

<b>Module Title:</b>	<b>Introduction to Theology</b>
<b>Module Code:</b>	<b>412 TITH</b>
<b>Level:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Credit Rating:</b>	<b>20 Credits</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	<b>Student Learning Time: 200 hours</b>
<b>Teaching Hours:</b>	<b>40 Hours</b>
<b>Academic Responsibility:</b>	<b>David Blowey OFM Conv, STD Thomas Herbst OFM, D Phil</b>

### **Module Aims:**

In this two part module, the first section will introduce students to the nature & purpose of theology & the sources, tools, and methodology of theological study, inclusive of:

- The broad historical development of major theological disciplines within specific contexts
- An investigation into the nature of God Himself, including God's attributes (with an emphasis on divine love) and God's Trinitarian essence-in-relationship.
- A consideration of God's activity in the universe with attention given to divine will, creation, and providence.

The second part of the module will continue, in a more advanced way, with certain of the themes encountered in the first part of the module especially in the light of the 'evolving' nature of theological reflection. This will include:

- Offering an exposition of the history of theology within the context of revelation and reason.
- Offering an analysis of the concept of *Dei Verbum*; the conciliar voice of the Church and claim to magisterial authority.
- An examination of some of the problems implicit in the above statement.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the module students should be able to:

1. reflect critically on forms of speech (and actions) used in dialoguing with and about God,
2. understand several approaches to Theology and the content of Theology,
3. critically engage with the major Christian doctrines.
4. demonstrate a familiarity with the terminology, concepts, and methods of several major theological systems,
5. be able to identify the main approaches to the study of theology.
6. sharpen their analytical skills regarding the necessity of faith matched to reason and will also be acquainted with the problems involved in such an approach as the difficult relationship between subjective understanding and objective revelation is explored as a variety of fundamental doctrinal issues will be examined and understood in this light.
7. improve their exegetical skills.
8. demonstrate familiarity with issues of Feminism, Modernism, science and, especially, multiculturalism.

### **Indicative Module Content:**

Part One:

- The concept of theology as a scientific discipline
- The doctrine of Scripture, including canonicity, authorship, inerrancy, and Tradition

- The sources for theological investigations
- Development of Christian thought (history of dogmas & doctrines; symbolum fidei)
- An analysis of various theological methods (influence of historico-cultural overtones)
- Theological language and analogy
- A survey of ecclesial doctrinal documents and their interpretation
- A study of assorted theological topics (doctrines of the Christian faith), such as the existence and nature of God (including the Trinity), and of God's work of creation
- A survey of methodological paradigms from across the centuries and cultures will help the students to understand the development of doctrines in the Church, thus special attention will be paid to the effect on theological methodology of significant shifts in philosophy in the course of history.

#### Part Two:

- Beginning with a review of the concept of revelation found in the Old Testament...
- Continuing to the fundamental Christological suppositions implicit in the Incarnation. This involves an overview of the content of the Prologue of John and the subsequent conciliar definitions of Nicea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon.
- Patristic authorities dealt with include: Ignatius on the role of the bishop, Irenaeus in terms of recapitulation and regula fidei, the synthetic merging of Neo-Platonic philosophy and speculative theology, Augustine on interior illumination and credes ut intelligam, and the evolution of the claim for papal primacy.
- The scholastic program in the medieval period and the writing of the summas, the impact of Aristotelian philosophy, natural law, the concept of 'religious life' and problematic observance of the 'Evangelical Counsels', imitatio Christi, and the challenge offered by heretical groups.
- The fractured voice of the Western Church beginning in the early fourteenth century to the Reformation with divergent views on soteriology, justification, and the magisterium.
- Trent, the Church adapting to the suppositions of the Enlightenment, nineteenth-century triumphalism and papal infallibility and the new horizons envisioned by Vatican II.
- Challenges of the post-modern era.

#### **Learning and Teaching Strategies:**

The basic format of presentation will be four weekly lectures systematically treating the subject matter as described in the Indicative Module Content. Students are given specific weekly reading assignments as well as directed toward extra-curricular reading proposed by the instructor. Research interests are quickly identified and tutorial sessions, depending on individual needs of the students, arranged for clarification and direction, inclusive of suggested extra-curricular reading. Within the classroom context of lectures, active participation of students in terms of questions and, especially, discussion is strongly encouraged as a primary way of developing analytical skills, critical thinking, and clarity of expression.

#### **Assessment:**

The module will be assessed by two written essays of not less than 2,500 words chosen from a selection of questions proposed by the instructor.

### Indicative Essay Titles:

1. Summarise and analyse an approved text from the apostolic Fathers.
2. Research a theologian of your choice, analysing the link between that theologian's *sitz im leben* and his/her theology.
3. Demonstrate the development of an approved text from any document of the Second Vatican Council using the Council's debates and speeches.

### Illustrative Bibliography

- Beinert, W., and Francis Schussler-Fiorenza, eds. (1995) *Handbook of Catholic Theology.* Crossroads.
- Clifford, Anne (2001) *Introducing Feminist Theology.* Orbis.
- Congar, Yves M.-J. (1968) *A History of Theology.* Doubleday  
Hunter Guthrie, trans
- Gaillardetz, Richard (2003) *By What Authority? A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful.* Liturgical Press.
- Fides et Ratio* and various other excerpts of conciliar documents and papal encyclicals.
- Metzger, Bruce (1987) *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance.* Claredon Press.
- Ormerod, Neil (1997) *Introducing Contemporary Theologies: The What and the Who of Theology Today.* Orbis.
- Stone, Howard W. and James O. Duke (2006) *How To Think Theologically.* 2d ed. Fortress Press.