that reading and especially assignments receive adequate attention and so as to prevent a bottleneck of work at the end of the semester.

It is very important that all quoted material in assignments be properly footnoted and acknowledged. The attention of students is drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed "**Academic Misconduct**". Failure to comply with the standards required will incur penalties as outlined in the ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook.

The attention of students is also drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed "**Guidelines for Essays.**" (see also the QTC Student Handbook) All essays should comply with these standards.

Information about this unit

Unit description

The unit *The Knowledge of God* is designed to introduce students to those doctrines which deal with how the Christian God acts to reveal himself. This involves examination of the issues involving the nature of theology as a discipline, as well as the nature and purpose of human knowledge of God, the distinction between general revelation and special revelation, and the role and nature of the word of God as gospel and as Scripture, including such categories as authority, inspiration, trustworthiness, clarity, interpretation and canon.

The second half of the unit examines the context of our knowledge of God—ourselves, and the world in which we know God. This involves examination of the issues involving the nature and purpose of creation, the place of providence as God’s ongoing relationship with the world, the nature and purpose of humanity, and the nature of the fall and sin. This unit will consider these fundamental Christian teachings as they are presented in the Scriptures of the Old & New Testaments, and in light of debates and insights past and present.

Learning Outcomes

TH401 Learning Outcomes

On completion of the unit, students will:

Know and understand:

1. Theological loci and how they interact
2. How God is known:
 - i) The concepts of revelation and inspiration
 - ii) The place and nature of Scripture and natural theology
 - iii) Reason, authority and experience
3. God’s relationship with the world:
 - Creation and providence
 - Humanity as created
 - Sin and evil
4. Implications of the knowledge of God and of his relationship to the world for Christian life

Be able to:

1. Interpret the Bible theologically
2. Understand the major creeds and confessions and other classical theological statements
3. Trace the interrelationships with the major themes of Christian theology
4. Identify the role of cultural and ecclesial contexts in the task of Christian theology
5. Analyse the relationship between Christian doctrine and individual and corporate Christian life
6. Present an analytical, evidence based argument or reflection

Be in a position to:

1. Inform their Christian thinking in both formal and informal study with perspectives about the knowledge of God and his relationship with the world

2. Show how the knowledge of God and His world is appropriated in personal life and the life of the community
3. Apply the knowledge of God and his world to situations and issues in contemporary church and society

TH601 Learning Outcomes

On completion of the unit, students will:

Know and Understand:

1. Theological loci and how they interact
2. How God is known:
 - i) The concepts of revelation and inspiration
 - ii) The place and nature of Scripture and natural theology
 - iii) Reason, authority and experience
3. God's relationship with the world
 - i) Creation and providence
 - ii) Humanity as created
 - iii) Sin and evil
4. Implications of the knowledge of God and of his relationship to the world for Christian life
5. Leading theologians and their interpretations of the knowledge of God

Be able to:

1. Interpret the Bible theologically
2. Understand the major creeds and confessions and other classical theological statements
3. Trace the interrelationships with the major themes of Christian theology
4. Identify the role of cultural and ecclesial contexts in the task of Christian theology
5. Analyse the relationship between Christian doctrine and individual and corporate Christian life
6. Present an analytical, evidence based argument or reflection
7. Discuss interpretations and applications of the knowledge of God

Be in a position to:

1. Inform their Christian thinking in both formal and informal study with perspectives about the knowledge of God and his relationship with the world
2. Show how the knowledge of God and His world is appropriated in personal life and the life of the community
3. Apply the knowledge of God and his world to situations and issues in contemporary church and society
4. Evaluate uses of the knowledge of God and his relationship with the world

How this Unit Contributes to the Course

The Theology units in the courses of the Australian College of Theology are designed to sum up biblical teaching in key areas and integrate your understanding of the content of the biblical texts, taken as a whole, with the insights of historical and contemporary theology on the matters in question.

The purpose of this unit is to help students to understand the place and nature of the church in God's plan, and to appreciate how as Christians we necessarily live as part of a greater whole, the people of God, whose destiny is to be united to Christ forever, together. As many students will graduate into positions of leadership in local churches, this unit will also consider the important and related topic of leadership and ministry within the church, as well as of two vital visible signs of God's grace given to the church by Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

TH401 is an advanced-level (400-level) core unit in the Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Ministry, Associate Degree of Theology and Diploma of Theology. TH601 (600 level) is an advanced-level core unit in the Master of Divinity, Graduate Diploma of Divinity and Graduate Certificate of Divinity. As such TH401/601 has the following ACT Pre/co-requisites:

- Successful completion of at least two of OT301/501, OT302/502, NT301/501, NT302/502;
AND
- Successful completion of at least one foundation-level Church History or Theology unit. (CH324/524 *The Reformation in Europe and Britain* is the unit you would usually take at QTC to meet this requirement.)

