FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

Course Handbook for the Master of Studies in Philosophical Theology
2016-17
Foreword

This handbook applies to students starting the MSt in Philosophical Theology course in Michaelmas term 2016. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/mosinphiltheo/studentview/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/mosinphiltheo/studentview/)
If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations.

If you have any concerns please contact Penny Rodgers, Graduate Studies Administrator, Faculty of Theology and Religion [graduate.enquiries@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:graduate.enquiries@theology.ox.ac.uk).

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Final version</td>
<td>2nd Oct. 2016</td>
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Disclaimer:

The information in this handbook is accurate as at 2nd October 2016, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges](http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges). If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.
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Degree of Master of Studies in Philosophical Theology

1. Introduction

1.1 Course Information

The course requirements presented in this pamphlet are based on the Examination Regulations, which can be found online at

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/mosinphiltheo/studentview/

The Examination Regulations remain the definitive regulations for all courses, although this pamphlet is designed to present them in an accessible format and to add further details for clarification. If in any doubt, please always consult the Examination Regulations.

Copies of all handbooks, pamphlets and forms can be found on the Faculty of Theology and Religion’s WebLearn site.

Other key sources of information are the Faculty of Theology and Religion website, the Faculty of Philosophy website and the University’s Oxford Students website. Please be aware that the colleges have their own handbooks, which are available on college websites.

1.2 Key Contacts

Course Coordinator

All students are assigned a supervisor, and in most cases this will be the course coordinator for the course that you are enrolled on. Your supervisor may arrange for some or all of the teaching to be undertaken by other members of academic staff, but your supervisor will still retain overall responsibility for your progress. The course coordinator for the MSt in Philosophical Theology is Professor Brian Leftow, Oriel College (brian.leftow@theology.ox.ac.uk).

Other useful contacts:

Graduate Studies Administrator (Theology and Religion Faculty Office): Miss Penny Rodgers (phone: 01865 270714, email: graduate.enquiries@theology.ox.ac.uk).

Graduate Studies Assistant (Humanities Division Graduate Office): Mr Nick Fowler (phone: 01865 270048, email: nick.fowler@humanities.ox.ac.uk).
For queries regarding the examinations and assessments process, please contact your supervisor or, if it concerns an administrative matter, your college office, or email: grad_exams.enquiries@theology.ox.ac.uk.

**Director of Graduate Studies (Michaelmas term 2016):** Professor Graham Ward (email: graham.ward@theology.ox.ac.uk)

**Director of Graduate Studies (Hilary and Trinity terms 2017):** Professor Anna Sapir Abulafia (email: anna.sapirabulafia@theology.ox.ac.uk)

1.3 Important dates

**Dates of full term 2016/17 (not including 0th week)**

Michaelmas 2016: Sunday, 9 October to Saturday, 3 December

Hilary 2017: Sunday, 15 January to Saturday 11 March

Trinity 2017: Sunday, 23 April to Saturday, 17 June

**Deadline for submitting proposals for essay titles:** Monday of 0th week (week Nought) of Hilary term

**Deadline for submitting essays:** Friday of eighth week of Trinity Term

*N.B. Please note that the terms ‘essay’ and ‘dissertation’ refer to the same piece of work.*

**Joint Standing Committee for Graduate Studies in Philosophical Theology:** Meeting dates TBC

**Graduate Studies Committee:** Meets on Tuesdays of weeks 1 and 6 each term

**Graduate Joint Consultative Committee:** Meets on Tuesday of week 4 each term
2. Course Content and Structure

2.1 Overview

Title of award: Master of Studies in Philosophical Theology

FHEQ level 7

Length of course: 9 months

2.2 Course Aims

The aims of the course are:

1. To develop the practice of analytical enquiry.
2. To enable students to acquire knowledge and understanding of foundational material and current developments in the area.
3. To develop the ability to identify, understand and apply key concepts and principles.
4. To enable students to reflect on relevant issues of method.
5. To enable students to gain a critical knowledge of the scholarly literature relevant to their course.
6. To develop skills in written and oral communication and to enable students to achieve a high standard in presenting an academic dissertation, displaying sustained argument, independent thought and lucid structure and content.

