



Trinity College Dublin

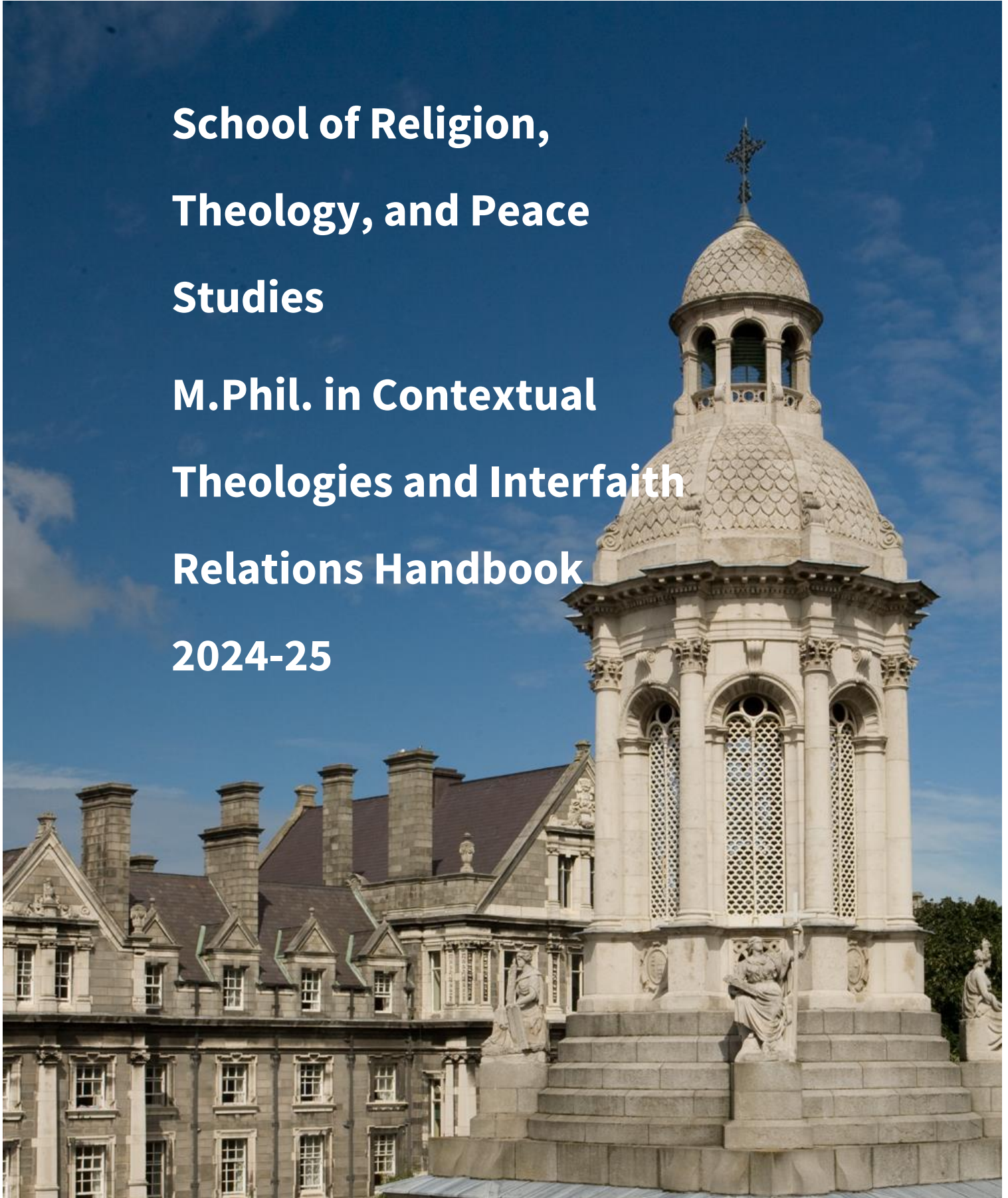
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

**School of Religion,
Theology, and Peace
Studies**

**M.Phil. in Contextual
Theologies and Interfaith
Relations Handbook**

2024-25



M.PHIL. IN CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGIES AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

SCHOOL OF RELIGION, THEOLOGY, AND PEACE STUDIES

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Introduction

Welcome to the [School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies](#) where we continue a tradition of scholarship that goes back to the very foundation of Trinity College Dublin.

