

REL6032: Advanced Studies – Directed

UoN Broken Bay Instit - Online

Semester 2 – 2016*



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

Course Description	This course provides the opportunity for specialised study in theology under the tutelage and guidance of a specialist in the field in question. It seeks to further the learning experience of the student by engaging in appraisal and analysis of a particular area within theology, allowing for more in depth study than would normally be covered in regular course work.
Contact Hours	UoN Broken Bay Instit - Online Lecture Online 1 hour(s) per Week for Full Term Self-Directed Learning Self-Directed 2 hour(s) per Week for Full Term
Unit Weighting	10
Workload	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator **Dr Dan Fleming**

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Consultation: *Please make an appointment via email*

Teaching Staff

Dr John Honner

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SYLLABUS

Course Content

Themes will include:

1. Critique of local and global issues in relation to a particular discipline;
2. Research of social and historical contexts of theological setting;
3. Awareness of personal perspective in doing theological reflection on specialised learning experience.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of a particular theological topic or theme as part of the wider dimension of theological discourse;
2. Show that they are apprised of a selection of core literature and other sources relevant to their chosen theological area.
3. Demonstrate advanced skills of literature review and analysis pertinent to their selected sources.
4. Present a major work (in sections or as a whole) that demonstrates early and developing skills of descriptive, interpretive and critical research based on literature.

ASSESSMENTS

This course has three assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Assignment 1 - Extended Proposal	Sunday, 28 August 2016, 11:59pm (AEST)	Individual	30%	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Assignment 2 - Literature Review	Sunday, 2 October 2016, 11:59pm (AEST)	Individual	30%	1, 2, 3, 4
3	Assignment 3 - Evaluation	Sunday, 6 November 2016, 11:59pm (AEST)	Individual	40%	1, 2, 3, 4

Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days. Assessments submitted more than five days late will automatically receive a zero mark.

Extensions of time

Please note: students who are unable to complete this assessment task before the due dates should contact their tutor before the assessment is due in order to request an extension. The request will be strictly considered according to the University of Newcastle's Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy (<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/000939.html>).

The process for applying for an extension is as follows:

1. Login to MyUoN
2. Select Adverse Circumstances, and read through the policy to ensure that your circumstance is an appropriate reason for an extension.
3. Follow the prompts.
4. Once you have applied, you will receive a confirmation email and reference number.
5. You will be asked to supply supporting documentation, which can be sent electronically to shortland-hub@newcastle.edu.au along with your reference number.

Introduction and Overview

This is a directed study course that functions more like a supervision program than a normal teaching-learning process. There is no group process in this course, and it is up to you to propose and develop a project. The teaching staff are here to guide your work.

The course centres on a topic of your individual choice. It should be a topic you are interested in and prepared to pursue in independent study throughout the semester, and a topic which is specific enough to be “doable” in a relatively short space of time and word length (see assessment details below). The teaching team’s role is to help you explore your topic and to help you to think theologically, but you will need to be able to access suitable resources. While no specific research resources are supplied for this course, the entire resources of the University’s Library system are available to you (see ‘Online Research-Resources’ in the menu on the left hand side in Blackboard), as are any hard copy libraries that you can access.

The first step of the course is to identify the topic you want to explore. This will quite likely be a topic you have covered in your earlier studies, but were unable to do much more than skim the surface. Or it might be a topic that you have read about and thought about, but not really had the opportunity to investigate more fully. You are now able to go into this topic in a little more depth. Most students who have done this course (some hundreds by now) have reported on the worthwhile nature of the process. Some get a feel for further supervised research and go on to do doctoral studies. If you are struggling with this first step, then get in touch with the Teaching Staff – they will be able to help you out.

Your second step is to contact the Teaching Staff directly (see details above) in the first ten days of the course, and let them know *briefly*:

1. the topic or area that interests you (and why)
2. what you would like to learn and understand better
3. what resources and research you might start with, or how you might proceed
4. any concerns you have.

The Teaching Staff will then either give you an immediate “go ahead” or help you to refine your topic. This will then become the framework for your more Extended Proposal, which is the first assignment. While there is some latitude given to students in this course on how assignments are shaped, please read this Course Outline carefully and the instructions for assignments. Announcements will be posted throughout the course with plenty of advice for your progression.