2.3 Intended learning outcomes

A. Knowledge and understanding
On completion of the course, students will have

- acquired a general understanding of the field of study;
- acquired some specialist knowledge of relevant primary and secondary literature;
- developed in intellectual depth and grasp of profounder issues.

B. Skills and other attributes

I. Intellectual skills

On completion of the course, students will have:

- gained some specialist knowledge of a particular discipline and/or historical period, as a basis for more detailed research or as a foundation for teaching in selected areas of philosophical theology
• gained a grounding in relevant research methods
• written a dissertation, which may constitute a basis for proceeding to a future research degree.

II. Transferable skills

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

(i) find information, organise and deploy it, including through the use of libraries and information technology;
(ii) use such information critically and analytically;
(iii) consider and solve complex problems;
(iv) work well independently and in co-operation with others.

2.4 Syllabus

The course is studied over nine months full time.

Candidates are required to study two of the papers given below and should select their two papers based on their previous qualifications.

This course, which covers part of the ground covered by the MPhil in Philosophical Theology, provides an opportunity for advanced work in Philosophical Theology.

1. Philosophy of Religion.
Lectures: there are no set lectures for this paper. Undergraduate lectures and graduate classes in the subject are available yearly.
Tutorials: 6 of 1.25 hours each.

2. History of Philosophical Theology.
Tutorials: 3 or 4 of 1.25 hours each, on each of the two periods chosen by the candidate.

3. Either The Development of Christian Doctrine to A.D. 451
   or Theology in Western Europe from Biel to Calvin
2.5 Course Requirements

2.5.1 Special Regulations

Candidates shall be required:

(a) to present themselves for a written examination in two of the papers prescribed below, the selection to depend on their previous qualifications;

(b) to present an essay of not more than 15,000 words on a topic in philosophical theology to be approved by the Joint Standing Committee for Graduate Studies in Philosophical Theology;

(c) to present themselves for a viva voce examination unless individually dispensed by the examiners (no candidate will be failed without a viva).

Candidates must make a written application for approval of the essay topic, to reach the Joint Standing Committee for Graduate Studies in Philosophical Theology not later than Monday of nought week in Hilary Term. In cases where there is some uncertainty about the acceptability of the proposal, candidates are advised to submit their applications earlier if possible. All applications should be accompanied by a recommendation from the candidate’s supervisor. Two copies of the dissertation must be sent to the Chair of Examiners for the M.St in Philosophical Theology, c/o the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford by the Friday of eighth week in Trinity Term of the year in which the examinations are taken. The dissertation must be accompanied by a signed statement by the candidate that the essay is the candidate’s own work, except where otherwise indicated. The candidate’s name should not appear on the dissertation itself.

Written examinations will be set in the tenth or eleventh week of Trinity Term.

The examiners may award a distinction to candidates who have performed with special merit in the whole examination.

1. Philosophy of Religion

As specified for Part B of the B.Phil. in Philosophy. See also regulations for Paper 1 of the M.Phil. in Philosophical Theology in the ‘Course Regulations for the M.Phil. in Philosophical Theology’ section of the course handbook.

2. History of Philosophical Theology

The paper will contain questions on philosophical influences on theology during the patristic period, the early medieval period, and the period 1760-1860. Candidates are required to show knowledge of two of the three periods and, within each of those two periods, of some of the principal relevant writings, viz. for the patristic period of works of Origen and Augustine, for the early medieval period of works of Anselm and Aquinas, and for the period 1760-1860 of works of Kant, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher. Study of texts in the original languages will not be required. Lectures, tutorials etc.: as for Paper 3 of the M.Phil. in Philosophical Theology.

3. Either The Development of Christian Doctrine to AD 451

or Theology in Western Europe from Gabriel Biel to Jacob Arminius

See regulations for Paper 1 of Section A and Paper 1 of Section C of the Christian Doctrine option of the M.Phil. in Theology in the 'Course Regulations for the M.Phil. in Theology' section of the course handbook.
3. Assessment

3.1 Elements of Assessment

Assessment consists of:

- two 3-hour written examinations.

- one 15,000-word dissertation on a topic in Philosophical Theology. (Students intending to proceed to doctoral study may use this topic as a foundation for future research).

