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|  | **MTG232.7**  **Theology in Context: The Spirit and the Church** |
| **Semester 1, 2025** |

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| Unit Supervisor and Lecturer | Fr Dr John D’Alton, B.Th, B.Min, Grad. Dip. Mission Studies, PhD (Monash).  [john-scmoi@adelaide.tabor.edu.au](mailto:john-scmoi@adelaide.tabor.edu.au) | | |
| Delivery | Tuesdays 6pm – 8pm  24 February- 13 June  Fully Online  Fully Online | | |
| AQF Level | 9 | Credit Points | 6 |

**UNIT DESCRIPTION**

This unit develops the students’ understanding of doctrines of God, the Trinity, divine revelation, creation, humanity and questions of providence. The unit aims to help students discuss these topics inter-contextually: that is, alongside contemporary western evangelical scholarship, students will learn to effectively engage with theologians from various historical contexts (e.g. Patristics, Medieval Scholastics, Reformers), cultural and religious contexts (e.g. indigenous, Asian, Buddhist), ecclesiastical contexts (e.g. Orthodox, Catholic, Baptist), as well as other often-marginalised voices. Key topics include: the attributes of God; sources for theology; Biblical authority; the Imago Dei; the creation of the universe; Trinitarian debates, such as Arianism; theodicy, evil and suffering, the Trinity in worship and other religions.

**PREREQUISITES**

N/A

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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| **ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS TASK THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:** | **RELATED CONTENT** | **RELATED ASSESSMENT** |
| 1) Analyse the historical and cultural developments within the doctrines of God, the Trinity, divine revelation, creation, humanity, and providence | Lectures and readings Weeks 1-13 | 1,2,3 |
| 2) Evaluate various approaches to these doctrines cogently, with a view to effectively recommending them in various contexts the students may encounter | Lectures and readings Weeks 1-13 | 1,2,3 |
| 3) Justify their own position on key issues within one of the relevant theological topics, with reference to relevant scholarship | Lectures and readings Weeks 1-13 | 1,2,3 |
| 4) Synthesise various approaches to a relevant theological topic from across the historical trajectory of the Christian tradition, in order to create a coherent framework for the given topic | Lectures and readings Weeks 1-13 | 1,2,3 |

**CHANGES MADE SINCE LAST OFFERED** (in response to Student Unit Evaluations)

N/A

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (Students should purchase this/these texts)

Anatolios, Khaled, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Baker Academic, 2018).

Anatolios, Khaled, *Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church* (Baker Academic, 2014).

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Augustine, *The Trinity,* trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2010).

Aquinas, Thomas, Summa Theologia Treatise on the Blessed Trinity (Prima Pars, questions 27-43).

Allen, Michael, “The Triune God,” in *The New Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

Barth, Karl, Church Dogmatics, IV/1, trans. G. W. Bromiley, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975).

St. Basil the Great, *Hexaemeron.* (https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf208/npnf208.viii.html).

St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* (Yonkers, New York: St. Vladimir’s, 2011), chapters 1, 7, 10, 25–27.

Bevans, Stephen B, and Katalina Tahaafe-Williams. *Contextual Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke, 2012).

[Druzhinina](https://www.amazon.com.au/Olga-A-Druzhinina/e/B01IAEG01U?ref_=litb_aut), Olga A., *The Ecclesiology of St. Basil the Great: A Trinitarian Approach to the Life of the Church* (Pickwick Publications, 2016).

Emery, Gilles, and Matthew Levering, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (Oxford, 2014).

Emery, Gilles, and Matthew Levering, ed., *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011).

Emery, Gilles. *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

Fiorenza, Francis Schussler, and John P. Galvin, eds. *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives* (2nd Edition. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011).

Green, Gene L., Stephen T. Pardue, and Khiok-Khng Yeo. *The Trinity among the Nations: The Doctrine of God in the Majority World* (Eerdmans, 2015).

Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius* (St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002).

Holmes, Stephen R. *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (IVP, 2012).