The School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies is one of the twelve Schools that comprise Trinity College's Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. It brings together biblical studies, theology, ethics, theory of religion, and international conflict and peace studies as independent but related disciplinary fields.

The School's undergraduate and postgraduate courses explore encounters between religions and cultures from their roots in antiquity to the present day. They investigate the intellectual and institutional resources developed in historical and current interactions and conflicts and apply them to the challenges and opportunities societies face in an age of globalisation.

The School has a strong commitment to community engagement, has campuses in Belfast and Dublin and is home to the [Loyola Institute](#), the [Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies](#) and the [Irish School of Ecumenics](#).

The School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies holds an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Athena Swan Ireland supports higher education institutions in impactful and sustainable gender equality work. Bronze award holders are recognised for their in-depth self-assessment focused on gender equality, commitment to their resultant action plan and capacity to follow through with these plans to bring about change.

The Handbook

This handbook summarises and supplements the regulations that are contained in the University Calendar. However, in the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the [General regulations](#), PART III, published in the University Calendar and information contained in the programme or local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations in the Calendar will prevail.

Academic and administrative staff will be available at Orientation to explain most of these requirements, and to answer any queries that you may have about procedures and regulations.

An electronic copy of this Handbook will be available on the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies website - on the [Current Student page](#). The following link will also be helpful regarding the [College Virtual Learning Environment](#) (VLE). A hard copy of this handbook in large print is also available in the School Postgraduate Administration office. Alternative formats of the Handbook can be provided on request.

There may be some modifications during the year to the procedures and regulations outlined below; these will be brought to your attention as they arise.

Please note:

Familiarise yourself with College's regulations for postgraduate students. These are available in the [Calendar, Part III](#).

Your @tcd.ie email account is the **only** e-mail address used for official College business. Consult this email account regularly.

Your personal data is kept in accordance with the [Student Data Policy](#).

College regulations require that you remain resident in the Republic of Ireland, or in Northern Ireland, during the course of your studies. Absence for a substantial period in either of the teaching terms is not permitted. Research abroad is permitted only with the approval of your Course Coordinator.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| SCHOOL OF RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND PEACE STUDIES - CONTACTS AND OPENING HOURS | 6 |
| 1.1 <i>Dublin Campus - ISE-LI Building Opening Hours</i> | 7 |
| 1.2. Key Locations..... | 7 |
| 1.3 <i>Key Dates</i> | 7 |
| 1.4 <i>Timetable</i> | 7 |
| 1.5 <i>Internship Module</i> | 8 |
| 1.6 <i>Field Trip</i> | 8 |
| 1.7 <i>Scholarships and Prizes</i> | 8 |
| 1.8 <i>Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project (Trinity-INC)</i> | 9 |
| 1.8.1 <i>Athena Swan Gender Charter</i> | 9 |
| 1.9 <i>Careers</i> | 10 |
| TEACHING AND LEARNING | 11 |
| 1. Coursework Overview 2024-25 | 11 |
| 2. Coursework Requirements | 12 |
| 3. Coursework Assessment | 12 |
| 3.1 <i>Marking Criteria</i> | 14 |
| 3.2 <i>Grade Bands</i> | 17 |
| 3.3 <i>Assessment standard</i> | 19 |
| 3.4 <i>Entitlement to an Oral Examination</i> | 19 |
| 3.5 <i>Description of ECTS</i> | 20 |
| 3.6 <i>QQI-NFQ Level</i> | 21 |
| 4. Academic Writing/Presenting and Submitting Your Work | 21 |
| 4.1 <i>Essays</i> | 21 |
| 4.2 <i>Dissertation</i> | 22 |
| 4.3 <i>Submitting Your Dissertation</i> | 23 |
| 4.4 <i>Referencing</i> | 25 |
| 4.5 <i>Reference Styles</i> | 26 |
| 5. PG Religion Policy on Generative AI | 27 |
| 5.2 <i>Further Information</i> | 29 |
| 6. The Role of External Examiners | 31 |
| 6.1 <i>The CTIR External Examiner</i> | 31 |
| 7. Course Deadlines..... | 32 |
| 8. Absence Policy..... | 32 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 9. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity and Referencing Guide | 33 |
| 10. Postgraduate Appeals Process | 35 |
| 11. Feedback..... | 36 |
| 12. <i>Links to University Policies / Reference/ Sources</i> | 38 |
| Appendix A - Module Descriptors..... | 39 |

SCHOOL OF RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND PEACE STUDIES - CONTACTS AND OPENING HOURS

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For the full list of all academic and administrative staff please visit the [School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies website](#).

