Master of Divinity, Master of Ministry and Related Programs

OT642/D
The Megillot: Ruth and Esther
(English Text)

Semester 1, 2017

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

OT642/D is offered by Malyon College as part of the Master of Divinity, Master of Ministry and Related Programs authorized for distance and contact delivery by the college, which is an accredited award of the Australian College of Theology (ACT).
Malyon College

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 master’s 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.
UNIT DETAILS

Unit Description

This unit will focus on the collection of books, found in the Writings in the Hebrew Old Testament, referred to as the Megillot or Book Scrolls. These books – Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther – are united in their diversity in that they all relate to festivals and/or key events in the history of Israel.

To highlight the unique character of this collection of books, Bandstra (Barry L. 2004. Reading the Old Testament. 3rd ed. Belmont: Wadsworth, 456) introduces the Megillot as follows:

We find some of Israel’s most mature thinking on the deeper issues of life in the Five Scrolls. Love, loyalty, freedom, destiny, death. Some of these books are delightful, some utterly depressing. Together they reveal a tradition that framed worthy responses to the human condition. In some respects these five books make for strange bedfellows. They have little form or content in common. The Song of Songs is pulsing love poetry, Ruth is a romantic short story, Lamentations is a collection of dirges, Ecclesiastes is a philosophical treatise, and Esther is an historical novella.

In this unit, special attention will be given to the books of Ruth and Esther.

Credit Points

This unit is valued at 4 credit points.

Co-and Pre-Requisites

OT502/D is a co- or pre-requisite.

Exclusions

Students who have previously completed OT642/D are excluded from this unit where they have studied either or both of Ruth and Esther in that study.
1. Introduction to the Megillot.
2. The reason for the collection.
3. The role of the collection.
4. A basic introduction to the individual books.
5. Detailed study of two of the books.
6. Textual exegesis.
7. Advanced critical issues.
8. Theological themes.
9. Contemporary application and relevance.

Unit Outcomes

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

A. Students should know and understand (knowledge):
   1. The collection of Old Testament books referred to as the Megillot.
   2. The text of Ruth and Esther.
   3. The cultural and historical allusions in and background to Ruth and Esther.
   4. The theological themes of Ruth and Esther with deliberate textual references.

B. Students should be able to (skills):
   1. Discuss the collection of Old Testament books referred to as the Megillot.
   2. Research and apply cultural and historical insights to Ruth and Esther.
   3. Apply the skills of biblical exegesis to Ruth and Esther,
   4. Consider the significance of the Hebrew text where relevant to exegesis,
   5. Derive theological themes from Ruth and Esther.
   6. Respond to the advanced critical issues related to Ruth and Esther.

C. Students should be in a position to (application):
   1. Discuss and explain the contemporary application and relevance of Ruth and Esther to contemporary Christian life and thought.

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. Assessments – 5 hours per week.

2. Distance students:
   a. Home study; including forums and revisions – 5 hours per week;
   b. Assessments – 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. Module forums.
2. Exegetical assignment.
3. Critical assignment.

*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 regular access to a quality commentary on each of Ruth and Esther (see the asterisked books in the Recommended Readings later in the Unit Guide).

Additionally, 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.
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<tr>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Topic/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 Feb</td>
<td>Unit intro</td>
<td>Overview of the Megillot: Introduction and content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22 Feb</td>
<td>Read the Ruth scroll at least once</td>
<td>Ruth: Setting, structure and content, and characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Mar</td>
<td>Read the chapter for the module and answer the following questions:</td>
<td>Ruth 1, Naomi and Ruth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. What is going on?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. What stands out?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 Mar</td>
<td>3. What details do I properly understand?</td>
<td>Ruth 2, Naomi, Ruth and Boaz</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. What details do I not understand?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15 Mar</td>
<td>5. Could I properly explain this passage to someone else?</td>
<td>Ruth 3, Naomi, Ruth and Boaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22 Mar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ruth 4, Boaz, the kinsman, Ruth and Naomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29 Mar</td>
<td>Prepare a basic answer to the question, ‘What are the three main themes of Ruth?’</td>
<td>Theological themes of Ruth</td>
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<tr>
<td>S/W</td>
<td>5 Apr</td>
<td>Study Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>S/W</td>
<td>12 Apr</td>
<td>Study Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>19 Apr</td>
<td>Read the Esther scroll at least once</td>
<td>Esther: Setting, structure and content, and characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>26 Apr</td>
<td>Read the chapters for the module and answer the following questions:</td>
<td>Esther 1-2, Xerxes and Esther</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Have I understood the unfolding events in this passage?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 May</td>
<td>2. Is there anything that I need to clarify?</td>
<td>Esther 3-5, Haman and Mordecai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>17 May</td>
<td></td>
<td>Esther 8-10, Triumph and celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>24 May</td>
<td>Prepare a basic answer to the question, ‘What are the three main themes of Esther?’</td>
<td>Theological themes of Esther</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After working as an Air Traffic Controller in the South African Air Force, Charles de Jongh commenced his ministry experience working with children, teenagers and young adults while completing his initial theological studies at the Baptist Theological College in Cape Town, South Africa, where he graduated with a Licentiate in Theology. He continued to focus on young adults’ ministry while completing a BA at the University of Stellenbosch with majors in Biblical Studies and Psychology.