Assessment 1 – Extended Proposal

Description: Completion of one Extended Proposal

Weighting: 30%

Word Limit: Absolute word limit of 2,300 words (includes approximately 1,800 words in the body of the essay plus approximately 500 words for references, reference list/bibliography, and other details as specified in the Course Outline)

Due Date: Sunday, 28 August 2016, 11:59pm (AEST)

Submission Method: Turnitin (note – the Turnitin dropbox will be available four weeks prior to the due date)

Assessment Criteria: Refer to further instructions on this page, and rubrics on pages 9-10. Please note: for Turnitin assessments, feedback is available by navigating back to the Turnitin Dropbox used to submit the assessment. Feedback is not available via MyGrades – this only shows a raw mark.

Return Method: Turnitin

Feedback Provided: Rubric, in text comments and summative comment for all students within three weeks of due date.

Specific Instructions:

Please ensure that the first page of your submission includes the following information:

- *Student Name*
- *Student Number*
- *Exact word count (i.e. the word count of your submission when you have finished it, not the word limit)*
- Plan your essay. There is no fixed template for this assessment because no one format would suit all the different kinds of topics you will end up pursuing. In general terms, however, most proposals should include:
 - (1) MANDATORY – The title of your research proposal: e.g. "Religious Education and Evangelization"
 - (2) Intention (what you hope to do)
 - (3) Purpose (why you have chosen this topic)
 - (4) Relevance (why you believe this topic is important – to you and your work, your religious affiliation, the world – one or all of these)
 - (5) Boundaries (what the topic will and will not cover - and why you will set these boundaries, be it in terms of focus, purpose or expediency)
 - (6) Other related work (concerns, where the topic might lead in the future, in terms of your own and/or someone else's work)
 - (7) MANDATORY – Key literature: (what main sources you will use – 6 to 8 scholarly books, articles, etc. would be normal, although this will depend a bit on the nature of the topic – and why you have chosen these). Clearly, this lays the groundwork for assignment 2.
 - (8) MANDATORY – List of references or bibliography
- Depending on your topic, you might not address all of the above or you might go beyond these items. They are merely common-sense guidelines in order to facilitate your thinking about the process. Note that 1, 7 and 8 are mandatory, the others advisory. This essay will be assessed on the quality of your thoughtfulness, argument, creativity, and awareness of issues (including theological issues); your writing and presentation and referencing are also important.
- Further instructions will be provided via announcements throughout the semester.
- Submissions need to be fully referenced in accordance with either the Turabian **OR** American Psychological Association (APA) referencing conventions.

Assessment 2 - Literature Review

Description: Completion of one Literature Review

Weighting: 30%

Word Limit: Absolute word limit of 2,300 words (includes approximately 1,800 words in the body of the essay plus approximately 500 words for references, reference list/bibliography, and other details as specified in the Course Outline)

Due Date: Sunday, 2 October 2016, 11:59pm (AEST)

Submission Method: Turnitin (note – the Turnitin dropbox will be available four weeks prior to the due date)

Assessment Criteria: Refer to further instructions on this page, and rubrics on pages 9-10. Please note: for Turnitin assessments, feedback is available by navigating back to the Turnitin Dropbox used to submit the assessment. Feedback is not available via MyGrades – this only shows a raw mark.

Return Method: Turnitin

Feedback Provided: Rubric, in text comments and summative comment for all students within three weeks of due date.

Specific Instructions:

Please ensure that the first page of your submission includes the following information:

