



BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY UNIT OUTLINE

GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY

UNIT TITLE	INTERPRETING JESUS IN AUSTRALIA
UNIT CODE	C74120
UNIT STATUS	Elective
HOST FIELD	C
PREREQUISITE/S	C51013; C73113 Introducing Theology
INCOMPATIBLES	-
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	All students do 7 hours per week study over a 13 week semester; This comprises weekly lectures and a weekly 1 hour seminar
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Odd Years – Semester 1
PREPARED BY	Revd Dr Ormond Rush
UNIT COORDINATOR	Revd Dr Ormond Rush
TEACHING STAFF	Revd Dr Ormond Rush
DATE PREPARED	11 February, 2004

Rationale

The core belief of Christians is that God has been revealed to them through Jesus Christ and that salvation comes through him. All other Christian belief derives from this foundational experience of divine revelation and divine salvation through Jesus Christ. A systematic theology of Jesus Christ is an important area of systematic theology. Awareness of the hermeneutical and methodological issues involved in the interpretation of Jesus Christ is an important competence for doing Christology in an Australian context.

Relation to Course

This elective unit teaches specialist knowledge and skills in systematic theology (Field C) by focusing on the doctrines related to Jesus Christ. As stated in the *Overall Rationale for the Postgraduate Programs in Theology 2004* (Section 3.2.1), “the event in human history on which the Christian religion is founded, the historical event of Jesus Christ, requires constant re-interpretation throughout history from diverse contexts.” The unit therefore is an appropriate focus for postgraduate study because of the centrality of belief in Jesus Christ for all beliefs addressed in systematic theology and the need to examine the specific Australian context within which the interpretation of that event takes place. The particular generic skills developed relate to greater awareness of hermeneutical issues in the interpretation of research data.

The postgraduate unit focuses on developing skills related to the interpretative process at work in the development of Christian belief in Jesus Christ. This elective presupposes the introductory knowledge and skills acquired in *C51013/C73113 Introducing Theology*.

Aims

This unit aims to examine the life, ministry death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the genesis of belief in his divinity through attention to the witness of Scripture and contemporary historical Jesus research, as well as trends in contemporary christologies.

The unit aims to provide postgraduate students with critical hermeneutical and methodological skills for interpreting Jesus Christ from an Australian context.

Learning Outcomes

Students will focus on the hermeneutical and methodological issues relevant for re-interpreting such beliefs from new perspectives.

On successful completion of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. Articulate the elements of a coherent methodology for Christology;
2. Articulate a coherent hermeneutical framework for the understanding, interpretation and application of beliefs in Jesus Christ;
3. Outline the distinctive features and historical context of Jesus' mission, ministry, and death, and the belief in his resurrection;
4. Trace the development of soteriological and christological interpretations of Jesus Christ up till the sixth century;
5. Apply a coherent hermeneutical framework and methodology for the understanding, interpretation and application of beliefs in Jesus Christ from a specific Australian context;
6. Demonstrate a capacity to engage in constructive learning through lecture and tutorial teaching, peer discussion and critical independent research, reading and writing;
7. Write extended essays and present seminar papers on directed or chosen topics.

Content

The postgraduate student will examine the following areas addressed in the lectures, but from the specific foci of theological hermeneutics and theological methodology:

- Topic 1: What is Soteriology? What is Christology?: Towards a Unified Christology
- Topic 2: Jesus' Vision and Program: The Reign of God
- Topic 3: Boundary Breaker: The Embodiment of Compassion
- Topic 4: "Educating Peter": The Sage of Subversive Wisdom
- Topic 5: A Prophet Enacting God's Coming to Rule
- Topic 6: A Prophet's Death
- Topic 7: Jesus' Resurrection and the Disciples' Experience
- Topic 8: Interpreting the Experience and the Story: Hermeneutical Issues
- Topic 9: The Diversity of NT Christologies
- Topic 10: The Christological Controversies: The First 6 Centuries
- Topic 11: Christ and Context: Liberation and Feminist Christologies
- Topic 12: The Uniqueness of Christ and Interreligious Dialogue
- Topic 13: Towards a Unified Christology

Organisation and Teaching Strategies

This unit of study consists principally in readings, discussions, and lectures. Two hours per week is allotted for lectures on specific topics of study in the unit. Every week during the semester, postgraduate students will gather with the lecturer in dedicated discussion groups for one hour. The particular readings allotted to them are related to the topics of study in the unit. The readings and discussions are related to the assessment topics of the unit.

