



BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

UNIT OUTLINE MASTER OF THEOLOGY MASTER OF MINISTRY

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| UNIT TITLE | RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THEOLOGIANs II: THESIS WRITING SKILLS |
| UNIT CODES | X74098 |
| UNIT STATUS | Core |
| HOST FIELD | - |
| PREREQUISITE/S | - |
| INCOMPATIBLES | - |
| CREDIT POINTS | 0cp |
| REQUIREMENTS | One full day seminar plus evening colloquium |
| FREQUENCY OF OFFERING | Each semester |
| PREPARED BY | BCT Postgraduate Research Committee |
| UNIT COORDINATOR | Dr Richard Colledge |
| TEACHING STAFF | A team coordinated by the BCT Postgraduate Research Committee and consisting of faculty from each of the research fields within theology, plus visiting postgraduate educationalists from local universities. |
| DATE PREPARED | 10 September 2003 |

Rationale

This is the second of two related units designed to facilitate the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate research at a masters level, and to enable students to construct a coherent and productive coursework masters course, with their masters thesis research interest as the integrating focus. Both units are essentially practical in orientation and focus on the needs and requirements of theological research and researchers. The emphasis is on masters-level research and the production of masters theses and dissertations.

Relation to Course

X74097 *Research Methodology for Theologians I* and X74098 *Research Methodology for Theologians II* are compulsory for all students in the BCT's masters courses, and are both taught each semester. The first unit assists students to develop a viable thesis/research proposal, while this second unit deals with the practicalities of writing the thesis. In conjunction with these methodology units, students are required to attend at least four postgraduate research colloquia, and to make a presentation to at least one colloquia during their course. Regular attendance at all postgraduate colloquiums (2 per semester) throughout the duration of their masters course is highly recommended.

Aims

This unit aims to give participants practical guidance in the construction of thesis research projects and the procurement of appropriate supervision and to facilitate the successful completion of such research work in theology and ministry.

Objectives

By the time of the awarding of this unit,

- 1) The participants will have learned how to compose a viable and credible formal research project proposal as already part of their thesis research
- 2) The participants will be developing their research project in partnership with the BCT theology and ministry research community made up of both faculty and postgraduate students.
- 3) By such means and their own effort, participants will be in process of developing a masters level thesis research competency in theological or ministerial research.

Content

- What a BCT Masters thesis has to look like, precisely: formatting guidelines, and the differences between the literary genre of 'thesis' and that of 'essay'
- How to put together and carry out a credible formal research proposal;
- Reading and writing for research purposes
- The choice of supervisor(s), kinds of supervision, relating to supervisors
- The importance of planning and scheduling: network planning, critical path analysis, setting up critical points or milestones
- Structuring the final write-up
- Ensuring that argument takes place
- Proofreading and final production
- Conference papers and publication along the way and of the final product
- Advanced Information Technology for researchers in theology and ministerial studies.
- The importance of the BCT Colloquium structure and of using it well for testing out formal thesis proposals and for presentation of results
- Other input relevant to postgraduate research from postgraduate educationalists.

Organisation and Teaching Strategies

- 1) Input and discussion in a *one day seminar* or a series of *evening seminars* with input from all Fields and library and other faculty within the BCT, from the Dean of the BCT, and from visiting postgraduate educationalists concerning topics relevant to theological and ministerial research and the research profile of the BCT.
- 2) Colloquia, consisting in input relevant to postgraduate research from visiting postgraduate educationalists from local universities, especially Griffith University; plus time for set-piece student presentations including of their thesis proposals and discussion of such, and less formal research in progress reports.
- 3) For the convenience of the BCT postgraduate research community and for the sake of more effective communication of information and ideas, the BCT also provides its postgraduate students and those of the Griffith School of Theology with their own presence on its website and an email mailing list.

Assessment

In line with its essentially practical focus, this unit will be credited to the student on the successful completion of the following tasks:

- Attendance and participation in the seminar
- Attendance and active participation in at least one colloquium
- The composition and acceptance by supervisor(s) and BCT committees as appropriate of a credible and viable formal **research proposal**, according to guidelines and judged according to criteria provided during the seminars.
- At least one **presentation** of research in progress or of final results, at a postgraduate Colloquium. This presentation will be followed by discussion and feedback on both method and content from faculty and other members of the BCT research community (this satisfies the requirement of 'active participation').

The unit will be credited to the student with the grade of SS.

References – Core

- Barzun, Jacques, and Graff, Henry, F. *The Modern Researcher*. Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., N.Y., 1970.
- Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory G. and Williams, Joseph M. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995.
- Conrad, Linda, Editor. *Developing as Researchers*. Griffith Institute for Higher Education, Griffith University, Nathan, 1994.
- Howard, Keith and Sharp, John A. *The Management of a Student Research Project*. Gower Publishing, Aldershot, Hampshire, 1983.
- McIntosh, Lawrence D. *A Style Manual for the Presentation of Papers and Theses in Religion and Philosophy*. Centre for Information Studies in association with ANZTLA and ANZATS, Wagga Wagga, 1994.
- McIntosh, Lawrence D. *Religion and Theology: A guide to current reference sources*. Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, 1997.
- Material specific to individual research Fields of Theology and Ministry within the BCT will be supplied by faculty from those fields in the unit of the seminar series.

References – Supplementary

- Bruce, Christine. *Developing Students' Library Research Skills*. HERDSA, PROBLARC, Campbelltown, NSW, 1992. Esp. Section Three: Postgraduate Students.
- Crotty, Michael. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1998.
- Graves, Norman, and Varma, Ved, *Working for a doctorate: A guide for the humanities and social sciences*. Routledge, London, 1997.
- Moses, Ingrid. *Supervising Postgraduates*. HERDSA, Univ. of NSW, Kensington, 1985.
- Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun, editor. *Starting Research - Supervision and Training*. Tertiary Education Institute, University of Queensland, 1992.