- *Student Name*
- *Student Number*
- *Exact word count (i.e. the word count of your submission when you have finished it, not the word limit)*
- Literature reviews are usually undertaken prior to writing a major thesis. Given that our course, RELT6032, concludes with a relatively short final essay, most information guides on how to write a literature review will need to be used only inasmuch as they help: a thoroughgoing literature review is not required for this assessment. The aim of the RELT6032 literature review is to ensure that you have gathered a good number of scholarly texts relevant to your proposal, and that you understand the issues and approaches and arguments contained in this literature.
- The literature review might comprise four sections (this is a guide, and you may choose to do it another way):
 - (1) An introduction which explains your focus, how and why you chose these texts, indicating some emerging themes, any difficulties, and particular learnings.
 - (2) The body of the review, which has its focus on six to eight texts. You could deal with these one at a time, or weave strands together around themes (but make sure you keep noting which authors you are referring to as you go). The aim is to summarise what each scholar has reported, their sources, methods and arguments, the strengths and weaknesses of their case. Avoid going too far into the work of your final assignment, which should reflect your own learning and understanding. The aim in the literature review is to provide a critical report on key texts. Make sure that your referencing follows APA or Turabian style. See the "Referencing Tips" on the home page.
 - (3) A conclusion: summarise what you have found, identify any issues, indicate any further research which may be needed, or comment on what might be interesting but outside the scope of your research. Words like "because" and "therefore" are useful, *because* they show you are reasoning. *Therefore* you are doing theology rather than giving opinions.
 - (4) A list of references: provide a full list of the works you have referred to, following either APA or Turabian style for References or Bibliography.
- Further instructions will be provided via announcements throughout the semester.
- Submissions need to be fully referenced in accordance with either the Turabian **OR** American Psychological Association (APA) referencing conventions.

Assessment 3 - Evaluation

Description: Completion of one Evaluation

Weighting: 40%

Word Limit: Absolute word limit of 2,900 words (includes approximately 2,400 words in the body of the essay plus approximately 500 words for references, reference list/bibliography, and other details as specified in the Course Outline)

Due Date: Sunday, 6 November 2016, 11:59pm (AEST)

Submission Method: Turnitin (note – the Turnitin dropbox will be available four weeks prior to the due date)

Assessment Criteria: Refer to further instructions on this page, and rubrics on pages 9-10. Please note: for Turnitin assessments, feedback is available by navigating back to the Turnitin Dropbox used to submit the assessment. Feedback is not available via MyGrades – this only shows a raw mark.

Return Method: Turnitin

Feedback Provided: Rubric, in text comments and summative comment for all students within three weeks of due date.

Specific Instructions:

Please ensure that the first page of your submission includes the following information:

- *Student Name*
- *Student Number*
- *Exact word count (i.e. the word count of your submission when you have finished it, not the word limit)*
- This assignment would normally take the shape of an essay that gathers together all the work you have done in this course. The first assignment set out your proposal and your initial thoughts and questions. The second assignment was a review of relevant literature to inform you more about your topic. This third assignment gives you an opportunity to reflect on your initial proposals and questions, to set out a deeper analysis of the issues and evidence, and to offer some carefully reasoned responses and suggestions. In a sense, this assignment is a report on what you have learnt, on what has transformed your understanding, and on how and why you might see and do things differently in the future.
- Questions that might guide some of your thinking in relation to your topic (call it XXX) could include: what do the literature findings mean for XXX? Where is XXX heading? What are the positive and negative features of XXX? Are there any disjunctions between the rhetoric and the reality in relation to XXX? What are the challenges that lie ahead for XXX, and why? What is the relevance (or not) of XXX in our day and age? What is your own most honest overall appraisal of XXX, and why? Note that these are advisory questions: develop your own schema of key questions. For your own project, there might well be other questions that you pose for yourself. You can organize assignment 3 in the way that you judge suits best the overarching goal of reaching a critical level of analysis for your topic.
- Given the length of the essay, it is suggested you have a well thought out plan that develops a sequence of steps and possibly use sub-headings to guide the poor reader. Make sure you offer clear definitions of your key terms. Try not to repeat your earlier assignments, but obviously you will need to restate your proposal and interest.
- Further instructions will be provided via announcements throughout the semester.
- Submissions need to be fully referenced in accordance with either the Turabian **OR** American Psychological Association (APA) referencing conventions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme

This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic ability; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Very Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic ability; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic ability; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of most assessment objectives.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve assessment objectives or compulsory course requirements. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

The grading scheme should be interpreted alongside the Postgraduate Theology Programs Marking Rubrics which can be found below.

Word limits

Please note that BBI uses absolute total word limits in order to ensure accuracy when calculating student word limits within Turnitin, as well as to save students and staff time in calculating their own word counts. The split between essay words and all other words is given as a guide only – you may use more or less words in your essay or references at your discretion.

