



# TH101-612/812

# The Knowledge and Doctrine of God

## Unit Outline

### About this Unit Outline

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

SEMESTER 1 2021

## 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 Handbook**, copies of which may be found in the Library or online at [www.acttheology.edu.au](http://www.acttheology.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 ACT's **Academic Misconduct Policy**, as well as ACT **Late Penalties Policy** and **Extensions Policy**, all of which are available on the ACT website. Failure to comply with the standards required will incur penalties as outlined in the relevant ACT Policies.

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

Students should be aware that the delivery of this unit and results awarded are moderated by the ACT. See the ACT "Moderation Policy" and "Moderation Procedure" at [www.acttheology.edu.au/documents/](http://www.acttheology.edu.au/documents/) for full details.

## Information about this unit

### Unit description

The unit The Knowledge and Doctrine of God is designed to introduce students to those doctrines which deal with how the Christian God acts to reveal himself and the knowledge of God that results from these acts.

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.

It is also involves examination into the knowledge of God that revelation actually gives us— what can we say about the God that we know? This entails forays into the nature and identity of the Christian God including the doctrine of the Trinity and God's attributes. 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.

### ACT Census Date

**7 April 2021**

Students must confirm their enrolment in this unit with the QTC Registrar by Wednesday 7 April 2021. This is the last day on which you may withdraw from the unit without academic penalty (a Fail), or without being liable for the tuition fees. To make a change in your enrolment you must contact the QTC Registrar in writing at: [registrar@qtc.edu.au](mailto:registrar@qtc.edu.au).

### Learning Outcomes

#### TH101-612 Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, the student should have achieved the following learning outcomes:

Know and understand:

1. Demonstrate developing knowledge and understanding of basic issues of theological methodology, the doctrines of revelation, Scripture, and theology proper.

Be able to:

1. Analyse the interrelationship between and the content of theological prolegomena and theology proper
2. Identify methodological and theological issues in knowing God
3. Present analytical evidence-based perspectives on theology proper and the means by which the knowledge of God obtains

Be in a position to:

1. Apply the theological content of 'The Knowledge of God' to Christian preaching and ministry practice as a reflective practitioner
2. Apply the theological content of 'The Knowledge of God' to other theological subdisciplines

**TH101-812 Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this unit, the student should have achieved the following learning outcomes:

Know and Understand:

1. Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of basic issues of theological methodology, the doctrines of revelation, Scripture, and theology proper

Be able to:

1. Investigate the interrelationship between and content of theological methodology and theology proper
2. Examine methodological and theological issues in knowing God
3. Present research-aware evidence-based perspectives on theology proper and the means by which the knowledge of God obtains

Be in a position to:

1. Apply the theological content of 'The Knowledge of God' to Christian preaching and ministry practice as a reflective practitioner
2. Apply the theological content of 'The Knowledge of God' to other theological subdisciplines

## **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.

It is intended that this unit will assist students to be able to better know, worship and declare the God who is revealed in Scripture above all as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and who is both good and glorious. This unit will also give students the resources to receive the means by which God has made it possible for us to know him and his will for us and to approach ministry with an accurate grasp of revelation and of Scripture. This unit aims to help integrate the findings of units in biblical studies and provide a foundation for ministry practices developed in the practical theology units.

## Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

TH101-612 counts towards the Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Ministry, Associate Degree of Theology and Diploma of Theology. TH101-812 counts towards the Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Graduate Diploma of Divinity and Graduate Certificate of Divinity.

The Co-requisites for **TH101-612** are 6 credit points of TH, CH or PE units, and 24 credit points of OT, NT or BB units. Students who have successfully completed TH001 (or TH401) cannot enrol in this unit. Please note: some of this unit content is delivered under the unit codes TH001 (previously TH401/601) and TH002 (previously TH402/602).

The Co-requisites for **TH101-812** are 6 credit points of TH, CH or PE units, and 24 credit points of OT, NT or BB units. Students who have successfully completed TH001 (or TH401) cannot enrol in this unit. Please note: some of this unit content is delivered under the unit codes TH001 (previously TH401/601) and TH002 (previously TH402/602).

## How this unit is organized & what we expect of you

The lectures and class activities for this unit will be taught in Semester 1 of 2021 across six intensive blocks (days) of teaching adding up to thirty-nine classes, each of 50 minutes duration. **All lectures will be held on Fridays.**

### Dates of Lectures:

- Friday 5 March
- Friday 12 March
- Friday 30 April
- Friday 7 May
- Friday 21 May
- Friday 28 May

### Friday Lecture Periods:

- 9.30am – 10.20am
- 10.45am – 12.35pm
- 1.25pm – 4.15pm

It is very important that you attend the lectures on all six Fridays. Please ensure that you arrive before 9.30am on Fridays and remain until 4.15pm. Please be punctual on all occasions.

This unit is worth 12 credit points toward your qualification. A 12 credit-point unit is considered to require a time commitment averaging 10 hours per week throughout Semester teaching and assessment weeks. If you find that you need to consistently spend more time than this on the unit, please contact the unit coordinator as a matter of importance.

