

MA Modules 2020-21

All modules are 20 credits unless otherwise indicated.

TMM42220 Research and Reflection: Resources and Methods Revd Dr Helen Collins

This compulsory module is designed to equip students to write their dissertation by familiarising them with a range of research methods and approaches. The module is delivered in two halves. The first half focuses on skills for selecting a dissertation question and designing the process of research. It is assessed via a comparative book review of two key texts for the dissertation topic. The second half of the course examines theological method in general, with a particular focus on practical theology, to analyse the place of experience and other academic disciplines within theology. It is assessed via a small research project.

Advanced New Testament Studies: The Letter to the Hebrews TMM40420 Revd Dr Steve Finamore

Hebrews is one of the gems of the New Testament, full of intriguing ideas and theological insights. After a period of relative neglect, it is once again the subject of rigorous scrutiny and debate. In this module, taught in a seminar style, students have the opportunity to engage with the major critical issues and to look at the text in some detail.

The module includes 20 hours of classroom time delivered over 10 weeks. The first hour each week is spent looking at important critical issues raised in the set reading.

The issues are:

1. Date, Authorship, Audience and Genre
2. Use of the Old Testament
3. Supersessionism
4. Christology A – What Jesus has Done
5. Christology B – Who Jesus Is
6. Hebrews Thought World including Platonism, Philo and Apocalyptic
7. Atonement
8. Faith
9. Cosmology and Eschatology
10. Contemporary Relevance of the Text

In the second hour each week we read through the text a chapter (or so) at a time. Knowledge of Greek is helpful but not essential.

Advanced Old Testament Studies: The Book of Psalms
TMM40320 Revd Dr David Firth

The Psalms have long been central to the worship of God's people, starting with their role in the temple in Jerusalem and continuing in various expressions of liturgy today. Understanding them is thus central to worship and spirituality. Yet it is also true to say that the ways in which the Psalms are being studied is currently going through a period of change, with focus shifting from the study of individual psalms to the book as a whole. It means we are now interested not only in the theology of a particular psalm, but also the theology of Psalms as a whole. Along with this, approaches to the Old Testament's poetry have also changed significantly, something not yet represented in liturgy. This module therefore introduces students to these contemporary discussions and then explores particular psalms (in English) for both their own message and their contribution to the Psalter as they reflect on how these emerging approaches can enrich our worship and spirituality. It is assessed through two 3,000 word essays.

Old Testament Texts in Hebrew: The Book of Psalms
TMM40620 Revd Dr David Firth

This module is offered in conjunction with Advanced Old Testament Studies. It requires an additional hour of class attendance to it and focuses on the translation and exegesis of the particular psalms considered in Hebrew rather than English. Students taking this module are registered for it rather than Advanced Old Testament Studies. It is assessed through one 6,000 word translation and exegesis of a selected psalm.

The Bible and Christian Faith (Hermeneutics of Biblical Violence)
TMM40120 Revd Dr Helen Paynter

In this module we will be learning about, and applying, a range of hermeneutical approaches to a range of biblical texts. We will mostly be focussing on biblical violence (which encompasses a broad selection of texts and genres, from narrative to psalm to apocalyptic). We will use a number of different hermeneutical tools such as narrative criticism, comparative study, reader-response, feminist criticism, and so on. At least half the classes will be seminar-style, which students will take in turns to lead, but pre-reading will be essential for all.

Advanced Study of a Christian Figure (Bonhoeffer)
TM41220 Dr Justin Stratis

This module will examine the life and theology of the 20th century German Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1909-1945). Noted as one of the first German churchmen to take a stand against the rise of Nazism (including its anti-semitism), Bonhoeffer famously took part in a conspiracy to assassinate Adolf Hitler –

