

Perth Bible College

A7100 Critical Thinking and Writing in Theological Studies

Trimester 3, 2025

Teaching Staff:

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Consultation times: M-F 9 am- 3pm (AWST) by
appointment only

A7100 Critical Thinking and Writing in Theological Studies

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Credit value:	9 credit points
Mode of study:	Delivery will be via online lectures videos, in-class tutorial sessions including activities and discussion.
Pre-requisite units:	Nil
Co-requisite units:	Nil
Units excluded:	Nil

Scheduled times and Venues: Thursdays, 9:30-12:00pm (AWST), PBC, Room A14 & via Google Meet

Teaching Staff:	Name:	Mrs. Jungmin Shaw
	Position & Qualifications:	Lecturer, MDiv
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	Consultation times:	M-F 9 am- 3pm (AWST) by appointment

Learning Management System: Moodle ([access here](#) – you must be logged in)

Workload:	Total Workload for unit:	143 hours
	Allocation of Workload:	27.5 hours of lecture; 52 hours dedicated to assessment tasks; 63.5 hours of reading

Background and Context

Studying theology at the graduate level involves not only learning content, but also developing and honing a set of specialised skills that encourage critical thinking, enable in-depth research, and facilitate communication and the effective expression of ideas.

Critical Thinking and Writing in Theological Studies seeks to prepare students to achieve these goals by focusing on essential study processes and communication skills. The unit will focus on the application of productive self-learning strategies, sound analytical skills, constructive research methods, effective reading and note-taking methods and good writing and speaking skills.

Curriculum Objectives

This introductory course unit provides structured, practical instruction in the nature and skills of critical thinking, reading and writing in a theological context. It is designed as a generic introduction to the academic skills relevant to the various disciplines in theological studies.

Contribution to Graduate Attributes

Graduate attributes are the generic qualities expected to be attained by graduates of a course, regardless of content or area of specialisation. These attributes relate to both the general course level and the distinctives of the discipline in which the unit is located. This unit

contributes to the attainment of the Course Outcomes in alignment with the distinctives of the Specific Discipline Outcomes, as follows:

Specific Discipline Outcomes	<i>develop enhanced capacity of language and writing skills to support the study of theological and associated texts</i>	<i>utilise appropriate methodologies for the study of areas of historical, philosophical and educational enquiry</i>
Course Outcomes		
<i>broad and coherent body of biblical and theological knowledge</i>	✓	✓
<i>skills to review, analyse and act on information in the exercise of critical thinking and judgement</i>		✓
<i>communicate a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas</i>	✓	✓

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course unit, students should be able to:

1. Analyse the relationship among thought, opinion, fact, belief, and knowledge;
2. Analyse arguments in theological readings to identify valid conclusions based on authentic evidence;
3. Read critically across a range of relevant primary and secondary theological resources;
4. Construct evidence-based argument in a specific theological discipline; and
5. Produce a piece of formal critical writing utilising appropriate critical methods and academic presentation conventions.

Content and Learning Activities

Topics will include the following:

- a) access college guidelines to support self-learning
- b) analyse the instructions for an assessment
- c) research assignment topics using the appropriate resources, including books, journals and electronic resources
- d) read resources using effective note-taking skills
- e) present a topic to an audience using appropriate visual aids
- f) plan and effectively structure and write various texts such as essays, journal/blogs, academic reports, book reviews, reading summaries use the required referencing conventions

Learning Resources

Essential Texts

Kibbe, M 2016, *From topic to thesis : a guide to theological research*, IVP Academic.
 van Oudtshoorn, A, 2007, *A Taste of Glory*, Snowgoose Media, Perth, Australia (provided via Moodle).

Recommended Readings

Rolls, N & P Wignell, 2015, *Communicating at University: Skills for Success*, Charles Darwin University, Darwin (purchase at PBC Reception).
 Holeman, VT, 2012, *Theology for Better Counselling: Trinitarian Reflections for Healing and Formation*. IVP Academic, Downers Grove (available in hard copy in the PBC library reserve section and digitally via the DTL 2 database).

Assessment Overview

All students must complete all assessment requirements as set, and conform with SCD Policy requirements.

Assessment Schedule

Type of Assessment Task	Value (%)	Date due	Unit Learning Outcome(s) assessed
Annotated bibliography/ Reference Survey	20%	Week 5	1, 2, 3
Skeleton	20%	Week 7	1, 2, 3, 5
PowerPoint Presentation	30%	Week 9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Essay Draft	20%	Week 10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Personal Reflection	10%	Week 11	1, 5

The deadline for assessments is 11:55pm uploaded via PBC Online on the day the class is scheduled in the trimester session/week indicated, unless specified otherwise.