After the initial meeting, students will be required to read through the core materials before the next seminar. After the group discussion and input at the second seminar, the group will chose their topic for specialisation within this unit and will be required to continue their own research before each of the following seminars where they will share the fruits of their research. The students will be required to post their weekly reflections to the online unit Discussion Board.

These presentations and a final integrating essay will provide the items for assessment of learning.

Assessment

Three items will assess the above objectives.

Items 1 and 2: One Seminar Presentation (2500 words; weighting of 40%)

At the first postgraduate seminar, each student will select from a range of topics provided a topic related to the hermeneutical and methodological foci of the unit. The student will be required to present a twenty-minute paper to the group on that topic (according to a timetable agreed upon by the group) and guide further discussion on the issue. This item will assess all the postgraduate objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5 above.

Criteria for Assessment

1. demonstration during seminar presentation of a clear understanding of the issues, key ideas and concepts related to the particular topic chosen;
2. demonstration of proficiency in researching, selecting and organising information relevant to the topic; structured argumentation; informed conclusions;
3. clear communication; accurate use of subject specific terminology.

Item 3: Written Essay (4000 words; weighting 60%)

By week 8, the student will propose to the lecturer a topic for the essay. This item will assess objectives 3 and 5 above.

Criteria for Assessment:

1. concentration on the set topic
2. communicability and overall persuasiveness of the argument
3. presentation of a well-formatted text using the required style-sheet for referencing
4. coherent structure and progression of the essay's thesis
5. evidence of research and critical reading
6. demonstration of an advanced understanding of the issues involved, an advanced ability to integrate and show the interrelationship of those issues, and an ability to present a personal synthesis through a thesis.

Generic Skills

- consolidation and adaptation of undergraduate skills related to critical reasoning, evaluation of scholarly opinions, independent learning, and the ability to collect, analyse and organise ideas and present a persuasive argument of a scholarly position regarding a topic;
- advanced skills in research, including primary and secondary texts.
- advanced skills in integration of a variety of research material.
- advanced writing skills: organisation, focus and conciseness.
- advanced skills in use of information technologies.

Textbooks

Required

A book of readings will be provided, containing articles and chapters from books of approximately 35 pages each – normally three articles each week for postgraduate students

Recommended

Wright, N.T. and Marcus Borg. *The Meaning of Jesus*. London: SPCK, 1999.

Academic and General Resource Requirements

References - Books

Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

- Cook, Michael L. *Christology as Narrative Quest*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997.
- Clifford, Anne M. and Anthony J. Godzieba (eds.). *Christology: Memory, Inquiry, Practice*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003.
- Dunn, James D. G. *Jesus Remembered*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2003.
- Goergen, Donald. *Jesus, Son of God, Son of Mary, Immanuel, A Theology of Jesus, Volume 4*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1995.
- Haight, Roger. *Jesus, Symbol of God*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Hurtado, Larry W. *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003.
- Loewe, William P. *The College Student's Introduction to Christology*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996.
- McDermott, Brian O. *Word Become Flesh: Dimensions of Christology*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1993.
- Meyer, Marvin W. and Charles Hughes, eds. *Jesus Then & Now: Images of Jesus in History and Christology*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001.
- Rausch, Thomas P. *Who Is Jesus?: An Introduction to Christology*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elizabeth. *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet. Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York: Continuum, 1994.
- Wright, N. T. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. London: SPCK, 1996.

References – Journal Articles

- Byrne, Brendan. "Gospel Narrative and the Jesus of History: Where Should Christology Begin?" *Pacifica* 13 (2000), 49-66.
- Cahill, Michael. "An Uncertain Jesus: Theological and Scholarly Ambiguities." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 63 (1998), 22-37.
- Del Agua, Agustín. "The Narrative Identity of Christians According to the New Testament." *Concilium*. Creating Identity (2000), 91-99.
- Fortin-Melkevik, Anne. "The Identity of the Christian Following Jesus Christ." *Concilium*. Who Do you Say That I Am? (1997), 91-101.
- Haight, Roger. "The Impact of Jesus Research on Christology." *Louvain Studies* 21 (1996), 216-228.
- Haight, Roger. "Two Types of Christology." *Chicago Studies* 38 (1999), 117-127.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. "Jesus, the Wisdom of God: A Biblical Basis for Non-Androcentric Christology." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 61 (1985): 261-294.
- Keating, James F. "The Invincible Allure of the Historical Jesus for Systematic Theology." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66 (2001), 211-226.
- Rush, Ormond. "Sensus Fidei: Faith 'Making Sense' of Revelation." *Theological Studies* 62 (2001), 231-261.
- Rush, Ormond. "Interpreting Jesus." In *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction for Students*. Tuggerah, NSW: Social Science Press, forthcoming 2004.