

Unit Outline



NT302/502 Early New Testament Church

QUEENSLAND THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

About this Unit Outline

This unit outline contains information you will need to find your way around the unit, **Early New Testament Church**. It attempts to provide a structure for your learning, giving details of the topics, and how they will be assessed.

Important notice

While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the information given below, it is the personal responsibility of each student to check the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, copies of which may be found in the Library or online at www.acttheology.edu.au

It is very important that students plan their time carefully to ensure that reading and especially assignments receive adequate attention and so as to prevent a bottleneck of work at the end of the semester.

It is very important that all quoted material in assignments be properly footnoted and acknowledged. The attention of students is drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed "Academic Misconduct". Failure to comply with the standards required will incur penalties as outlined in the ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook.

The attention of students is also drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed "Guidelines for Essays." (see also the QTC Student Handbook) All essays should comply with these standards.

Information about this unit

Unit Description

One writer has said that all Christians have within them something of a "restoration" mentality when it comes to "fixing" the church. i.e., we tend to feel that if we could just restore the church to the way that it used to be in NT days, everything would be all right. Well, I hope this unit helps you to understand that there were lots of problems within the early church and persecutions from without. I trust that you will find that exciting and interesting that despite these challenges the word continued to grow and spread. I pray this will encourage you to trust God as he continues to spread the word today, in the face of problems within the church and pressures from outside the church.

The first section of the unit focuses on the Acts of the Apostles and investigates the history, theology and features of the early church as it grew, expanded, and matured.

In the second section, students will examine in outline several other NT writings (Epistles and Revelation) not covered elsewhere in the course.

Learning outcomes

There are two focal points in this unit:

- to consider the Book of Acts as a presentation of history, theology and narrative.
- to investigate the contents, themes and theology of the various books of the New Testament.

NT302 learning outcomes

- Candidates will develop an understanding of key developments in the growth of the earliest church, together with an awareness of emerging patterns and common themes alongside exceptional and notable events.
- Candidates will also gain an ability to summarise and outline relevant information from Acts and various epistles, with an increased capacity to review significant themes, perspectives and interpretations associated with the material in view.

NT502 learning outcomes

- Candidates will develop an understanding of key developments in the growth of the earliest church, together with an awareness of emerging patterns and common themes alongside exceptional and notable events. In analysing and exploring these texts, candidates will develop an increased ability to recognise and employ inter-disciplinary skills and perspectives.
- Candidates will also gain an ability to summarise and outline relevant information from Acts and various epistles, with an increased capacity to synthesise and review significant themes, perspectives and interpretations associated with the material in view.

How this unit contributes to the course

The unit is a core unit in your degree. It is concerned not so much with critical issues as with enabling students to grasp a firm understanding of the development of the early church and of the contents, themes and theology of the various books of the New Testament.

This unit caters for students studying either of the following accredited units:

- NT302 The Early New Testament Church – a core module of the BTh/BMin/AssocDegTh/DipTh/DipMin.
- NT502 The Early New Testament Church – a core module of the MDiv/ GradDipDiv/ GradCertDiv.

Each of these units is a 4-credit point unit in its respective award.

Pre-requisites and co-requisites for this unit

This is a core unit and as such there are no pre-requisites or co-requisites associated with it.

How this unit is organised and what we expect of you

The unit is taught over a 13-week semester. There are three lectures each week, each of 50 minutes duration.

At Bachelor level a 4 cp unit is considered to require 6 – 8 hrs of time commitment per week. At MDiv level the expectation is 7-9 hours on average.

Students are required to attend all lectures, complete any set pre-reading and complete the assessment tasks by the due dates.

Teaching staff

UNIT CO-ORDINATOR

Rev Wesley Redgen

LECTURERS

Acts, James, Thessalonians, Galatians, Revelation

Wesley Redgen

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Ephesians/Colossians and Hebrews

Dr Russell Williams

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Please feel free to contact us if you have any problems or concerns about the unit.