1.1 Dublin Campus - ISE-LI Building Opening Hours

ISE-LI building: Access will be swiping card only and will be restricted to normal office hours. Currently a standard 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. working day i.e., Monday - Friday. The School will remain open on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings until 9.30 p.m. to accommodate the delivery of the School's Dublin based Evening Postgraduate programmes. Any changes to the opening hours will be notified by e-mail.

Please note students are not permitted to remain in the building outside normal office hours unless you are attending a lecture, seminar or event which has been scheduled by a staff member.

1.2. Key Locations

We are on the main Trinity Campus. Further facilities information will be provided at orientation.

[View our location and get driving/walking directions](#)

[Interactive College Map](#)

[School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies](#)

[Trinity Central](#)

[School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies, Belfast](#)

1.3 Key Dates

Key dates for each M.Phil. course are available in the Orientation Pack on the [Current Student](#) page of the School website. Submission deadlines for coursework are listed on the Key Dates and in module syllabi.

1.4 Timetable

Your timetable will be accessible via your [student portal](#).

1.5 Internship Module

Participants in the module “Praxis of Contextual Theologies and Interfaith Relations” (EM7490) undertake an internship with a non-governmental organisation. Intake to this module is limited in accordance with the number of internships available. This module is an unpaid internship, and students must bear all associated costs of internships themselves (for example, travel and accommodation). Participating students also need to be aware of any visa and insurance requirements and prepare well in advance. Please see the [Internships and Placements Policy](#) for further details.

1.6 Field Trip

M.Phil. students can benefit from a visit to the UN / Geneva which takes place each May, as well as the annual Belfast Field Trip in October.

Details of further field trips as part of the course offerings will be provided throughout the year by your Course Coordinator.

1.7 Scholarships and Prizes

For Scholarships, please see information available online at: [Postgraduate Scholarships](#).

1.7 Research Ethics in the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies Trinity College Dublin and the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies’ research community takes great care to ensure that our research activities follow best ethical practice in their design, content, and conduct. Staff and students are required to follow College policies, maintain appropriate ethical standards in their research, and adhere to current data protection policies such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If you are conducting research that involves human participants, it is highly likely that you will need to apply for research ethics approval from either the School's Research Ethics Committee or the AHSS [Faculty Research Ethics](#) Committee. Visit [Research Ethics](#) on the School website for details of procedures, approval checklists, forms, and deadlines. To review the College’s full “Policy on Good Research Practice”, follow this [link](#).

1.8 Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project (Trinity-INC)

Trinity-INC is based in the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office](#) and works to embed the principles of diversity, equality, and inclusion across all curricula in Trinity so all students, regardless of their personal circumstances, learning backgrounds, abilities or strategies, have equitable opportunity to achieve their learning goals. We do this by working across the College with staff and students. Our [Student Partner Programme offers paid opportunities to](#) students from underrepresented backgrounds to provide input on their experiences of inclusion and exclusion within the teaching and learning environment, co-facilitate training sessions or embark on a project to help make the experience for students in your course or School more inclusive.

Visit the [Trinity-INC website](#) or contact trinityinc@tcd.ie to learn more about what we do and how you could get involved.

Reference/Source:

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Training: <https://www.tcd.ie/equality/training/student-training/>



1.8.1 Athena Swan Gender Charter

The School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies holds an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Athena Swan Ireland supports higher education institutions in impactful and sustainable gender equality work. Bronze award holders are recognised for their in-depth self-assessment focused on gender equality, commitment to their resultant action plan and capacity to follow through with these plans to bring about change.

Statement of Inclusivity

Trinity College, the University of Dublin aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, and values diversity. The College is committed to maintaining an environment of dignity and respect where all staff and students can develop to their full potential. The concept of equality is central to the College's ethos of academic and service excellence. The School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies strives to be an inclusive

learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, or sexual orientation.

Pronouns, Gender Identity and Gender Expression

Our School affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on a class roster, please let the teaching staff know. Feel free to correct us on your gender pronoun if you feel comfortable doing so. College is formally committed to recognise and support an individual's gender identity and gender expression so that all members of the College community may experience a positive and inclusive environment, where every member is treated with dignity and respect. You can find that formal commitment in [Trinity's Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy 2019](#).