an act for which he was imprisoned and ultimately executed in the Flossenbürg concentration camp just a few weeks before the end of the second world war. His book, *Discipleship*, written in the midst of a two year experiment running an underground seminary for the anti-Nazi Confessing Church is often cited as one of the most influential works of Christian literature, and his famed 'Letters and Papers from Prison', in which he famously asked 'Who is Jesus Christ for us today?', remains one of the most prophetic documents of the twentieth century. In this module, we will read and discuss mostly primary texts from Bonhoeffer's writings, including his doctoral thesis *Sanctorum Communio*, his Habilitationsschrift *Act and Being*, his Berlin Christology lectures, *Discipleship*, *Life Together*, *Ethics*, and *Letters and Papers*, amongst other sundry documents. Students will be required to write one 5000 word essay on a topic of their own choice relating to Bonhoeffer's life and/or theology. It is intended that students will gain a deep and critical understanding of Bonhoeffer's place and significance in modern church life, as well as become familiar enough with his writings so as to use them as a resource in their own lives and ministries.

Advanced Topic in Christian Doctrine (Ecclesiology) TMM40920 Dr Justin Stratis

In this module, we will examine the Christian doctrine of the church. The lectures begin with an attempt to ground ecclesiology within a proper trinitarian framework, before moving on to consider some of the earliest moments of controversy regarding this topic (including: the relation of the Church to Israel, the emergence of the episcopate and the primacy of Rome, St Cyprian's theory of 'no salvation outside of the church,' Donatism, and the credal tradition). From there, the question is posed concerning the place of 'mission' in the church's identity, framed in terms of the interrelation between world and church. We then move on to discuss the matter of the church's visibility vs. its alleged 'invisibility,' the relation of the church to the state, and the impact of post-colonialism, post-Christendom, and the ecumenical movement on ecclesial identity. This module aims to be relevant for students of all denominations and backgrounds, and intends to enable them to think more critically and doctrinally about their natural and traditioned intuitions about what the church is.

Assessment is by means of a 5000 word essay on a topic of the student's choice having to do with ecclesiology.

Liturgy and Spirituality TMM45220 Revd Dr Paul Roberts

This module uses the theme of Spirituality to understand the worship of the Church (its 'liturgy'). It looks at how worship engages with our experience of time, prayer and suffering. It also looks at how celebrating the sacraments of eucharist and initiation shape our understanding of our relationship with God and our understanding of our life in him. In the course of this study, there is a growing appreciation of the importance of worship and liturgy as a source for lived theology – the Christian spiritual life. Teaching is through means of class presentations and set reading.

Assessment is by two 3000 word essays. In the case of ordinands, the second will be an assessment of the current worshipping practice of the church that they attend. This module fulfils the liturgical study requirements for ordinands who are studying for the MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission.

Reflective Practice: Mission and Evangelism TMM43520 Revd Dr Howard Worsley

This module is foundational for students studying at Masters level because it weaves the various strands of biblical and theological insight into the context of mission. The core texts used are Bosch (2005), Bevans and Schroeder (2004) and Stroope M (2017).

Building on students' prior work in understanding the biblical basis for mission (Nussbaum (2005), Allen (1962) and Wright (2006)), the module will review the foundational legacy of Bosch's influential work 'Transforming Mission' and consider this in the light of Bevans and Schroeder's 'Constants in Contexts'. Consideration is given to how mission can be viewed since the apostolic era in the different ecclesiologies of the world church throughout history.

Particular attention is given to the current role of mission in this postcolonial era of the church in the west, noting the ambiguous role of mission in postmodernity. Other key areas of attention are given to 'reverse mission', business as mission, mission in a pluralist society and mission as public theology.

Themes in Moral Theology TMM41420 Revd Dr Sean Doherty

In the language of Romans 12, in joyful response to what God has done for us in Christ, we are called to live according to God's 'good, perfect and pleasing will.' This requires discernment.

This module offers students the opportunity to grow in that gift of discernment. Recognising that they will bring existing experience and wisdom into the module, it will seek to bring that experience into deeper conversation with the Christian tradition of moral thought.

The module begins by examining contemporary ethical approaches, before exploring how we should draw on the Bible and the Christian tradition in order to discern God's will. This is then brought to bear on several contemporary moral issues including medical, political and economic ethics. The module therefore adds up to an overview of selected themes in moral theology.

