Bachelor of Ministry, Bachelor of Theology and Related Programs

TH401/D
The Knowledge of God

Semester 1, 2016

Malyon College
is an approved institution of the
Australian College of Theology

TH401/D is offered by Malyon College as part of the Bachelor of Ministry and Bachelor of Theology, authorized for distance and contact delivery by the college, which is an accredited award of the Australian College of Theology (ACT).
At Malyon we recognise that the world is changing. These are times of great challenge and opportunity. Our commitment is to raising up a generation of influential Christians who have a strong biblical base, skills in leadership and ministry, and a heart for God.

We have been training Christian leaders for over 100 years, and we’ve learnt a few things about theological training. Our graduates are serving all over the world as pastors, cross-cultural workers, workplace leaders, chaplains, church leaders and theological faculty.

Malyon offers full-time and part-time study options through lecture, intensive and distance modes. We have excellent resources for students including a large library, wireless internet and 24 hour access to the campus. All our awards are accredited through the Australian College of Theology.

The Australian College of Theology

The ACT was established under the auspices of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in 1891. The ACT is a company limited by guarantee governed by a nine-member Board of Directors. The Anglican Primate of Australia presides as the chairman of meetings of the company which consists of 54 persons (in 2010). The ACT is an Australasian provider of state accredited higher education courses leading to awards in theology and other disciplines related to Christian ministry. The ACT operates as an ecumenical consortium of some 2,500 students enrolled in 19 Bible and theological colleges approved to teach the awards of the ACT. These awards range from two-year diplomas, three-year undergraduate and coursework masters degrees to masters and doctoral research degrees.

The ACT has a centrally devised and managed curriculum and a quality assurance process that are applied across the whole network of affiliated colleges. The day-to-day educational system is managed by the Dean from the ACT office in Sydney. Academic governance is the responsibility of the Academic Board which oversees all academic activities of the College. The standing committees of the Academic Board share this responsibility by monitoring the quality of delivery and resourcing, developing policy, and reviewing the course structure for research, coursework and diploma courses. The membership of the Academic Board and its committees is comprised mostly of faculty members of affiliated colleges. A number of senior university academics are represented to help ensure that ACT practice (especially in the outcome of the consideration of research examiner’s reports and general academic policy) remains comparable with the standards of and best practice in the university sector.

As a HEP under the Higher Education Support Act, the College was required to undergo a quality audit conducted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). The AUQA Audit Report was publicly released on the AUQA website in February 2007.

In 2010 the company consists of 54 members composed in the following way:
(1) the Anglican Primate of Australian and the Dean of the ACT,
(2) the principals of 10 Anglican Theological Colleges,
(3) 21 persons elected by the House of Bishops of the General Synod,
(4) the principals of 11 affiliated colleges approved to deliver the research degrees of the ACT,
(5) 5 graduates holding an ACT research degree,
(6) 5 graduates holding any other degree of the ACT.
The mission of Malyon College, confessed in its purpose statement and rooted in God’s own mission (’missio Dei’), is to develop Christian leaders who not only know the gospel but also trust it and live it out in their personal lives, ministry and mission. In service of this goal the suite of theology units at Malyon College has two aims. It helps students to begin to formulate a coherent understanding of the gospel (usually called systematic theology) and then assists them to begin thinking through its ramifications for their everyday lives (usually called practical theology). In sum, the units provide a creative space within which students can improvise and rehearse a performance which befits the unfolding drama of what the Triune God is doing throughout history in preparation for doing so upon the world stage.

The recommended introduction to the suite of theology units at Malyon College, Theology for Everyday Life (PC421), acquainted students with the usefulness of theology (i.e. a true understanding of the gospel which directs the Church’s practice) by allowing them a firsthand experience of how theological reflection upon all of life can facilitate the fulfilment of their vocation to “do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor.10:31). The current unit, The Knowledge of God (TH401), now takes students two steps further. Firstly, it clarifies how we can know the being and acts of God at all and it rehearses the faithful performance of this epistemology in Christian life, ministry and mission. It then begins to employ this theological method in order to formulate an understanding of creation (including providence, humanity, sin and evil) and considers what this understanding implies for how we live.