1.9 Careers

As a Trinity student you have access to information, support, and guidance from the professional team of Careers Consultants throughout your time at Trinity and for a year after you graduate. The support offered includes individual career guidance appointments, CV and LinkedIn profile clinics, practice interviews and mentoring. Visit [Trinity Careers Service](#) for career, further study and job search advice. Sign into MyCareer to book appointments, find information about vacancies and bursaries, and book your place on upcoming employer events.

Follow the service on Instagram for career news and advice [@trinity.careers.service](#).

Students may also wish to avail of the following online resources:

[Overview of careers resources for postgraduate taught students](#)

[Plan Your Career](#)

[Trinity LinkedIn Alumni Tool](#)

[IT Services](#)

[Library](#)

TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Coursework Overview 2024-25

The MPhil in Contextual Theologies and Interfaith Relations (CTIR) is an interdisciplinary course that explores some of the complex relationships within and between faith communities and their traditions. It pays close attention to the interplay of faith and society/politics and the conflicts generated by it while critically reflecting on the relationship between faith, and class, caste, race, ethnicity, nationhood, gender, sexuality, and ecology. The course focuses on the practical and theoretical possibilities of engaging in the challenging praxis of justice, peace, and integrity of creation. By offering a wide range of critically reflective faith perspectives from the Americas, Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, it blends together themes of liberation theologies, and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

There are three main strands in the course:

1. Religions, ethics, and pluralism with a particular focus on religion and secular; religion and human rights; religion, conflict, and peace; religion and race, caste, gender, sexualities; and religion and postcolonial/decolonial critique.

Modules:

EM7477: Religions, Politics and Ethics in a Pluralist World

EM7554: Engaging Religious Fundamentalism

EM7552: Religions in International Relations

2. Intra-religious dialogue with a particular focus on ecclesial communities and the ecumenical movements

Modules:

EM7489: Nature, Grace, and Place: Theology, Maps and Territories

EM7480: Reimagining Ecumenical Theology: Dialogue and Difference

3. Interreligious dialogue and themes of liberation involving Buddhist-Christian, Buddhist-Muslim, Hindu-Muslim, Christian-Muslim and Jewish-Christian and indigenous traditions.

Modules:

EM7478: Liberationist and Interreligious Theologies

EM7485: Issues In Buddhist-Christian Dialogue

EM7482: Muslim God, Christian God: Islam and Muslim-Christian Comparative Theology

EM7484: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations

2. Coursework Requirements

Students must take **six** taught modules (10 ECTS each), comprising one core module (Research and Methods) and five elective modules, and write a dissertation (30 ECTS). It is recommended that the students take a module each from the above three strands as outlined below for the two semesters. Students may also take modules for credit or audit modules from the other three MPhil courses in the School of Religion. However, the number of modules taken from the other courses (for credit) should not exceed more than two. Students can consult the module coordinator for guidance in essay writing. In the second semester, each student will be given a dissertation supervisor. Key dates and the deadlines for essay and dissertation submissions can be found on key dates.

3. Coursework Assessment

School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies courses rely on a continuous assessment system, based on a mixture of written assignments and lecture/seminar attendance. The internship module is assessed by participation in a work-placement scheme with an accredited body, the submission of a written report and attendance at preparatory seminars.

Students are required to adhere to the word count in the context of the overall assignment; if the submission is under or over the 10% leeway on the word count the student will be required to edit to the specified word count and resubmit. Submissions after the deadline will also be subject to a penalty for lateness.

NB North American Students: The grading system in UK and Ireland is different from in North America - 60-69 is considered a very good grade.