In 1991, he commenced ministry in a church plant as the solo pastor at the Hilton Baptist Church, South Africa; during his ministry the church grew from 6-10 attendants to over sixty. At the same time, he completed an MA at Stellenbosch University, researching ‘contemporary developments in Christology in Africa.’ After five years of ministry, he took up a lecturing position at the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa with a focus on Biblical Studies and Practical Theology. While lecturing, he carried out doctoral research at the Rand Afrikaans University into the ‘significance of hermeneutical method in recent biblical scholarship.’ Other ministry involvement at this time included serving on the Executive of Baptist Youth of Southern Africa and chairing the Board of Mission Aviation Fellowship South Africa.

Charles has been a lecturer at Malyon College since July 2007, with his main teaching areas being Biblical Studies and Youth Ministry. He has since completed a doctorate at the University of Johannesburg in Higher Education, examining ‘theories of multiple intelligences and learning assessment for deep learning in higher education.’

Contact details:
Office number +61 7 3354 5656
E-mail charles@malyon.edu.au
UNIT ASSESSMENT

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 Student Assignment Guide is 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. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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

Graduate Diploma and Master’s students at the advanced graduate degree 600-level should note that grades are awarded on the following criteria:

Building upon both knowledge and skills developed at foundational levels, candidates will be expected to analyse texts and ideas and come to independent judgements in a selected area of study.

Pass – The candidate demonstrates ability in engaging the primary sources, evidences a grasp of the foundational features of the discipline, and exhibits engagement with a range of scholarly viewpoints.

Credit – The candidate demonstrates a pronounced ability to engage primary sources, exhibits a sound grasp of the foundational features of the discipline, and evidences ability in the task of critically evaluating a range of scholarly viewpoints.

Distinction – The candidate demonstrates a pronounced ability in the analysis of primary sources and in the task of critically evaluating and assessing empathetically a range of scholarly points of view.

High Distinction – The candidate demonstrates superior ability in the analysis and critique of primary sources and ideas in critical dialogue with a wide range of scholarly points of view reporting these empathetically.
**ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

**Requirement 1: Module Forums**

Students will be required to post twelve 165-word responses to the first twelve modules on the related module forum on Moodle. The purpose of the forums is for students to intentionally interact with the material being studied. While each response is only 150-180 words long (longer word length will be penalized), it is important to understand that they are to be concise and focused, well argued, and appropriately referenced.

*Students are to indicate the word length of their submission in brackets at the end of their post.*

**Students should note that they have two weeks to complete each forum; as such:**

- *a.* Extensions will only be granted in genuinely exceptional circumstances.
- *b.* Procrastination will not be accepted as a reason for late submission.
- *c.* **Non-submission will incur a 100% penalty;** non-submitted post will be allocated -100%.

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

1. Meaningful consideration of the topic.
2. Concise and focused responses.
3. Well-argued presentation.
4. Demonstrated advanced critical thinking.
5. Appropriately referenced.

**Length:** 165 words per response = 2000 words total

**References:** as required

**Due:** Each forum will be closed two weeks after the related module is taught*

**Mark allocation:** 30%

*Forum submission dates:
Module 1 – Tuesday 28 February
Module 2 – Tuesday 7 March
Module 3 – Tuesday 14 March
Module 4 – Tuesday 21 March
Module 5 – Tuesday 28 March
Module 6 – Tuesday 3 April
Module 7 – Tuesday 11 April
Module 8 – Tuesday 2 May
Module 9 – Tuesday 9 May
Module 10 – Tuesday 16 May
Module 11 – Tuesday 23 May
Module 12 – Tuesday 30 May
Requirement 2: Exegetical Assignment

Students are to present a technical exegesis of ONE of the following passages:

Students are to note that the book chosen for this requirement may not be the same as that chosen for requirement 3


The exegesis is to be critical in that, inter alia, it shows an awareness of background and contextual issues, as well as options of interpretation; it is also to include a 500-word well-considered contemporary application of the passage.

The key assessment criteria for this requirement are as follows:

1. *Utilized references as per the set requirement.
2. Meaningfully integrates relevant background and cultural insights.
3. Deliberately locates the text in its historical context.
4. Focuses on key aspects and sections of the biblical text.
5. Deliberately locates the passage in the context of the entire book.
6. Demonstrates an advanced awareness of options of interpretation.
7. Draws reasonable and intentional exegetical conclusions.
8. Meaningful and significant contemporary application.