Jamieson R. B. and Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis* (Baker Academic, 2022).

Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978).

McGrath, Alister E. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (2nd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

Phan, [Peter C.](https://www.amazon.com.au/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Peter+C.+Phan&text=Peter+C.+Phan&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books-single-index) *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity* (Cambridge, 2011).

Rusch, William G. ed., *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Augsburg, 1980).

Smith, Brandon D. ed., *The Trinity in the Canon: A Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Practical Proposal* (B&H Academic, 2023).

Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, trans. Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1948), sections 1-30.

Further resources, including recommended and required pre-reading texts, websites, and an extended bibliography, are listed on the unit site.

**SEMESTER PROGRAM**

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| **Week beginning** | **Week** | **Lecture / Workshop Topic and foci** | **Required Pre-Readings** |
| 24 Feb | 1 | Why Trinitarian theology matters/ Introduction to Orthodox and other views. Bobrinskoy chapter. | Lossky, *Mystical Theology,* chap.3 “God in Trinity”. |
| 3 March | - | NO CLASSES - *First Week of Great Lent* |  |
| 10 March | 2 | Trinity in the Old and New Testaments. | Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, chap. 2. |
| 17 March | 3 | Historical Development of Trinitarianism pre-Nicaea.  Irenaeus and Tertullian. | St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III.16–19 |
| 24 March | 4 | Trinity, Athanasius and Nicaea.  On the Incarnation | Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines chapter 9: “The Nicene Crisis,” 223–251. |
| 31 March | 5 | Trinity in the Cappadocians.  St Gregory the Theologian’s *Orations*, St Basil *On the Holy Spirit,* St Basil on Trinitarian Ecclesiology ([Druzhinina](https://www.amazon.com.au/Olga-A-Druzhinina/e/B01IAEG01U?ref_=litb_aut)). | McGuckin, *The Trinity in the Greek Fathers.* |
| 7 April | 6 | Trinity and Worship.  Trinity and Creation themes in Theophany service, Theophany Matins and Vespers, St John Chrysostom liturgy. | Theophany Matins and Vespers |
| 14 April | - | NO CLASSES - *Holy Week* |  |
| 21 April | - | NO CLASSES – *bright Week* |  |
| 28 April | 7 | Post-Nicaean and Chalcedonian reflections on Trinitarian Ecclesiology and Soteriology. Theopaschism, St Augustine. | Viezure, *Verbum Crucis* pp. 161-202. |
| 5 May | 8 | Trinitarian Theology in St John of Damascus.  Divine Providence, Creation, etc. | *Exact Exposition,* Book1, Chapters 1-8. |
| 12 May | 9 | Theological implications of Creation.  St Basil’s *Hexaemeron*. Rose, *Genesis.* | *Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church,* chapter 5. |
| 19 May | 10 | Trinity, Creation, and the Restoration of Paradise.  St Maximos + St Basil’s eschatological vision of the Trinity and Church, Papanikolaou and Sophia. | *Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church,* chapter 6. |
| 26 May | 11 | Trinity, Creation, Church, and Icons.  Coakley and icons of the Father | Benz, *The Orthodox Icon*, chapter 1. |
| 2 June | 12 | Trinity, Creation, and the modern world.  Augustine and Aquinas in the West | Kärkkäinenon article on Moltmann and Pannenberg |
| 9 June | 13 | Trinity and Prayer, and Trinity in other religions.  Murphy Article + Kim, Clooney, Burrell. | Fredericks, *Primordial Vow* (Trinity and Buddhism). |