Students are expected to attend all lectures, complete any set pre-reading and complete any

assessment tasks by the relevant due date. Please be in touch as soon as you can if you anticipate having any difficulties with your assessments or with meeting the due date.

## Teaching staff

UNIT COORDINATOR

**Andrew Bain**

LECTURER

**Andrew Moody**

E [amood@qtc.edu.au](mailto:amood@qtc.edu.au)

LECTURER

**Andrew Leslie**

E [abain@qtc.edu.au](mailto:abain@qtc.edu.au)

## 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).

P 07 3062 6939

E [registrar@qtc.edu.au](mailto:registrar@qtc.edu.au)

### Moodle functions and queries

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

P 07 3062 6939

E [registrar@qtc.edu.au](mailto:registrar@qtc.edu.au)

### Library/Resources

Contact the Librarian for help with finding resources for your assessment, finding full-text database articles, logging into the library databases and catalogue, how to renew a book for longer or place a hold on a book currently out to another person. Also contact the library for any queries about audio recordings of your class on Moodle.

P 07 3062 6939

E [library@qtc.edu.au](mailto:library@qtc.edu.au)

## Unit timetable: topics & teaching and learning activities

| Date  | Topics  |
|---|---|
| Day 1:<br>Friday 5 March<br>(Andrew Moody)  | Doctrine of God—incommunicable and communicable attributes  |
| Day 2:<br>Friday 12 March<br>(Andrew Moody) | Doctrine of God—Trinity   |
| Day 3:<br>Friday 30 April<br>(Andrew Moody) | Doctrine of God—Trinity   |
| Day 4:<br>Friday 7 May<br>(Andrew Leslie)   | Nature of theology, revelation prolegomena, nature of language for God, models of revelation        |
| Day 5:<br>Friday 21 May<br>(Andrew Leslie)  | General revelation, special revelation, Scripture—inspiration                                       |
| Day 6:<br>Friday 28 May<br>(Andrew Leslie)  | Scripture—authority, truthfulness and trustworthiness, clarity, interpretation, hermeneutics, canon |

## TH101-612 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 Policy found in the QTC Handbook, where a student submits an assessment past its due date, in accordance with the ACT **Late Penalties** Policy, 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, after which point the mark awarded shall be zero. Where the assessment is a **Take-Home Exam**, the assessment marks will be reduced at the rate of **6%** of the total possible marks for the assessment item **per calendar day**, up to 7 days late, after which point the mark awarded shall be zero.

Your submitted assessment items must also be within **10% of the required word limit**, and failure to meet this requirement shall result in a penalty of **10%** of the total possible mark being deducted. **Please see the QTC Handbook for full details on what is included within your total word count.** 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><b>Take-Home Exam</b><br/><b>2400 words total</b><br/><b>40% of final grade</b></p> | <p>Three compulsory questions, 800 words each (<b>2400</b> words total).<br/>Students will answer one question on each of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. an incommunicable attribute;</li> <li>2. a communicable attribute; and</li> <li>3. an aspect of the doctrine of the Trinity.</li> </ol> <p>In each answer, the particular aspect of the doctrine of God must then be applied to one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. preaching;</li> <li>b. ministry; or</li> <li>c. the practice of Biblical interpretation.</li> </ol> <p>Application will account for approximately 200 words of the 800 words for each question.</p> <p>Students can choose which of preaching, ministry and Biblical interpretation goes with each question, but all three areas of preaching, ministry and Biblical interpretation must be addressed across the three questions. In other words, match one aspect of the doctrine of God with each field of application.</p> |

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|---|--|
| <p><b>3000 word Essay</b><br/><b>60% of final grade</b></p> | <p>Write a <b>3000</b> word essay on ONE of the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is general revelation intended to accomplish? Does it achieve its goal? Account for this success or failure.</li><li>2. In what sense is Scripture 'clear'?</li><li>3. What is the nature of the authority of Scripture?</li><li>4. What is the relationship between the gospel as the the word of God and Scripture as the word of God?</li><li>5. In what sense can believers know God? What limitations, if any, are there on our knowledge of God?</li><li>6. Inerrancy? Limited inerrancy? Infallibility? what is the best way to explain the nature of the Bible's truthfulness?</li></ol> |
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# TH101-812 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 Policy found in the QTC Handbook, where a student submits an assessment past its due date, in accordance with the ACT **Late Penalties** Policy, 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, after which point the mark awarded shall be zero. Where the assessment is a **Take-Home Exam**, the assessment marks will be reduced at the rate of **6%** of the total possible marks for the assessment item **per calendar day**, up to 7 days late, after which point the mark awarded shall be zero.