Unit timetable: topics & teaching & learning activities

| | LECTURE TOPIC | After Lunch | READINGS |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| WEEK 1 WR | Acts 1:1-6:7 Jerusalem under Peter and the 11. 'And the Word of God increased' | Course intro (first lecture) | Peterson or Schnabel on Acts 1:1-6:7 Barnett, 13-26,195-217 Carson Moo on Acts |
| | Don Carson Week | | |
| WEEK 2 WR | Acts 6:8-9:31 Greek speaking Jewish Christians, Samaria, Palestine & Damascus. 'Church built up and multiplied' | Background lectures | Peterson or Schnabel on Acts 6:8-9:31 Barnett 217-230 |
| WEEK 3 WR | MDiv Student Presentations | MDiv Student presentations | |
| WEEK 4 WR | Acts 9:32-12:24 Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch 'But the Word of God grew and multiplied' | Background lectures | Peterson or Schnabel on Acts 9:32-12:24. Barnett, 231-246 |
| WEEK 5 WR | Acts 12:25-16:5 From Jerusalem to Antioch, Cyprus and Asia Minor 'So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily' | Background lectures | Peterson or Schnabel on Acts 12:25-16:5 Barnett 269-271, 276-296, 328-329 |
| WEEK 6 WR | Acts 16:6-19:20 Macedonia, Achaia and parts of Asia Minor 'So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily' | Background lectures | Peterson or Schnabel on Acts 16:16-19:20 Barnett, 329-337 |
| WEEK 7 WR | Acts 19:21-28:31 Paul in Jerusalem, Caesarea and Rome 'Preaching the Lord Jesus Christ openly and not hindered' | Background lectures | Peterson or Schnabel on Acts 19:21-28:31 Barnett, 337-343 |
| WEEK 8 WR | James | Same as before lunch | Book of James + Carson Moo on James |
| | Mission , Holidays | | |
| WEEK 9 WR | Galatians | Same as before lunch | Book of Galatians + Carson Moo on Galatians |
| WEEK 10 WR | Thessalonians 1 & 2 | Same as before lunch | Books of 1 & 2 Thess. + Carson Moo on Thessalonians |
| WEEK 11 RW | Ephesians/Colossians | Same as before lunch | Books of Eph & Col. + Carson Moo on Ephesians and Colossians |
| WEEK 12 RW | Revelation | Same as before lunch | Book of Revelation + Carson Moo on Revelation |
| WEEK 13 RW | Hebrews | Same as before lunch | Book of Hebrews + Carson Moo on Hebrews. |

RW = Russell Williams WR = Wesley Redgen

It is strongly advised that students read the set portions prior to the class, rather than after.

The unit timetable above indicates chapters in the textbooks for pre-reading. Students should read the chapters on the passage for the week from either Peterson or Schnabel, as well as the set pages from Carson & Moo and/or Barnett. The lectures are not designed to provide content that can be found in the textbook. The lectures will assume that the student has completed the pre-reading chapter(s). During the lecture, certain aspects will be emphasised and explained and discussion will be encouraged in order to seek to apply what has been learned to life and understanding.

Assessment NT302

Assessments are submitted online via Moodle.

In order to pass the unit, you must submit all assessment pieces and attain a mark of at least 50% for the unit as a whole.

Late submission of assessment, without prior permission, will be taken into account in determining your mark.