Normally at QTC, you will only be permitted to take TH401/601 once you have entered the second full-time year of your course (or part-time equivalent). GradDipDiv and GradCertDiv students are exempt from normal ACT prerequisite requirements, but at QTC will only be permitted to enrol in this unit provided they have already completed at least 16 cps with a Credit average or better, and with the permission of the unit lecturer.

How this unit is organized & what we expect of you

This unit will be taught weekly across a full 13 week semester and will involve three hours per week of contact time, i.e. three 50 minute lectures each week. Some of these classes will be in traditional lecture format, others will be variously seminar-type discussions involving the whole group, small group discussions, or in-class student exercises.

This unit will involve 3 hours per week of contact time. This unit is worth 4 credit points toward your qualification. At Diploma or Bachelor level, a 4 credit-point unit is considered to require a total time commitment of 6–8 hours per week, and 7–9 hours at Master of Divinity level. Students are required to attend all lectures, complete any set pre-reading and complete assessment tasks by the relevant due date.

Lecture Times:

Students are expected to attend all lectures, complete any set pre reading and complete any assessment tasks by the relevant due date.

The normal ACT Attendance Rule of 80% minimum attendance applies, in order to gain credit for this unit. Please do be in touch with the Registrar as soon as you can if you anticipate having any difficulties with your assessments or with meeting the due date.

These lecture arrangements for *The Knowledge of God* were published and distributed to QTC students in the November 2016. Students who enrol for this unit are expected to have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that they are able to attend all lectures.

Teaching staff

LECTURER:

Mark Baddeley

E: mbaddeley@qtc.edu.au

Please feel free to contact me if you have any problems or concerns about the unit.

Other Key Contacts

Registrar's office

Contact the Registrar's office for any queries about which unit to enrol in next, if you wish to change your enrolment, defer due to illness, family circumstances etc., or request an extension for your assessment (criteria apply).

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Moodle functions and queries

Contact the Registrar or the Assistant Registrar for help if something on Moodle is not working, if you need help using Moodle etc.

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Library/Resources

Contact the Librarian for help with finding resources for your assessment, finding full-text database articles, for help with logging into the library databases and catalogue, and for help with how to renew a book for longer or place a hold on a book currently out to another person.

E library@qtc.edu.au

Unit timetable: topics & teaching and learning activities

In the case of this unit, we will cover the following topics over the course of the Semester, typically looking at them biblically, then in terms of how they have been understood historically, contemporary issues / challenges within the Christian and theological world, and in some cases also from the standpoint of Apologetics. Attention will also be given to how these teachings can be related and communicated in the context of ministry.

WEEK	LECTURE TOPIC
WEEK 1	Unit Introduction & Studying this Unit Introduction to Revelation
WEEK 2	General Revelation & the question of "Natural Theology"
WEEK 3	Special Revelation
WEEK 4	Scripture & Inspiration
WEEK 5	The Canon and Trustworthiness of Scripture
WEEK 6	Scripture's Relationship to Reason, Tradition & Experience
MID SEMESTER BREAK	No lectures
WEEK 7	The Doctrine of Creation
WEEK 8	The Doctrine of Providence
WEEK 9	Humanity as Created
WEEK 10	Humanity as Created
WEEK 11	Sin – Its Nature and Act
WEEK 12	Sin – Its Nature and Act
WEEK 13	An integrated reflection on Revelation and Creation

TH401 Assessments

Assessments are submitted online via Moodle

In order to pass the unit, you must submit all assessment pieces and attain a mark of at least 50% for the unit as a whole.

Unless an extension has been applied for and granted in accordance with the Late Penalty Policy found in the QTC Handbook, where a student submits an assessment past its due date, the assessment marks will be reduced at the rate of 3% of the total possible marks for the Assessment item per calendar day, up to 14 days late.

Your essays must also be within 10% of the required word limit and your ability to meet this requirement will also be taken into account in determining your mark. QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

ASSESSMENTS	DESCRIPTION
<p>3000 word Essay</p> <p>50% of the final grade</p>	<p>Write a 3000 word essay on ONE of the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is general revelation intended to accomplish? Does it achieve its goal? Account for this success or failure. 2. In what sense is Scripture 'clear'? 3. What is the nature of the authority of Scripture? 4. What are the important elements of a Christian doctrine of creation? 5. In what sense is God in control of history and human actions? 6. What is the relationship between our sins and Adam's sin?
<p>Take-Home Exam</p> <p>2250 words total</p> <p>50% of the final grade</p>	<p>Take Home Exam: Three compulsory questions, 750 words each (2250 words total). These questions will be on topics covered in the unit other than those set for the essay. Students will receive the exam questions one week before the due date.</p>

TH601 Assessments

Assessments are submitted online via Moodle

In order to pass the unit, you must submit all assessment pieces and attain a mark of at least 50% for the unit as a whole.