Your submitted assessment items must also be within **10% of the required word limit**, and failure to meet this requirement shall result in a penalty of **10%** of the total possible mark being deducted. **Please see the QTC Handbook for full details on what is included within your total word count.** 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><b>Take-Home Exam</b><br/> <b>3600 words total</b><br/> <b>50% of final grade</b></p> | <p>Three compulsory questions, 1200 words each (<b>3600</b> words total).</p> <p>Students will answer one question on each of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. an incommunicable attribute;</li> <li>2. a communicable attribute; and</li> <li>3. an aspect of the doctrine of the Trinity.</li> </ol> <p>In each answer, the particular aspect of the doctrine of God must then be applied to one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. preaching;</li> <li>b. ministry; or</li> <li>c. the practice of Biblical interpretation.</li> </ol> <p>Application will account for approximately 300 words of the 1200 words for each question.</p> <p>Students can choose which of preaching, ministry and Biblical interpretation goes with each question, but all three areas of preaching, ministry and Biblical interpretation must be addressed across the three questions. In other words, match one aspect of the Doctrine of God with each field of application.</p> |

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|---|--|
| <p><b>3600 word Essay</b><br/><b>50% of final grade</b></p> | <p>Write a <b>3600</b> word essay on ONE of the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What relationship exists between general revelation and the gospel?</li><li>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.</li><li>3. What are the strengths (if any) and limitations (if any) of holding that revelation is propositional?</li><li>4. Is theology a science (like mathematics), a craft (like plumbing) or an art? What are your implications for the nature and practice of theology?</li><li>5. Is language for God univocal, analogical or equivocal? What are the implications for the nature of our knowledge of God?</li><li>6. What concept of the Bible's truthfulness best supports its trustworthiness for faith? What doctrine of inspiration best supports this view of its truthfulness?</li></ol> |
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# Guide to Assessments

## *What are we looking for?*

### General remarks

All students are expected to avail themselves of the guidelines for written assignments provided in the ACT Handbook (consult the table of contents) and in the QTC Student Handbook section 'Style Requirements for Written Assignments'.

All written work for this unit should conform to the guidelines of the *SBL Handbook of Style* (with the exception of Australian spelling conventions).

Any Hebrew and Greek cited must be typed in a Unicode font; SBL BibLit is commended as one font covering Hebrew, Greek, and Roman Unicode ranges, but is not required. It is freely available from the SBL website: [http://sbl-site.org/educational/BiblicalFonts\\_SBLBibLit.aspx](http://sbl-site.org/educational/BiblicalFonts_SBLBibLit.aspx)

Do note carefully the number of words required for each assessment item, depending on whether you are enrolled for TH101-612 or TH101-812. For full information on what is included in the total word count, see the QTC Handbook section headed *Length of Assignments*.

In a Take-Home Exam, all direct quotations in your answers from books and articles should be footnoted, but there is no need to footnote the lectures or lecture notes. As is the case with a formal on-site exam, lecture notes and audio recordings of lectures should not ordinarily be footnoted or included in the bibliography of a Take-Home Exam.

### For TH101

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

First, it requires you to **articulate 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 are 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 so on your own.

The **Take Home Exam will involve one extra skill**. Each question will ask you to trace some implications from your discussion of the doctrine of God for the practices of preaching, ministry, and Biblical interpretation. This will require you to succinctly state the implication, and to **explain how** that aspect of the doctrine of God results in that implication for that practice. Grading will reflect the tightness of the link drawn between the doctrine of God and the implication for practice, and the richness of the discussion in showing a deeper grasp of the doctrine and its implication for practice.

## Learning Resources

### Essential textbooks for TH101-612 and TH101-812:

Jensen, Peter. *The Revelation of God. Contours of Christian Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002.

AND ONE OF:

Herman Bavinck, Herman. *God and Creation. Vol. 2 of Reformed Dogmatics*. Edited by John Bolt, Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004.

Bray, Gerald. *The Doctrine of God. Contours of Christian Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993.

Horton, Michael S. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.

### Recommended books:

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

Horton, Michael S. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

### Further resources:

#### INTRODUCTORY TEXTS

Allison, Gregg. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Bray, Gerald. *God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Van der Kooi, Cornelis and Van den Brink, Gijsbert. *Christian Dogmatics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017.

#### SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGIES

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae* 61 vols. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964–81.

Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics* 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003-08.

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics* 31 vols. London: Bloomsbury, 2009.

Lombard, Peter. *The Sentences* 4 vols. Mediaeval Translations. Toronto: St Michael's College, 2007.

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991-97.

Pelikan, Lehmann and Mayes eds. *Luther's Works* 73 vols. Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1955-.

Sanders, Fred. *The Triune God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

Sonderegger, Katherine. *Systematic Theology* vol. 1. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015.

Strong, Augustus. *Systematic Theology*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2009.

#### SPECIAL STUDIES

Duby, Steven. *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account*. London: T & T Clark, 2018.

George, Timothy. *God the Holy Trinity: Reflections on Christian Faith and Practice*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.

Helm, Paul. *Eternal God: A Study of God Without Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Letham, Robert. *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2004.

Holsteen, Nathan and Svingel, Michael. *Exploring Christian Theology*, Volume 1 Revelation, Scripture, and the Triune God. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014.

Phan, Peter ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Swain, Scott. *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction To The Bible And Its Interpretation*. London: T & T Clark, 2011.

Vanhoozer, Kevin. *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005.

Ward, Timothy. *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Webster, John. *God Without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology* vol. 1. London: T & T Clark, 2016.

## 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   |