The choice of dissertation topic is the student’s, albeit subject to the supervisor’s advice and the approval of the Joint Standing Committee for Graduate Studies in Philosophical Theology.

3.2 Examination entry and examination dates

Guidance and advice on examination entry and how to ensure that you are entered for the correct examinations and assessments is available at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/entry

Information on alternative examination arrangements is available at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/arrangements

Examination timetables are published as early as possible and no later than five weeks before the start of the examination. Provisional start dates are provided on the University’s website: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/exams/timetables/, but these must be taken as a guide only.

A personal timetable showing the dates, times and location of your examinations will be sent to you at your college at least two weeks before the examination starts.

3.3 Guidance for the submission of proposals for essay titles

Students should complete the ‘Graduate submitted work title approval form’, which can be found at the back of the Handbook for Postgraduate Taught Students and on the Theology and Religion Faculty’s WebLearn site. The form should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Assistant, Mr Nick Fowler, Humanities Division Graduate Office, Radcliffe Humanities, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6GG, nick.fowler@humanities.ox.ac.uk. Proposals can be submitted by email or in printed form.

Any alteration of the approved essay title requires the Joint Standing Committee for Graduate Studies in Philosophical Theology’s approval. Applications, supported by a supervisor’s recommendation, must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Assistant, Mr Nick Fowler, not later than noon on Friday of -1 week in the Trinity term. A change of title form is available on the Theology and Religion Faculty’s WebLearn site.
3.4 Guidance for the submission of written work for examination

- TWO copies of each essay must be submitted. All submitted work should be double-spaced in font size 12.

- All submitted essays must be accompanied by a ‘Graduate submitted work coversheet’ (found at the back of the Handbook for Postgraduate Taught Students and on the Theology and Religion Faculty’s WebLearn site), which must include a clear statement of the all-inclusive word count for text and footnotes (but excluding bibliography). Candidates are not permitted to exceed the stated word limit.

- Essays must be securely fastened or bound.

- All submitted work must be anonymous, and identified by CANDIDATE NUMBER ONLY; the student’s name or any other identifying information (such as dedications containing names) should not appear.

- Penalties will be imposed for over-length essays, for unapproved changes to the title, and for work which is not securely bound or which bears the candidate’s name.

- Each piece of submitted work must be accompanied by a declaration (the ‘Graduate submitted work declaration’ found at the back of the Handbook for Postgraduate Taught Students and on the Faculty’s WebLearn site), signed by the supervisor of that piece of work, that it is the candidate’s own work and that no part has been submitted for any other degree at Oxford or another institution.

More information about the presentation of written work can be found in the Faculty of Theology and Religion’s Handbook for Postgraduate Taught Students.

3.5 Conduct in examinations

Information on (a) the standards of conduct expected in examinations and (b) what to do if you would like examiners to be aware of any factors that may have affected your performance before or during an examination (such as illness, accident or bereavement) are available on the Oxford Students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance).

If you have any difficulty in interpreting the Examination Regulations, or finding out about subject options, dates, deadlines, etc. ask for advice from your supervisor or the Theology and Religion Faculty Office.
3.6 Examination conventions and grade descriptors

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of your award. They include information on: marking scales, marking and classification criteria, scaling of marks, progression, resits, use of viva voce examinations, penalties for late submission, and penalties for over-length work.

The examination conventions and descriptors for allocating marks issued in 2015/16 can be found on the Theology and Religion Faculty’s Weblearn site. Any modifications will be published not less than one whole term before the examination takes place or, where assessment takes place in the first term of a course, at the beginning of that term. Up-to-date conventions will be sent to all students before the examination and published on the Theology and Religion Faculty’s Weblearn site.

3.7 External Examiner and Examiners’ Reports

The External Examiner for Master of Studies in Philosophical Theology is Dr. Christopher Hughes, Reader in Philosophy at Kings’ College London.

Students are strictly prohibited from contacting external examiners directly. If you are unhappy with an aspect of your assessment you may make a complaint or appeal (see Handbook for Postgraduate Taught Students).

You can access the Examiners’ reports (including the external examiner’s reports) in Weblearn at https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/humdiv/theology/theo_grad.