3.1 Marking Criteria

Your essay feedback will be returned to you through Blackboard, and you will be provided with indications of where your essay was most successful and where you need to concentrate your future work. You will receive feedback based on the following rubrics:

School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies, Essay Marking Rubric

| <i>Criteria</i> | 80 and above, Outstanding | 70-79, Excellent | 60-69, Good | 50-59, Passable/adequate | 49 and under, Fail |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| <i>Relevance to question</i> | The essay has directly and comprehensively answered the question, showing an element of originality and creativity in how it is addressed. Outstanding understanding of the topic and related areas is shown. | The essay has directly and comprehensively answered the question. Excellent understanding of the topic is shown. | The essay has answered the question but contains some irrelevant material and/or has omitted some key aspects. Treatment of the topic is generally good but may be simplistic in areas. | The essay has some relevant material but has failed to understand the question and/or has not covered many central aspects. Treatment of the topic is superficial. | The essay has failed to understand the question and/or has not covered many key aspects. Poor knowledge of the topic is shown. |
| <i>Structure and argument.</i> | The essay is structured logically, with subheadings where appropriate, and clear introduction and conclusion. A robust and original line of reasoning is maintained which culminates in a strong concluding argument regarding the essay topic. | The essay is structured logically, with subheadings where appropriate, and clear introduction and conclusion. A consistent line of reasoning is maintained which culminates in a clear concluding argument regarding the essay topic. | The essay is mostly well organised although the structure and line of reasoning may be difficult to follow in places. A concluding argument is made but is somewhat underdeveloped. | Some attempt at structuring material has been made but the essay is disorganised overall. The analysis lacks rigour and the conclusion are unclear and/or unsupported by the main body of the essay. | The reasoning behind the essay's structure is difficult to discern. There is no logical line of argument, sections do not flow, and it is unclear what the essay has achieved in terms of argument and conclusion. |
| <i>Conceptual analysis</i> | The essay has sourced and employed relevant theories in a sophisticated and illuminating manner, debating, and assessing competing perspectives. The work shows strong evidence of deep | The essay has sourced and employed relevant theories in an appropriate manner, debating and assessing competing perspectives. The work shows evidence of deep critical thinking. | The essay has sourced and employed some theories but has not analysed and assessed them in sufficient depth. The work shows some evidence of critical thinking. | The essay has failed to sufficiently use theory to illuminate the topic and is largely descriptive of the subject matter. There is a lack of critical engagement with the literature. | The essay does not show awareness of relevant theories and is largely descriptive. Evidence of critical thinking skills is limited. |

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| | critical thinking throughout. | | | | |
| <i>Writing and presentation</i> | The writing is lucid, sophisticated, and flowing. Grammar and syntax are excellent throughout and there are minimal typographical errors. Formatting is neat and consistent. | The writing is clear and flowing. Grammar and syntax are correct throughout and there are minimal typographical errors. Formatting is neat and consistent. | The writing is generally easy to read with some unclarity in places. Grammar, syntax, and spelling show some errors which could have been avoided during further editing. Formatting is mostly neat and consistent. | Some passages are well expressed but overall, the writing lacks clarity, precision, and readability. There are many grammar, syntax, and spelling errors which could have been avoided during further editing. Formatting is untidy. | The writing lacks clarity, precision, and readability. There are many grammar, syntax, and spelling errors and there is insufficient evidence of editing. Formatting is untidy. |
| <i>Sources and referencing</i> | There is evidence of research and reading far beyond the set texts. The essay relies overwhelmingly on high quality sources (i.e. peer-reviewed, recent, and relevant). The appropriate referencing system is used correctly and consistently. | The essay relies overwhelmingly on high quality sources. The appropriate referencing system is used correctly and consistently. | The essay relies on sources of varying quality. The appropriate referencing system is used mostly correctly with some errors. | The essay relies on a limited number of perhaps rudimentary texts. The referencing contains many errors and inconsistencies. | A limited number of low-quality sources is used. Referencing is poor. |
| <i>Successes and ways to improve.</i> | There are likely no identifiable weaknesses in the student's work that can be improved. | There is little that can be improved in future work, though there may be scope for a greater degree of critical depth. | The feedback highlights issues that can be addressed in future work, leading to higher marks. | The essay shows that there are significant weaknesses in the student's academic skills which should be addressed through greater effort, closer editing, and potentially professional support. | The work is not at the required standard. If issues are not addressed, completion of the degree may be in jeopardy. |