Your essays must also be within 10% of the required word limit and your ability to meet this requirement will also be taken into account in determining your mark. QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

| ASSESSMENT TASK(S) | DESCRIPTION |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Essay</p> <p>2000 words</p> <p>50% of final Grade</p> | <p>A 2000 word essay, which will assess the historical, political and religious background to the New Testament church.</p> <p>Write a 2000 word essay on ONE of the following topics.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did Luke give such prominence to Stephen's speech? 2. Explore the similarities and differences in the presentation of the gospel to Jewish and Gentile audiences presented in the Book of Acts. 3. What do we learn about the status of Christianity from the dealings of the Christians with Roman authorities in Acts? 4. What does James mean by the terms 'rich' and 'poor', and what does he say about them? |
| <p>2. Exam</p> <p>90 minutes</p> <p>50% of final Grade</p> | <p>A 90 minute exam which will assess the content of unit topics not covered in the essay topics in Assessment Item 1.</p> <p>The exam will include two sections:</p> <p>Section A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must answer six from ten short answer questions, with all questions weighted equally. • Section A will count for two-thirds of the total examination marks. <p>Section B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One essay question out of three questions. • Section B will count for one-third of the total examination marks. |

Assessment NT502

Assessments are submitted online via Moodle.

In order to pass the unit, you must submit all assessment pieces and attain a mark of at least 50% for the unit as a whole.

Late submission of assessment, without prior permission, will be taken into account in determining your mark. Your essays must also be within 10% of the required word limit and your ability to meet this requirement will also be taken into account in determining your mark. QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

| ASSESSMENT TASK(S) | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Essay</p> <p>2,000 words</p> <p>35% of final Grade</p> | <p>A 2000 word essay, which will assess the historical, political and religious background to the NT church on ONE of the following topics.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why were the decisions of the Jerusalem Council so important for Paul's mission to the Gentiles. 2. Who were the "God-fearers" and what was their role in the spread of the early church? 3. What competing ideologies and religions did the early church encounter in its spread and to what extent were they a vibrant challenge to the young faith? 4. Is James a Christian Writing, or a Jewish Writing with a few Christian interpolations? |
| <p>2. Chapter Review and Class Presentation</p> <p>1000 words</p> <p>10 minutes</p> <p>15% of final Grade</p> | <p>A Chapter Review and class presentation of a scholarly article or articles on Acts and New Testament letters or chapters in the series <i>The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting</i>, edited by Winter et al, or <i>Witness to the Gospel: a Theology of Acts</i>, edited by Marshall and Peterson.</p> <p>The topics are to be agreed with the lecturer. Your paper and presentation must cover the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The key idea of the chapter 2. The significance/contribution of this idea for understanding Acts 3. An evaluation of the article. <p>You have a strict 10 minutes for presentation.</p> |
| <p>3. Exam</p> <p>2 hours</p> <p>50% of final Grade</p> | <p>A two-hour exam, in two sections, which will assess the content of unit topics not covered in the essay topics in Assessment Item 1.</p> <p>The exam will include two sections:</p> <p>Section A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must answer three from seven short answer questions, with all questions weighted equally. • Section A will count for one-third of the total examination marks. <p>Section B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two essay questions out of five questions. • Section B will count for two-thirds of the total examination marks. |

Guide to Assessments

All students are expected to read the guidelines for written assignments provided in the ACT Handbooks, available in the library or online. You should also read the relevant sections of the QTC Student Manual.

All written work for this course should conform to the guidelines of the *SBL Handbook of Style* (with the exception of Australian spelling conventions.). All assessments should be in Word Doc format.

All Greek and Hebrew cited must be typed in a Unicode font; SBL BibLit is commended as one font covering Greek, Hebrew and Roman Unicode ranges, but is not required. It is freely available from the SBL website: <http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/biblicalfonts.aspx>

The Learning Resources listed in this outline provide a beginning point for research for assessments for this course; students are expected to engage with the works listed there, but are not limited to these resources. The literature on the gospels is massive, and you are encouraged to consult widely.

Do note carefully the *number of words required* for each assessment item, depending on whether you are enrolled for NT302 or NT502.

Assessment 1: Essay

This essay is designed to assess your ability to research an aspect of Acts and in the process weigh up the differing views of the scholars in the light of scripture. Your primary task is answering the question from the scripture. Please ensure the essay answers the question.

The essay must be in formal essay format. I.e. no dot points, good grammar, good paragraph and essay structure.