Length: 3000 words
References: *specialist references indicative of detailed exegesis and research
Mark allocation: 40%
Due:
If Ruth passage chosen, Monday 24 April by electronic submission on Moodle
If Esther passage chosen, Monday 5 June by electronic submission on Moodle

* With respect to the sources, students will be required to reference the following sources as a minimum:
  ➢ Two female commentators.
  ➢ Two majority world commentators (Africa, Asia, South America).
  ➢ Two relevant journal articles
  ➢ Three quality single-volume commentaries.
* All sources are to be quoted or referred to, at least once, in the actual essay; in other words, if you do not reference a source, do not include it in the List of Reference.
Requirement 3: Critical Assignment

Students are to write an essay that responds to ONE of the following topics (A or B):

Students are to note that the book chosen for this requirement may not be the same as that chosen for requirement 2

A. The Book of Ruth

Write an essay that responds equally (1000 words each) to TWO of the following critical issues:
   a. Were the deaths of the men in Moab (Ruth 1:1-5) God’s punishment on them for leaving Bethlehem during the famine?
   b. How can the story of Ruth the Moabite be reconciled with the command found in Deuteronomy 23:3?
   c. Explain the biblical and customary background to the events that occur in Ruth 4:1-17.

The key assessment criteria are as follows:

1. Understanding of the issues being considered.
2. Awareness of the debate and proposed options of understanding.
3. Well-presented responses to the issues.
4. Meaningful references to the biblical text of Ruth and related scripture.
5. Motivated presentation of personal response.

Length: 2000 words
References: specialist references indicative of detailed exegesis and research
Mark allocation: 30%
Due: If Ruth passage chosen, Monday 24 April by electronic submission on Moodle
B. The Book of Esther

Write an essay that compares and contrasts the theological themes of the Masoretic (MT) and Septuagint (LXX) texts of Esther, including a consideration of the purpose of the additional themes found in the LXX. For the purpose of this assignment, students are to make use of the text provided on Moodle.

In other words, on the basis of the comparison of the two texts, students are to write an essay that addresses the following; however, these items must not be discussed distinctly (they are not to be the outline for the assignment):

- The theological themes of the MT.
- The additional themes found in the LXX.
- The theological significance of the themes in the MT.
- The intended purpose of the additional themes in the LXX.

The key assessment criteria are as follows:

1. Awareness of the contrasting content in the MT and LXX.
2. Understanding of the theological themes of the MT.
3. Understanding of the theological themes introduced in the LXX.
4. Meaningful comparison of the theological themes in the MT and LXX respectively.
5. Meaningful contrasting of the theological themes in the MT and LXX respectively.

Length: 2000 words

References: specialist references indicative of detailed exegesis and research

Mark allocation: 30%

Due:

If Esther passage chosen, Monday 5 June by electronic submission on Moodle
## UNIT CONTRIBUTION TO GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

### 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 Formation – ‘Shepherds with God’s heart’

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Is secure in God, living in the truth and freedom of the gospel</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Pursues intimacy with God and Christ-likeness, particularly through spiritual disciplines</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Intentionally plans for growth, being aware of personal strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Grows spiritual, personal and relational health, especially through accountability</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Is committed to influencing and serving others in the church and the world</td>
<td>✓</td>
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### Graduate Attribute 2: Theological Formation – ‘Knowledge and understanding of God’s heart’

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<tr>
<td>a. Understands the ‘big story’ of the Bible and the gospel</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Is personally able to interpret and apply the Bible</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Is formulating a biblical, historical and contemporary theology</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Reflects biblically and theologically on life and practice</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Is committed to communicating and demonstrating the gospel</td>
<td>✓</td>
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### Graduate Attribute 3: Ministry Formation – ‘Knowledgeable and wise shepherds’

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Has a godly influence on others</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Possesses the knowledge and skills needed for chosen ministry path</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Ministers and communicates the gospel with clarity in a range of contexts</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Works well in a team and intentionally does so</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Is committed to servant leadership and the mentoring of others</td>
<td>✓</td>
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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.
RECOMMENDED READINGS

The list below provides the learner with references that relate to the unit material and topics under consideration.

For additional resources, students are encouraged to refer to www.bestcommentaries.com, which gives ‘reviews and ratings’ of biblical, theological and practical Christian works.

@ → Female commentary
# → Majority World commentary
‡ → Historic commentary

Ruth

Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn and Tikva Frymer-Kensky. 2011. Ruth. JPS Bible Commentary. Philadelphia: JPS. @

Esther

Baldwin, Joyce G. 1984. Esther. TOTC. Downers Grove: IVP. @
*Berlin, Adele. 2001. Esther. JPS Bible Commentary. Philadelphia: JPS. @

Compilations

Female Commentators


Majority World


General

**ACT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**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](http://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.*