This unit is valued at 4 credit points.

8 cps of foundational OT and/or NT study, plus 4cps of CH or TH

None

The unit is made up of the following sections and sub-sections:
Foundation
1. The main loci of theological knowledge and their interaction.
2. Connections between the content of theology and the practice of faith.

Section A: The Knowledge of God
1. The concepts of revelation and inspiration.
2. The place and nature of Scripture and natural theology.
3. The issues raised by reason, authority and experience.

Section B: The Doctrine of Creation (or ‘God and the World’)
1. Creation and providence.
2. Humanity as created.

Unit Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, students should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

1. Theological loci and how they interact
2. How God is known: the concepts of revelation and inspiration and the place and nature of Scripture and natural theology; reason, authority and experience
3. God’s relationship with the world: creation and providence; humanity as created; sin and evil
4. Implications of the knowledge of God and of his relationship to the world for Christian life

Skills

be able to -

1. Interpret the Bible theologically
2. Understand the major creeds and confessions and other classical theological statements
3. Trace the interrelationships with the major themes of Christian theology
4. Identify the role of cultural and ecclesial contexts in the task of Christian theology
5. Analyse the relationship between Christian doctrine and individual and corporate Christian life
6. And
7. Present an analytical, evidence based argument or reflection

Application

be in a position to -
1. Inform their Christian thinking in both formal and informal study with perspectives about the knowledge of God and his relationship with the world
2. Show how the knowledge of God and His world is appropriated in personal life and the life of the community
3. Apply the knowledge of God and his world to situations and issues in contemporary church and society

**Workload Requirement**

A unit will generally require about 10 hours per week for lectures for contact students or home study for distance students, preparation and revision, and assignment work over thirteen weeks. In addition, two study weeks are worked into each semester. Excluding the study weeks, this generally averages out as follows:

1. Contact students:
   a. Lectures – 3 hours per week;
   b. Preparation – 2 hours per week;
   c. Assignments – 5 hours per week.
2. Distance students:
   a. Home study; including forums and revisions – 5 hours per week;
   b. Assignments – 5 hours per week.

**Learning Guides**

Students should access the Learning Guides on the unit Moodle page for guidance through their studies for the semester.

**Assessment Requirements**

The student shall complete the following assessment requirements:

1. **10 forum posts** (35%)
2. **Research Essay** (2500 words, 40%)
3. **Final Exam** (one hour, 25%)

Contact students will be expected to attend all lectures; while the forum posts are the distance student’s equivalent of classroom interaction. Just as class attendance is compulsory for on-campus students, forum participation is compulsory for distance students.

*Students who fail to attend lectures or complete forum posts satisfactorily may be failed.*
Required Resources

In order to complete the unit, the student will be required to have access to the following resources:


Note that the latter volume, by Vanhoozer, is accessible in ebook format from the Malyon Library Catalogue.

Further learning resources will be made available on Moodle, our Online Learning Centre. These resources may include articles, extracts, contact lecture notes and other learning activities.

Lecture Schedule (Draft)

