



MA in Biblical Studies

Note

To be awarded the MA in Biblical Studies, students must complete five 20-credit taught modules (from the list below) and an 80-credit dissertation (TH7435). Note that not all modules will be available in any particular academic year, though care will be taken to ensure that students continue to have a range of options.

In order to ensure that students have the correct level of theoretical orientation to undertake advanced study, TH7401 Research Methods, Perspectives and Resources is required. Because of the significant focus on biblical exegesis a second module, TH7407 Exegetical and Hermeneutical Methods, is also compulsory.

Modules

TH7401 Research Methods, Perspectives and Resources (20 credits)

The module will include the following topics, essential to work at postgraduate level

- Critical thinking
- Analysing, evaluating, building and presenting arguments
- What is research? Advanced IT, web-based and other tools and resources; proposing and testing hypotheses; data collection.
- Practical theology and reflective practice
- Research methodologies – including qualitative and quantitative research
- Academic writing: style; structure; writing concisely; writing critically
- Bibliographies: building and managing a bibliography; appropriate use of sources

TH7405 Biblical Pneumatology (20 credits)

This module explores, compares and contrasts the way Old and New Testament writers understand the role and activity of the Spirit of God. It covers the following topics:

- A critical examination of view(s) of the role and activity of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, including: the Spirit and God, the Spirit and Creation, the Spirit and Prophecy, the Spirit and Leadership, the Spirit and Renewal and the Spirit and the Future
- A critical examination of the view(s) of the Spirit of God in the New Testament, focusing particularly on Pauline, Lukan and Johannine passages that deal with pneumatological issues.
- A critical examination of the continuity and discontinuity in the understanding of the Spirit between the Old and New Testaments.
- Discussion and analysis of the approaches to pneumatology of recent and current scholars, including those at the forefront of the discipline.

Students with relevant language skills will be expected to engage, at an appropriate level, with biblical texts in their original languages; and tutorial support for this will be provided

TH7406 Biblical Theology of Mission (20 credits)

This module looks at the imperative and practice of mission from a biblical perspective. It covers the following areas:

- Is there a theology of mission in the Old Testament? The Missio Dei in an Old Testament context. God's commitment to the non-Israelite nations in the Old Testament, evidenced in creation and divine covenants and the place of the nations in the divine purpose. The role of Israel/Judah in making God known; centripetal and centrifugal universalism; the extent to which the nations share in the blessings promised to Israel.
- What is mission in a New Testament context? Mission in the teachings of Jesus; mission in the synoptic gospels and Acts; mission in the (disputed and undisputed) Pauline corpus; mission in the Johannine corpus; mission in the general epistles.
- Conclusion and Application. Comparing and contrasting views of and approaches to mission in the Old and New Testaments. Is there a 'biblical theology of mission'? Application of 'biblical' patterns and practices to contemporary mission theology.
- Students with relevant language skills will be expected to engage, at an appropriate level, with biblical texts in their original languages; and tutorial support for this will be provided.

TH7407 Exegetical and Hermeneutical Methods (20 credits)

The module explores appropriate exegetical and hermeneutical methods in relation to Old and New Testament texts. It will discuss: key elements in reconstructing the text – including textual and historical criticisms; the significance of genre; translation – including grammatical and lexical issues; intertextuality; and historical and theological context; scholarly approaches to the interpretation of the text – including discussion of the location of meaning, structural criticism and newer literary approaches. Discussion of exegetical methods and hermeneutical approaches will be linked to specific Old and New Testament texts – with optional reference to the Hebrew and Greek text for those with appropriate existing language skills.

TH7435 Dissertation (80 credits)

This module is made up, primarily, of independent research, in an area of study chosen by the student, with some guidance by a supervisor.

Work on the dissertation commences with the completion of a Dissertation Proposal Form. This helps the student to refine his or her ideas and hone them into a narrow, focused piece of work defined by a simple, single-sentence research question. At this point, too, a supervisor is chosen. The assessment of the dissertation proposal, however, is purely formative and does not contribute to the student's final grade.

Once appointed, the supervisor will be on hand to give comment on samples of work and give guidance to the student throughout the research journey. The content of the dissertation will be indicated by the dissertation title, which will be finalised in consultation with the dissertation supervisor.

TH7436 The World of the Bible (20 credits)

This module looks at the Old and New Testaments against their geographical, historical, cultural and literary background and discusses the relationship between socio-historical context and exegesis and interpretation.

It will consider, critically, (i) historical texts and inscriptions and their relation to biblical historical narrative; (ii) scholarly views of the emergence and history of Israel; (iii) the relationship between ANE texts and the Old Testament, particularly flood and creation accounts; (iv) the influence of Old Testament and intertestamental texts on the New Testament; (v) the Jewish and Greco-Roman backgrounds to the New Testament, and their influence on the origins of Christianity.

TH7437 Paul's Letters: Method, Context and Theology

The module examines the biography of the Apostle Paul and the theological contribution of his writings to the New Testament and those letters influence in Christian theology. Special attention is given to themes of theology, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and ethics found within the undisputed Pauline corpus. Elements include:

- History of Pauline Studies
- A Chronology of Paul
- Paul the Missionary
- Paul's View of God
- The Centre of Paul: The Faithful Christ
- Soteriology and Pneumatology: Pauline Participation in Christ
- Anthropology in Paul
- Pauline Ethics
- Paul's understanding of Christian Community
- Eschatology and Paul