10% over word limit leeway. Beyond that the following penalties are applied:

Minor breach of word limit (approx up to 100 words over): lose 1 mark

Major breach of word limit (approx 100-300 words over): lose 2-3 marks

Unacceptable breach (more than approx 300 words over): take down a marking category and include warning that markers may not read beyond the word limit set for the assessment task

Referencing

Assessment tasks need to be fully referenced according to the Turabian **OR** the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing conventions. Reasons for appropriate referencing include: (1) to enable the marker to locate specific pages; (2) this accuracy is expected at Graduate Certificate / Masters level; and (3) to avoid possible plagiarism (refer above for further details). Please note that the following referencing conventions apply for this course: For every idea, chart, picture, etc which is not the student's own, a full reference must be provided in either APA or Turabian style containing author, date and pagination (e.g. Lovat, 2012, p. 10). Only in very rare cases where a student refers to a general theme in a book or to the title of a work, can the page number be omitted (e.g. in Groome's (1998) work on shared Christian praxis). More details on referencing style can be found below or in your Blackboard course site.

Turabian Referencing Style

Turabian, Kate L. [*A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*](#), 8th ed., revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and the University of Chicago Press Staff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

American Psychological Association (APA) Style

American Psychological Association, [Mastering APA style: student's workbook and training guide](#). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, c2010.

Libraries (Researching)

Students might find the following researching platforms helpful:

- [The University of Newcastle NEWCAT+ Library Catalogue](#)
- [Religion and Theology Research Guide](#)
- [The Bishop David L. Walker Library \(The Broken Bay Institute\) Catalogue](#)
- [Trove – National Libraries of Australia Catalogue](#)

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

As a result of student feedback, the following changes have been made to this offering of the course:

- *Student feedback on this course has been overwhelmingly positive, especially from those who use it as the final course in their programs. However, some requests have arisen for further information within the context of the Course Outline (in addition to that provided in announcements) which have been incorporated in this iteration.*

Academic Misconduct

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity policy, refer to <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/000608.html>.

Adverse Circumstances

You are entitled to apply for special consideration because adverse circumstances have had an impact on your performance in an assessment item. This includes applying for an extension of time to complete an assessment item. Prior to applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure, available at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/000940.html>. All applications for Adverse Circumstances must be lodged via the online Adverse Circumstances system, along with supporting documentation.

Important Policy Information

The 'HELP for Students' tab in UoNline contains important information that all students should be familiar with, including various systems, policies and procedures.

Support Systems and Services for Students

UON offers a range of support systems and services to assist students throughout their studies. UON helps you get the degree you want! The following support systems and services are available to you (even as an online student) and most of these are free for students to access:

[Careers Guidance and Advice](#)

[Free Legal Advice](#)

[Indigenous Engagement](#)

[Disability Support](#)

[Health and Welfare Advisors](#)

[Postgraduate Study Support](#)

[Financial Help](#)

[Chaplaincy Services](#)

[Student Mentors](#)

Marking Rubrics

UoN-BBI Theology Programs Minor and Major Essay Marking Rubric (Used for Assessment Items 1, 2 & 3)