School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies, Presentation Marking Rubric

| <i>Aspect</i> | 80 and above, Outstanding | 70-79, Excellent | 60-69, Good | 50-59, Passable/adequate | 49 and under, Fail |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <i>Relevance to question</i> | The presentation has directly and comprehensively answered the question, showing an element of originality and creativity in how it is addressed. Outstanding understanding of the topic is shown. | The presentation has directly and comprehensively answered the question. Excellent understanding of the topic is shown. | The presentation has answered the question but contains some irrelevant material and/or has omitted some key aspects. Treatment of the topic is generally good but may be simplistic in areas. | The presentation has some relevant material but has failed to understand the question and/or has not covered many central aspects. Treatment of the topic is superficial. | The presentation has failed to understand the question and/or has not covered many key aspects. Poor knowledge of the topic is shown. |
| <i>Structure and argument.</i> | The presentation is structured logically, with clear introduction and conclusion. A robust and original line of line of reasoning is maintained which culminates in a strong concluding argument regarding the presentation topic. | The presentation is structured logically, with clear introduction and conclusion. A consistent line of line of reasoning is maintained which culminates in a clear concluding argument regarding the presentation topic. | The presentation is mostly well organised although the structure and line of reasoning may be difficult to follow in places. A concluding argument is made but is somewhat underdeveloped. | Some attempt at structuring material has been made but the presentation is disorganised overall. The analysis lacks rigour and the conclusion are unclear and/or unsupported by the main part of the presentation. | The reasoning behind the presentation's structure is difficult to discern. There is no logical line of argument, sections do not flow, and it is unclear what the presentation has achieved in terms of argument and conclusion. |
| <i>Conceptual analysis</i> | The presentation has sourced and employed relevant theories in a sophisticated and illuminating manner, debating, and assessing competing perspectives. The presentation shows strong evidence of deep critical thinking throughout. | The presentation has sourced and employed relevant theories in an appropriate manner, debating and assessing competing perspectives. The work shows evidence of deep critical thinking. | The presentation has sourced and employed some theories but has not analysed and assessed them in sufficient depth. The work shows some evidence of critical thinking. | The presentation has failed to sufficiently use theory to illuminate the topic and is largely descriptive of the subject matter. There is a lack of critical engagement with the literature. | The presentation does not show awareness of relevant theories and is largely descriptive. Evidence of critical thinking skills is limited. |
| <i>Presenting skills</i> | The presentation is delivered in a confident, clear, eloquent, and unhurried manner. Efforts to engage the | The presentation is delivered confidently and clearly. Efforts to engage the audience through eye contact and | The presentation is delivered mostly clearly but with some comments lacking precision. Slides support the argument but may | The presentation has some relevant material but is delivered without confidence and clarity. Slides are disorganised. | The oral delivery and slides are insufficiently clear to convey the required content. |

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| | audience through eye contact and voice projection are made. Slides are uncluttered and quotes and images are appropriate. | voice projection are made. Slides are uncluttered and quotes and images are appropriate. | be cluttered or untidy in places. | | |
| <i>Sources and referencing</i> | There is evidence of research and reading far beyond the set texts. The presentation relies on high quality sources (i.e. peer-reviewed, recent, and relevant). The appropriate referencing system is used correctly and consistently. | The presentation relies overwhelmingly on high quality sources. The appropriate referencing system is used correctly and consistently. | The presentation relies on sources of varying quality. The appropriate referencing system is used mostly correctly with some errors. | The presentation relies on a limited number of perhaps rudimentary texts. The referencing contains many errors and inconsistencies. | A limited number of low-quality sources is used. Referencing is poor. |
| <i>Successes and ways to improve.</i> | There are likely no identifiable weaknesses in the student's work that can be improved. | There is little that can be improved in future work, though there may be scope for a greater degree of critical depth. | The feedback highlights issues that can be addressed in future work, leading to higher marks. | The presentation shows that there are significant weaknesses in the student's academic skills which should be addressed through greater effort, closer editing, and potentially professional support. | The work is not at the required standard. If issues are not addressed, completion of the degree may be in jeopardy. |

Please note that these criteria are applied specifically to the assessment of your coursework to indicate strengths and weaknesses in a particular piece of work. The submission grade proposed by your internal examiner(s) will seek to balance the various aspects of your achievement.

3.2 Grade Bands

0-29: Highly unsatisfactory - Fail

30-39: Very weak - Fail

40-49: Weak - Fail

50-59: Satisfactory

60-69: Very Good
70-79: Excellent
80+: Truly outstanding

An essay marked below 50 is deemed unsuccessful. A pass mark is from 50 to 69 inclusive. An essay marked 70 or above is in the Distinction class.

Marks are determined by judgements across the criteria and do not necessarily represent the same band of achievement on all criteria. Positive achievements on some criteria compensate for weaknesses on other criteria and *vice versa*. The final mark reflects the weighting of the different variables in this judgment, as agreed by the examiners, and subject to confirmation by the Court of Examiners.