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<tr>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 Feb</td>
<td>Introduction to Systematic Theology &amp; TH401</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Section A. The Knowledge of God</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>22 Feb</td>
<td>Christ: the Beginning and End of Wisdom</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>29 Feb</td>
<td>Scripture: the Authoritative Script – Part 1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7 Mar</td>
<td>Scripture: the Authoritative Script – Part 2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>14 Mar</td>
<td>Language and Hermeneutics</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>21 Mar</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
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<td>s/w</td>
<td>28 Mar</td>
<td>STUDY WEEK</td>
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<td>s/w</td>
<td>4 Apr</td>
<td>STUDY WEEK</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11 Apr</td>
<td>Nature: Reason and Experience</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>18 Apr</td>
<td>Religious Experience</td>
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<td>Section B. The Doctrine of Creation</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>25 Apr</td>
<td>Creation – Part 1</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>2 May</td>
<td>Creation – Part 2</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>9 May</td>
<td>Humanity</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>16 May</td>
<td>Sin &amp; Evil</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>23 May</td>
<td>Unit Summary &amp; Review</td>
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<td>s/w</td>
<td>30 May</td>
<td>STUDY WEEK</td>
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<td>Semester Examinations</td>
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The single passion and vocation which Andrew Dunstan (BMin, BTh (Hons I), MPhil, DPhil (cand.)) prayerfully pursues anew each morning is for the attention of Christian leaders to be so caught by the gospel of the good, true and beautiful God that they embody it in endless faithful and striking improvisations in their ministry, mission and Christian lives.

Andrew became a Christian when an encounter with the gospel for the first time during a WEC High School camp sparked a powerful revolution of his entire thought and life. He concluded thereafter that God was enlisting him to the ministry of the gospel as a pastor.

After initial studies in psychology at the University of Queensland, Andrew completed a BMin and BTh (Hons) through Malyon College. Further convinced of the power and worth of the gospel through his theology lectures under Jim Gibson, yet troubled by the tendency of many pastors to let other sources shape their habits of ministry and piety, Andrew sensed his calling specify into a vocation to be a pastor-theologian: to help forge both a theology (i.e. explication of the gospel) whose goal is practice and a practice of Christian life, mission and ministry whose basis is truly theological (i.e. shaped by the gospel). This catalysed an honours thesis which investigated the Scottish theologian TF Torrance’s understanding of why the gospel exercises authority over people, and especially the role that both its ‘depth’ and ‘compulsion’ have in this.

After several years rehearsing a theological practice of ministry as an associate pastor at North-East Baptist Church (Nundah), a social worker, a volunteer with WEC and SU Queensland and an itinerant speaker, Andrew won the FJ Church Scholarship which provided almost $50 000 to study towards his vocation. Moving to England with his wife, Elspeth (Elf), he completed a Master of Philosophy specialising in modern theology at the University of Oxford under the supervision of Dr Joel Rasmussen and Reverend Professor Paul Fiddes. His thesis explored the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth’s understanding of the beauty (i.e. persuasiveness) of the glory of God. He is currently in the final stages of expanding this under the supervision of Rev. Prof. Paul Fiddes in order to complete a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford. Whilst at the University of Oxford Andrew had the distinction of being the Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) at the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture, of being offered a scholarship to work under Rev Prof Alister McGrath and of completing his first academic publication: a book chapter on Barth’s theology of beauty (translated into Russian!).

Andrew and his wife returned to Malyon College in late 2013 in order to develop the college’s vision of the centrality of the gospel to systematic theology (knowledge) into one which also places it at the centre of practical theology (practice) as Lecturer in Theology and New Testament.

Contact details
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Assessment Instructions

In completing assessments, students should note that:

1. The College requirements for the writing and submission of assignments are to be adhered to at all times, as marks will be deducted for incorrect and poor presentation. Of particular importance is that the official College title page is to be used, and that the word length be indicated.

2. The current Assignment Style and Writing Guides are available to all students on the Moodle site; it should be studied, both when starting out and at the beginning of each academic year as adjustments or changes may be made from time-to-time.

3. The due date is non-negotiable; in exceptional circumstances students are to adhere to College protocol for requesting permission for late submission. Penalties for late submission are set at 5% per College week. The Assignment Style Guide contains details of the protocols to be followed.

4. With respect to length, students are permitted to write at a length of 10% either side of the stated length; for example, a 1000-word assignment should be within a 900-1100 word length. Students will be penalized 1% per 100 words, or part thereof, under or over the stipulated length.