Your paper should include an abstract and bibliography in the usual format.

The bibliography will include 10-20 entries and will include a variety of viewpoints and recent scholarship where possible.

The essay must use the provided QTC coversheet as its first page and be submitted via Moodle in word doc format.

NT502 only – Chapter Review and Class Presentation.

This chapter review and class presentation is based on a select chapter from books examining the historical background or theological themes relevant to Acts. They are taken from the series *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, edited by Winter et al, or *Witness to the Gospel: a Theology of Acts*, edited by Marshall and Peterson.

Your chapter is to be agreed with the lecturer. This will be done in the first week of lectures. See Moodle for a list of presentation topics from which to choose. Please note only one person per topic. Do not assume you have a particular topic until agreed to by the lecturer.

Your presentation and paper must cover the following:

1. The key idea of the chapter
2. The significance/contribution of this idea for understanding Acts
3. An evaluation of the article.

While your class presentation should focus on 1 and 2, ensure your written work gives sufficient attention to 3.

You will be assessed on your written paper not your oral presentation. The written paper is due one week after the class presentation. (This allows you time to incorporate any feedback you may receive). The paper is to be in standard essay format.

You have a strict 10 minutes for class presentation.

You do not need to submit any part of the class presentation. The class presentation is not for assessment, rather it is designed for you to share with the class what you have learnt. This presentation does not need to be in any set format, however, please do not just read your paper to the class. Please ensure that you put sufficient effort into your presentation to make sure it is easy to listen to, clear and well structured, so that the class can learn from what you have read. You may choose to use any aids you wish (PowerPoint, handouts etc.)

Exam

While the essay is designed to assess your ability to dig deep into one topic, the exam is designed to assess your broad knowledge of the subject. Therefore, the questions will reflect this and your approach to study for the exam should reflect this. The best preparation is to know the lecture material and required reading. Previous exam papers are available in the library and on Moodle for you to see the type of questions asked.

Learning resources

ESSENTIAL REFERENCES – TEXTBOOKS

One of the following two commentaries:

Peterson, David. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Pillar. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2009.

Or

Schnabel Eckhard. *Acts*. ZECNT. Zondervan Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2012.

Barnett, Paul. *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity*. Leicester: IVP, 1999.

Carson, Don and Douglas Moo. *Introduction to the New Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Students also need access to a good Bible dictionary that contains articles on each of the NT Epistles.

IF YOU HAVE EXTRA MONEY TO BUY ANOTHER BOOK, IT WOULD BE BEST TO BUY:

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*. Downers Grove, Il.: Intervarsity, 1993.

or

Marshall, I. H. and David Peterson, eds. *Witness to the Gospel: a Theology of Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1998.

OTHER REFERENCES

Bauckham, Richard, ed. *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*. Vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. Edited by Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1995.

Gill, David W. J. and Conrad H. Gempf, eds. *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*. Vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. Edited by Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1994.

Levinskaya, Irene. *The Book of Acts in its Diaspora Setting*. Vol. 5 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. Edited by Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1996.

Martin, Ralph P. and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments*. Downers Grove, Il.: Intervarsity, 1997.

Rapske, Brian. *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*. Vol. 3 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. Edited by Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1994.

Winter, Bruce W. and Andrew D. Clarke, eds. *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting*. Vol. 1 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. Edited by Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1993.

This is only a short listing. Students should consult the *ACT Undergraduate Manual* or *ACT Post-Graduate Manual* for a fuller listing.

ACT Standards

Grades

Grades in assessment instruments are awarded in the following categories-

| Grade | Score | GPA |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|
| Fail (F) | 0-49% | 0 |
| Pass (P) | 50-57% | 1 |
| Pass+ (P+) | 58-64% | 1.5 |
| Credit (C) | 65-74% | 2 |
| Distinction (D) | 75-84% | 3 |
| High Distinction (HD) | 85+% | 4 |