Unless an extension has been applied for and granted in accordance with the Late Penalty Policy found in the QTC Handbook, where a student submits an assessment past its due date, the assessment marks will be reduced at the rate of 3% of the total possible marks for the Assessment item per calendar day, up to 14 days late.

Your essays must also be within 10% of the required word limit and your ability to meet this requirement will also be taken into account in determining your mark. QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

ASSESSMENTS	DESCRIPTION
<p>3500 word Essay</p> <p>50% of the final grade</p>	<p>Write a 3500 word essay on ONE of the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What relationship exists between general revelation and the gospel? 2. What is the relationship between Jesus Christ the Word of God and Scripture the Word of God? Critically evaluate Karl Barth's proposal as part of your answer. 3. What are the strengths (if any) and limitations (if any) of holding that revelation is propositional? 4. What is at stake <i>in our theological understanding of creation</i> in the questions over the age of the universe, evolution, and human origins according to those in favor of more literalistic and less literalistic readings of Gen 1-3? Critically evaluate these proposals and explain what is at stake in these debates. 5. Does evil 'exist'? What are the implications of your answer? 6. Was humanity created 'innocent' as the first stage in a longer project or 'perfect' as a finished product in itself? What are the implications for our understanding of human nature?
<p>Take-Home Exam</p> <p>3000 words total</p> <p>50% of the final grade</p>	<p>Take Home Exam: Three compulsory questions, 1000 words each (3000 words total). These questions will be on topics covered in the unit other than those set for the essay. Students will receive the exam questions one week before the due date.</p>

Guide to Assessments

In this unit we are looking for both the research essay and the take home exam essays to offer a *sustained persuasive argument*. This involves several factors.

First, it requires you to have *articulated a clear answer to the question*—preferably one that you have written out in a sentence or two before you begin writing the essay. This answer should be clearly stated in the essay—often in the introduction, but certainly in the conclusion. Stronger essays are ones whose answers demonstrate one or more of: grasping the essence of the issues, offering something comprehensive, demonstrating a deeper understanding of the issues rather than one that, while accurate, is at a more introductory level, and showing an understanding of the implications of the answer.

Second, it requires you to *offer evidence* for your answer. There should be information in the essay that is relevant to the question and which supports your answer. Some essays may also want to discuss evidence that could be used to reject your answer and show why it doesn't actually do that when understood correctly.

Third, it requires you to *show how* the evidence you include actually does support your answer. A common mistake students make is to include information—quotes, Scriptural passages or the like—and do nothing with them but to have them in the essay as though their significance for their answer is self-evident. It almost never is to the reader (however much it might be to the writer) without explicit commentary that takes the reader by the hand and explains how that information helps supports the case they are making.

Fourth, it requires you to try and *persuade your reader that your answer is the correct one*. Good doctrine essays don't treat the exercise as a case of 'show and tell'—where the idea is simply to get all the ideas and information out and the order in which they come doesn't matter. Instead, the writer thinks about how to organize their material so as to build a case for their answer in the most persuasive fashion they can.

Finally, it requires you to engage with both Scripture and scholars and theologians. Ideally there should be signs that your answer is the way it is because you are convinced that that is what Scripture teaches. It should also be evident that you standing on the shoulders of others—modern scholars, and theologians modern and ancient, to help you read Scripture and think through the issues better than you could do on your own.

Learning Resources

Textbooks to Purchase

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by J. T. McNeill. Translated by F. L. Battles. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960.

Hoekema, Anthony. *Created in God's Image*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.

AND CHOOSE ONE OR BOTH OF:

Jensen, Peter. *The Revelation of God*. CCT. Leicester: IVP, 2002.

Thompson, Mark. *A Clear and Present Word: the Clarity of Scripture*. NSBT. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.

Recommended Resources:

Berkouwer, G. C. *The Providence of God*. Translated by Lewis B. Smedes. Studies in Dogmatics 18. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952.

Gunton, Colin. *The Triune Creator: a historical and systematic study*. NSCT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

Helm, P. *The Providence of God*. CCT. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993.

Hughes, P. E. *The True Image: the origin and destiny of man in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.

Morris, L. L. *I Believe in Revelation*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976.

Packer, J. I. "God's Inerrant Word." Pages 3-137 in *Honouring the Written Word of God*. By J. I. Packer, vol. 3 of *The Collected Shorter Writings of J. I. Packer* by J. I. Packer. Vancouver: Regent College, 1999.

The Documents of the Council of Trent and its Catechism

The Westminster Confession of Faith

Documents of the Second Vatican Council

ACT Standards: Grades

Grades in assessment instruments are awarded in the following categories-

Grade	Score	GPA
Fail (F)	0-49%	0
Pass (P)	50-57%	1
Pass+ (P+)	58-64%	1.5
Credit (C)	65-74%	2
Distinction (D)	75-84%	3
High Distinction (HD)	85+%	4