	Fail (FF) (0-49%) Inadequate	Pass (P) (50-64%) Basic	Credit (C) (65-74%) Sound	Distinction (D) (75-84%) Thorough	High Dist. (HD) (85-100%) Comprehensive
DEMONSTRATE AND APPLY APPROPRIATE KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS IN RESPONSE TO THE TOPIC <i>The extent to which you have responded to the topic/question, demonstrating your knowledge in relation to the topic; your thinking skills in relation to its verbs; and your capacity to apply these in a highly skilled manner.</i>	<p>Inadequate evidence of knowledge and skills required at this level of study.</p> <p>Concepts/terms mishandled.</p> <p>Does not respond to the question.</p>	<p>Evidence of basic knowledge and skills and capacity to apply these in response to the topic.</p> <p>Concepts and technical terms used, but in a manner which reveals a basic level of understanding only.</p> <p>Somewhat off track in responding to the question.</p>	<p>Evidence of sound knowledge and skills and capacity to apply these in response to the topic.</p> <p>Concepts and technical terms were used well for the most part, with some inaccuracies.</p> <p>Responds to the question, but at times includes irrelevant or unclear information.</p>	<p>Evidence of a thorough knowledge base and skill set and capacity to apply these in response to the topic.</p> <p>Concept and technical terms were used in an accurate manner.</p> <p>Responds to the question in a thorough manner without losing focus.</p>	<p>Sophisticated and comprehensive application of an extensive knowledge base and skill set to respond to the topic.</p> <p>Concepts and technical terms were used in a sophisticated and accurate manner.</p> <p>Responds to the question in a comprehensive and original manner. Of a publishable quality.</p>
STRUCTURING AND ARGUING TO PROVE A THESIS <i>The extent to which you organise your paper, including an Introduction, Body and Conclusion, to develop an argument and prove a thesis.</i>	<p>Inadequate evidence of a thesis.</p> <p>An internally inconsistent thesis. No reasoned argument.</p> <p>Aimlessly rambles from topic-to-topic.</p>	<p>Thesis was attempted in a basic manner.</p> <p>The thesis has a degree of internal consistency, but the argument it develops is not carefully reasoned.</p> <p>Parts of the essay needed better ordering to make more sense.</p>	<p>Thesis was discernable, and was developed in a sound manner.</p> <p>The thesis is consistent, and argues for its conclusion in a sound manner.</p> <p>Each part of the essay was put together well, although key points were not always ordered clearly.</p>	<p>Thesis was clear and well developed throughout.</p> <p>An internally consistent thesis, which provides a reasoned argument that demonstrates higher-order thinking skills.</p> <p>Well-structured as a whole essay.</p>	<p>Thesis was clear and well developed throughout, revealing higher order skills such as creativity and innovation in its approach.</p> <p>An internally consistent thesis which develops a sophisticated argument, demonstrating thinking skills of the highest order.</p> <p>Well structured as a whole essay and close to or at publishable quality.</p>
RESEARCH AND USING RESOURCES <i>The extent to which you have critically interpreted and used the set readings and resources for this course, as well as further research gathered from a wide variety of relevant sources, e.g. journal articles, conference proceedings, multimedia resources.</i>	<p>Inadequate evidence of engagement with the set readings and resources for this course.</p> <p>Inadequate evidence of further research and use of resources.</p>	<p>Basic evidence of engagement with the set readings and resources for this course.</p> <p>Basic evidence of further research and use of resources.</p>	<p>Sound evidence of engagement with the set readings and resources for this course.</p> <p>Sound evidence of further research and use of resources.</p>	<p>Thorough evidence of engagement with the set readings and resources for this course.</p> <p>Thorough evidence of further research and use of resources.</p>	<p>Comprehensive evidence of engagement with the set readings and resources for this course.</p> <p>Comprehensive evidence of further research and use of resources.</p>
COMMUNICATE ACADEMICALLY, INCLUDING REFERENCING <i>The extent to which you adhere to conventions</i>	<p>Inadequate execution of the prescribed referencing convention / minor plagiarism.</p>	<p>Basic execution of the prescribed referencing convention.</p> <p>Basic expression</p>	<p>Sound execution of the prescribed referencing convention.</p> <p>Sound</p>	<p>Thorough execution of the prescribed referencing convention.</p>	<p>Comprehensive execution of the prescribed referencing convention.</p>

<i>of written English, including but not restricted to spelling, word choice, punctuation and grammar, as well as adherence to assessment requirements and prescribed referencing style. The extent to which you communicate academically by using discipline-specific language correctly and communicate your argument in a clear and understandable manner. The extent to which you remain within the prescribed word limit.</i>	Inadequate expression and academic writing style by adhering to English conventions. Significant breach of word limit (more than 10% over), or failure to write a sufficient amount (more than 10% under the word limit).	and academic writing style by adhering to English conventions. Minor breach of word limit.	expression and academic writing style by adhering to English conventions. Adheres to word limit.	Thorough expression and academic writing style by adhering to English conventions. Adheres to word limit.	Comprehensive expression and academic writing style by adhering to English conventions. Adheres to word limit.
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Verb descriptors:

1. **Explain** — relate cause and effect, the relationship between aspects of something, the why and how behind it (Bloom's level 2).
2. **Analyse** — identify components and the relationship between components; draw out and relate implications (Bloom's Level 4).
3. **Compare** — show how things are similar or different (Bloom's level 4).
4. **Propose** — put forward (a point of view, idea, argument, suggestion, hypothesis) for consideration and/or action (Bloom's level 6).
5. **Argument** — present reasons for or against a topic, thing, or person's action/viewpoint (Bloom's level 6).

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

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