5. With respect to the List of References, a specific number of references will not be set; however, students should note the guidelines indicated for the specific assessment requirement. However, students should note that:
   a. Bibles (including study Bibles), basic dictionaries and devotional guides are not regarded as academic references.
   b. Electronic sources should generally not number more than half the required number of references, and should be used with caution.

6. The failure to adhere to the stipulated assessment format requirements will be penalized as follows:
   a. Body of assignment:
      i. 1st level – 1%
      ii. 2nd and subsequent levels – 2%
   b. List of References and referencing:
      i. 1st level – 1%
      ii. 2nd and subsequent levels – 2%
Grade Criteria

Bachelor’s students at the advanced undergraduate degree 400-level should note that grades are awarded on the following criteria:

Units at advanced level build upon foundational studies. Critical issues raised by a broad range of contemporary scholars are introduced and evaluated; primary sources are analysed at depth; and the critical and evaluative faculties of the students are developed in dialogue of scholarly literature.

Pass

✓ Demonstrates an engagement with primary sources.
✓ Has begun to grasp the foundational features of the discipline.
✓ Is beginning to engage with a range of scholarly viewpoints.

Credit

✓ Demonstrates ability in engaging primary sources.
✓ Evidences a grasp of the foundational features of the discipline.
✓ Demonstrates emerging skills in the task of critically evaluating a range of scholarly viewpoints.

Distinction

✓ Demonstrates a pronounced ability to engage primary sources and understands their setting and historical context.
✓ Evidences a sound grasp of the foundational features of the discipline.
✓ Shows an ability to evaluate critically a range of scholarly viewpoints with empathy.

High Distinction

✓ Demonstrates a pronounced ability in the analysis of primary sources and understands their setting and historical context.
✓ Evidences a confident grasp of the foundational features of the discipline.
✓ Exhibits an ability to evaluate and assess empathetically a range of scholarly viewpoints that suggests the emergence of independent thinking and research skills required at early postgraduate level.
**ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

**Requirement 1: Ten Internet Forum Posts**

At the end of each module a question will be placed on the TH401D/601D Moodle forum which assesses students' comprehension of the main content of that module as presented in the learning guide, text book or primary source reading prescribed for that module. Students must write responses on the forum of 400 words each to a total of 10 of these questions which demonstrate their engagement with and understanding of the content in question.

The **key assessment criteria** for this requirement are as follows:

1. Demonstrates engagement with prescribed module content.
2. Demonstrates synthesis and comprehension of prescribed module content.
3. Where appropriate demonstrates some critical evaluation of the content in question.
4. Where appropriate demonstrates some ability to apply the content in question to theoretical and practical problems.
5. Demonstrates clarity of expression, correct grammar and concision.

*Length: 10 posts of 400 words each*
*References: Not Required*
*Due: 5 June by electronic submission on Moodle*
*Mark allocation: 35%*
**Requirement 2: Research Essay**

Students must research and write a 2500-word essay which responds to ONE of the following two questions:

1. Evaluate the debate between Emil Brunner and Karl Barth over the role ‘natural theology’ should play in our knowledge of God. Which, if any of them, is right and what practical difference does it make to Christians today?

2. A fellow pastor has just lent you a copy of Robert Schuller, *Your Church Has a Fantastic Future* (1986), which he claims has made a profound impact on his ministry. Evaluate the epistemology assumed in it. On the basis of your evaluation would you feel comfortable embracing its insights?

The **key assessment criteria** for this requirement are as follows:

1. Engages with the primary source / issue in question.
2. Understands the primary source / issue.
3. Where appropriate critically evaluates the primary source / issue.
4. Argument is comprehensive: it addresses the most important points.
5. Argument is logically coherent: statements, ideas, paragraphs and sections build upon and do not contradict each other.
6. Argument is credible: it is backed up by both Scripture and appropriate primary and secondary resources.