<p>1. Annotated bibliography/ Reference Survey</p> <p>(Carries 20% of the total grade)</p>	<p>Students create an annotated bibliography/reference survey for an essay in another unit they concurrently study. If Study Ready is the only unit enrolled in the current study period, please contact the lecturer for an essay topic.</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select a topic/question 2. Research: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Books, journal articles, reputable online sources 3. Annotate each reference articulating the core idea(s)/arguments presented in the reference <p>Evaluation Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research Relevance and Range of Sources: Relevance and accuracy of your understanding of the chosen topic, minimum 5 references including at least 1 journal article. ● Critical Summary: Capture the core idea(s)/argument in a clear summary in the student's own words.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Academic Writing: writing is clear, concise, and cohesive, showing control of basic academic conventions. ● Referencing Style: Follow the reference guide in the Student Handbook. (APA/Harvard) <p>Submission Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Format: PDF ● Word limit: 500 words (+/- 10%) excluding the reference data ● Due: Week 5
<p>2. Skeleton</p> <p>(Carries 20% of the total grade)</p>	<p>Students present an essay outline (on a question of their choice) that includes a completed introduction, bullet points for each body paragraph, a completed conclusion, and a list of references.</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select a topic/question (Students are encouraged to use the same topic from the assessment 1) 2. Research: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Research your chosen topic. Books, journal articles, reputable online resources 3. List the main ideas in bullet points 4. Write introduction and conclusion in full paragraphs 5. Add the Reference list 6. Sample Structure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Intro – Main Point 1 – Main Point 2 – Main Point 3 – Conclusion <p>Evaluation Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding and Structure: The outline demonstrates a clear grasp of the topic and presents a logical argument progression. ● Written Coherence: Introduction and conclusion are clearly written and aligned with the outline. Ideas are logically ordered and well connected. ● Source Integration: Use of quality academic sources that support the argument. ● References: Proper citation of all sources used. (APA/Harvard) References do not count towards the word limit. <p>Submission Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Format: PDF ● Word limit: 350-400 words ● Due: Week 7

<p>3. PowerPoint Presentation</p> <p>(Carries 30% of the total grade)</p>	<p>Students present an 8–10 slide presentation on a theological or counselling topic of their choice (Recommend using the contents from the assessment item 2: Skeleton).</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select your audience (e.g., youth group, Bible study, kids church, class, etc.) 2. Write a presentation script (word limit: 650–750 words) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduction, main body, conclusion 3. Create 8–10 slides to highlight the contents from the script (e.g., key points, images, quotes, diagrams, and etc.) <p>Evaluation Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Content & Argument Coherence: The presentation has a clear thesis or message which develops logically throughout the script. ● Structure & Clarity: The script and slides are well-organised, easy to follow, and appropriate for the chosen audience. ● Engagement & Creativity: Presentation shows originality, thoughtful engagement with topic, and creative use of slides or illustrations. ● Referencing: Proper and consistent citation of all sources used. (APA/Harvard) <p>Submission Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Format: PDF ● Presentation script word limit: 650-750 words ● Presentation slides: 8-10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compile your presentation script and the PowerPoint slides into a single file and submit it as a PDF document. ● This assessment requires the standard number of references for this level of study, which is a minimum of 5 sources. ● Due: Week 9
<p>4. Essay Draft</p> <p>(Carries 20% of the total grade)</p>	<p>Students submit the essay draft from another unit. This will be assessed for academic writing style (e.g., structure, clarity, grammar, flow, etc.) and the APA or Harvard formatting and referencing.</p> <p>Evaluation Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Academic Writing Style: Essay demonstrates formal academic tone, clear structure (introduction, body, conclusion), logical flow, and appropriate grammar and syntax. ● Clarity & Cohesion: Paragraphs are well-developed, transitions are logical, and the argument is easy to follow. ● Referencing Accuracy: In-text citations and reference list are consistent and accurate in either APA or Harvard style. ● Formatting Compliance: Follows formatting rules (e.g., title page, spacing, font, margins) in accordance with the referencing style guide. <p>Submission Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Format: PDF

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word limit: 1000 words (+/- 10%) • Due: Week 10
<p>5. Personal Reflection</p> <p>(Carries 10% of the total grade)</p>	<p>Students write a critical analysis of their strengths and areas for improvement in the academic writing space under the following three headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where I started • Where I am now • What I need to work on <p>Submission Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format: PDF • Word limit: 500 words • Due: Week 11

Course Unit Revision

The unit was slightly revised based on a previous iteration in order to offer it for the first time by the present lecturer in association with SCD; there has as of yet been no opportunity for student feedback.

Extension Policy

Students must submit all assignments by the due dates set by the lecturer and published in the course unit profiles.

Late Penalty

Late assignments without an approved extension will attract an automatic penalty deduction of 5% of the marks available for the item of assessment for every day (including weekends and holidays), or part thereof, beyond the date and time of submission (or any extension granted).

Assignments submitted without an approved extension beyond 10 days after the due date will receive a zero mark and NOT be annotated by the lecturer.

Example:

Student submits an assignment worth 50 marks 4 days late.

Total mark available=50

Penalty: 4 days late = 5% of 50x4 = 10 mark penalty

The student's original mark is 40.

Final mark =40-10=30

Grounds for Extension

An extension of an assignment's due date may be granted on the following grounds: medical illness (certified by Medical Certificate); extreme hardship; and compassionate grounds.

In such cases an extension of up to 28 days may be granted without penalty but only if requested before the assignment due date. The student should submit an "Application for Extension" including supporting documentation to the Member Institution for authorising and signing by the Lecturer / Registrar /Academic Secretary prior to the due date. The student will then be informed of the result of the request.

In extreme cases, extensions beyond 28 days may be granted. Such extensions must be applied for in writing, including supporting documentation, to the Teaching Body setting out the extreme circumstances. The Teaching Body's appropriate committee will consider such an unusual extension and notify the student of the outcome in writing.

If the unit assessment includes an examination and an extension is granted, arrangements will be made for an alternative examination to be given to the student within the extension period.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use or paraphrasing of another person's work, and the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. For more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct refer to the SCD Handbook.

SCD Academic Board has mandated that Studiosity is the only online study assistance permitted within the SCD. Studiosity is supplied free of charge to SCD students, and it can be accessed through [INSERT ACCESS, e.g. the MI Learning Management System.]

Intellectual Property

The Course Unit Outline from which this Course Unit Booklet is derived is the property of the Sydney College of Divinity. The particular interpretation, amplification, and extension of the Course Unit Outline that expresses the theological values of the Member Institution and meets the needs of its stakeholder are the property of the Member Institution.