Chaplaincy and Christian Mission TMM42520 Revd Dr Mike Peat

This module offers an exciting opportunity for theological reflection and deeper insight into the burgeoning role of chaplaincy within the contemporary mission of the church. Teaching for the module takes place in a block week, and includes both consideration of the theological underpinnings of chaplaincy and an opportunity to learn about its practice from various tutors' personal experience. We will look more closely at chaplaincy in several different contexts, selected to cover 'traditional' sectors (e.g. hospital, prison, education) as well as more recent innovations (e.g. sports chaplaincy).

The module includes a substantial placement, arranged in consultation with the Module Coordinator and, where possible, tailored to the specific interests of each student. Assessment involves completing either a portfolio of tasks or an extended essay, and students will be expected to integrate learning from published texts with reflection on experience gained through placement.

Whether you are sensing a call to full-time chaplaincy, or part-time (paid or voluntary) alongside church-based or secular employment, this module will be a valuable opportunity to expand your understanding of chaplaincy and hone your discernment of its place in your future!

The following modules are delivered by the Centre for Anabaptist Studies (taught at Bristol Baptist College)

Advanced Topic in Christian Doctrine: Anabaptist Ecclesiology and Missiology TMM41520 Dr Stuart Murray Williams

This module reviews the religious options newly available in the early sixteenth century – Catholic, Protestant, Anabaptist and Spiritualist – and explores the notion of a believers' church within Anabaptism. It investigates the significance of Anabaptism as a disciplined community and missionary movement.

Early Anabaptists emphasised participatory worship, rather than passive attendance. We examine this and Anabaptist practices in the areas of baptism, communion and leadership, reflecting on perceived weaknesses within Anabaptist ecclesiology.

We explore the theological and biblical foundations of Anabaptist missiology, with particular reference to frequently quoted New Testament texts, and significant elements in the message early Anabaptists proclaimed. We give attention to their evangelistic practices, coordinated and uncoordinated, with particular reference to lifestyle witness. We also examine aspects of their socio-political engagement and pleas for religious liberty, before reflecting on the impact of their mission activities and the contemporary significance of what we have studied.

Advanced Study of a Christian Figure: The Life and Writings of Pilgram Marpeck

TMM41220 Dr Stuart Murray Williams

We reflect on the surprising recovery of Marpeck, a major Anabaptist pioneer, after centuries during which he disappeared from history and introduce the sources available for studying his life and writings. We set Marpeck in his sixteenth-century context, examine what is known about his life, and consider some of those who were influential on his development.

We explore the various debates in which Marpeck was involved throughout his life – with the Spiritualists, especially Caspar Schwenckfeld, the Reformers, especially Martin Bucer, and other Anabaptist communities.

We investigate Marpeck's theological convictions, with sections on Christology, ecclesiology and missiology, the sacraments, biblical interpretation, church and state, the sword and the oath.

The module invites students to consider how they respond to Marpeck, who was an unusual Anabaptist leader in some ways but is often regarded today as an attractive representative of the Anabaptist tradition. It looks at his influence in the sixteenth century and reflects on the contemporary significance of his teaching.

Key Issues in Christian Faith and Ethical Living: Biblical and Practical Peacemaking (10 credits – taught at Level 6)

TMM3177 Dr Stuart Murray Williams

This 10-credit module (which can be accompanied by a 10 credit Independent Learning Project module) introduces the commitment of the Anabaptist tradition to peacemaking, and then explores the three main approaches to war and peace in church history – pacifism, just war and holy war, before examining a number of contemporary approaches to peacemaking.

It provides an introduction to the teachings of the Old and New Testaments on issues of war and peace, violence and non-violence.

The module introduces the notion of the 'peace church' and examines a number of practices that characterise and help to form such churches. It includes consideration of the necessary theological foundations for these churches, and reflections on the perennial question about how one responds in situations of personal threats.

The module also explores one or more contemporary practical peacemaking initiatives that have been inspired by the Anabaptist vision.