**ASSESSMENT TASKS**

**Due Dates Summary:**

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| **Assessment** | **Words** | **Value** | **Due Date** |
| 1. **Class Discussion Papers on Assigned Readings**   Describe various theological positions and contexts for each week’s topic, based on the readings under discussion each week. (5 papers of 400 words = >2000 words equivalent) | >2000 | 30% | Weekly presentation in class starting week 2, upload due the same week on Fridays 23:59 (AEST)  (Papers start from week 2, but week 1 reading must be read and prepared before class ready for discussion in week 1) |
| 1. **Research Essay**   Investigate one or two major issues within the unit’s various topics, with reference to relevant scholarship. | 3000-3500 | 50% | Week 12 Friday, 6 June, 23:59 (AEST) |
| 1. **Oral Exam (Hurdle requirement)**   A 1-1 oral exam consisting of approximately 10-15 questions to determine that the student has sufficiently engaged with and understood the course material.  This is a HURDLE requirement: Students ***must*** pass this assessment to pass the entire unit. | 30 minutes | 20% | Week 13 or 14  Date and time to be arranged in Week 11 or 12, and oral exam will be held in Week 13 or 14 via Zoom. |

**Task Description:**

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| **ASSESSMENT TASK 1**  Class Discussion Papers on Assigned Readings  30%  Due: Weekly starting week 2  2000 words |
| **Instructions**  Students are to produce 5 papers of >400 words length and deliver them in class for approx. 5 minutes (using a Powerpoint slidepack is optional), with an analysis of key points of the week’s assigned reading. During week 1 students will pick which of the 12 possible week’s readings they will focus on. This presentation should include the following elements: key points from the reading related to the subject themes, some analytic comments (for example its relationship to other writers), and 1 or 2 points about the context of the text. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  There are many writings relevant to the topics of the Trinity and Creation across 2000 years that need to be understood in context and in relation to other texts. Students are expected to become aware of the breadth of views and their historical and theological contexts. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 2**  **Title of Assessment**  Research Essay  50%  Due: Week 12 Friday, 6 June, 23:59 (AEST)  3000-3500 words |
| **Instructions**  Students are to write a logically structured and clearly presented composition that demonstrates engagement with a representative range of the church fathers and scholarly literature, ability in textual interpretation, and analytical skills in addressing the topic.  Choose from one of the following two topics ((a) or (b)), or else a topic as agreed in writing with the lecturer (c):   1. Discuss three heretical views of the Trinity and how the Church responded to these (including modalistic monarchianism). Include 200-300 words on how these views sometimes are present today. 2. What is the significance of the prayers being either to the whole holy Trinity, or to the Father, Christ, or the Holy Spirit, in different parts of the Liturgy of St Basil the Great? How does this shape the spirituality of the Christian? Include 200-300 words of personal experiential reflection. 3. Other topics could include a textual analysis of the developments of the doctrine of the Trinity from Athanasius to the Cappadocians, analysis of Aquinas’s Trinitarianism in the light of St John of Damascus, Orthodox responses to Moltmann and Pannenberg, Trinitarian concepts in Dionysius and Lossky, etc. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  The topics of Trinity and Creation encompass many related areas, and students need to be able to engage these themes in depth and with breadth. This major essay requires students to read widely and analytically, and discuss a topic at significant depth, relating to the material from theological, historical, and practical angles. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 3**  Oral Exam (Hurdle requirement)  20 %  Due:Date and time to be arranged in Week 11 or 12, and oral exam will be held in Week 13 or 14 via Zoom.  30 minutes. |
| **Instructions**  Students will respond to some simple and more complex questions and brief texts related to various aspects of the unit’s material, and explain their answers. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  The oral exam will determine to what extent the student has absorbed unit material. A 1-1 oral exam consisting of approximately 10-15 questions to determine that the student has sufficiently engaged with and understood the course material. This is a HURDLE requirement: Students ***must*** pass this assessment to pass the entire unit. This avoids any concerns with students using AI for other assessments. |

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ASSESSMENTS**

Please refer to this Unit’s website tile *Assignments* (hyperlink) for further information about assignments, assessment criteria, grading scale, and the process for late submission of assignments.

Refer to the [*Student Academic Toolkit*](https://learn.tabor.edu.au/course/view.php?id=3718)for information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, referencing, formatting, and for relevant links to Tabor and faculty policy. If you are unsure, consult your lecturer or program coordinator for advice.

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS UNIQUE TO THIS UNIT**

N/A