*Length: 2500 words*

*References: No less than 14 meaningful references*

*Due: 1 May by electronic submission on Moodle OR to the College office by no later than 4.30pm*

*Mark allocation: 40%*
**Requirement 3: Semester Examination**

Students will sit a one-hour final examination at the end of the semester. The examination will assess the student’s grasp of the content of the entire unit. However students should note that while all topics in the unit are subject to assessment, no topic will be assessed twice. Moreover the examination may include any, but not necessarily all, syllabus topics. Students will have access to an unmarked, standard Bible. The examination will be structured as follows:

a. Section A, compulsory short questions (12.5% of total unit mark).

b. Section B, choice of elective essay questions (12.5% of total unit mark).

The **key assessment criteria** for this requirement are as follows:

1. Reproduce the content and foundational aspects of the topic/s.
2. Demonstrate a sound grasp of the foundational features of the topic/s.
3. Refer to and engage with primary documents and sources, including the Scriptures.
4. Demonstrate an awareness of and engagement with scholarly viewpoints.
5. Critically evaluate options of understanding and/or scholarly viewpoints.
6. Practically apply learned material to real life situations.
7. Draw motivated and reasonable conclusions.

*Length: 1 hour  
Due: As per the examination timetable  
Mark allocation: 25%*
Developing Christians of Influence
“Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jeremiah 3:15)

| Graduate Attribute 1: Personal Maturity – ‘Shepherds with God’s heart’ |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. grows a deepening relationship with Jesus | ✓ | | |
| b. is secure in God’s call with a desire and ability to learn and grow | | ✓ | |
| c. is self-aware and maintains self-care | | ✓ | |
| d. seeks and builds healthy relationships | | ✓ | |
| e. is committed to living with integrity and prayerful dependence on God | | ✓ | |

| Graduate Attribute 2: Theological Maturity – ‘Knowledge and understanding of God’s heart’ |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. knows and trusts the Bible | ✓ | | |
| b. understands the context of diverse theological ideas | ✓ | | |
| c. forms a personal theology which is both biblical and thoughtful | ✓ | | |
| d. reflects theologically and applies the Bible to real life | ✓ | | |
| e. is committed to helping others know God’s grace and truth and live God’s way | ✓ | | |

| Graduate Attribute 3: Ministry Maturity – ‘Knowledgeable and wise shepherds’ |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. is able to have a godly influence over others | ✓ | | |
| b. possesses skills needed for chosen ministry path | ✓ | | |
| c. understands cultures and contexts and is able to minister in a range of contexts | ✓ | | |
| d. is able to work with and lead a team | ✓ | | |
| e. is committed to serving, evangelising and mentoring others | ✓ | | |

1. A major thrust of this unit
2. A contribution that this unit should make
3. A possible function of this unit, but not targeted
4. An unlikely product of this unit

**Note:** Graduates who have not completed the curricular and non-curricular ministry aspects of Malyon’s courses will tend to be most developed in Graduate Attribute 2.
The list below provides the learner with references that relate to the unit material and topics under consideration. Note that it is by no means a comprehensive bibliography on the unit topics. A bibliography of the most helpful works relevant to the topic of each module will be included at the end of the learning guide for that module. Students are expected to find further resources related to the topic themselves through consulting bibliographies available in textbooks and online, browsing the library shelves, and various library and journal search engines. The following is simply a sample of some of the most helpful introductions and classic works on the unit topics. Note also that the works listed by no means necessarily represent the view of the lecturer.

**General**


### Knowledge of God


**Doctrine of Creation**


Key Policies

Students should take note of the following ACT policies:

1. Unit Moderation Policy.
3. Academic Appeals Policy.

Accessing Documents

These and other policy documents are publically available in the following handbooks, through links on ACT’s home page (www.actheology.edu.au):

1. Undergraduate Handbook.
5. Distance Education Handbook.

These should be read in conjunction with the ‘Recent Updates’ link found on the ACT website.