Therefore:

0-29 indicates a highly unsatisfactory level of achievement across the criteria.

30-39 highlights a very weak level of achievement across criteria OR so highly unsatisfactory on at least one criterion that achievements on other criteria do not compensate.

40-49 indicates a weak level of achievement across the criteria OR a very weak level of achievement on many criteria.

50-59 A satisfactory level of achievement across the criteria OR a good level of achievement on some criteria compensating for weaknesses in others.

60-69 A very good level of achievement across the criteria OR an excellent level on some criteria and at least satisfactory on all criteria.

70-79 An excellent level of achievement on all the criteria OR a truly outstanding achievement on some of the criteria and at least satisfactory on all criteria.

80+ A truly outstanding achievement on all criteria.

3.3 Assessment standard

Most modules require coursework totaling 4,000 words to be submitted according to the internal deadlines distributed at the beginning of each academic year. The 30 ECTS dissertation is 15,000-20,000 words long and is to be submitted in August.

For 2024-2025 the submission date is Friday 15 August 2025.

In the calculation of the overall mark for the course, modules are weighted according to their ECTS credit value. The best 5 module marks out of 6 are used to calculate the final overall average mark. The pass mark for all elements is 50%, except for the internship module which is assessed on a pass/fail basis. Part-time students must pass all modules taken in the first year in order to proceed to the second year of the course. Students must achieve a mark of at least 50% in each module in order to proceed to dissertation, and must receive a mark of at least 50% in the dissertation to be eligible for the degree of M.Phil. Students that fail an assessment to a maximum of 10 ECTS may resubmit their work, provided that the original submission had been received by its deadline.

Compensation is allowed to a maximum of 10 credits at a minimum mark of 40%.

Students can be awarded the M.Phil. with Distinction if they achieve a mark of Distinction (70% or above) on their dissertation and in the final overall average mark. A Distinction cannot be awarded if the candidate has failed any module during the course. A student who does not wish to submit a dissertation for the M.Phil., or who fails the dissertation, may instead opt to be considered for a Postgraduate Diploma provided that they have passed modules amounting to 60 credits. The Postgraduate Diploma may be awarded with Distinction to candidates who, in addition, have achieved an overall average mark of 70% or above. If you do not wish to proceed to the dissertation stage, you should notify your Course Coordinator in writing before 1 April. Such students are required to submit module assessments by 1 May.

3.4 Entitlement to an Oral Examination

In a case where the failure of a dissertation is contemplated, the student is entitled to defend their dissertation at an oral examination. This exam must take place prior to, or

during, the Court of Examiners. The student will be given the reasons for this examination and at least a week's notice that their presence at the examination board will be necessary. The format for the examination is at the discretion of the course committee.

3.5 Description of ECTS

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required to achieve the objectives of a module or programme of study. It is designed to enable academic recognition for periods of study, to facilitate student mobility and credit accumulation and transfer. The ECTS is the recommended credit system for higher education in Ireland and across the European Higher Education Area.

The ECTS weighting for a module is a measure of the student input or workload required for that module, based on factors such as the number of contact hours, the number and length of written or verbally presented assessment exercises, class preparation and private study time, laboratory classes, examinations, clinical attendance, professional training placements, and so on as appropriate. There is no intrinsic relationship between the credit volume of a module and its level of difficulty.

The European norm for full-time study over one academic year is 60 credits. 1 credit represents 20-25 hours estimated student input, so a 10-credit module will be designed to require 200-250 hours of student input including class contact time, assessments, and examinations.

ECTS credits are awarded to a student only upon successful completion of the programme year. Progression from one year to the next is determined by the programme regulations. Students who fail a year of their programme will not obtain credit for that year even if they have passed certain components. Exceptions to this rule are one-year and part-year visiting students, who are awarded credit for individual modules successfully completed.

3.6 QQI-NFQ Level

Under the [QQI-NFQ](#), the Irish National Framework of Qualifications, the Postgraduate Diploma and MPhil are both Level 9 qualifications.

4. Academic Writing/Presenting and Submitting Your Work

4.1 Essays

Module Coordinators will provide a range of titles for your essays. Most written assessments are 4,000 words in length, excluding footnotes and bibliography. Please note that some modules are assessed by a shorter essay and another form of assessment e.g., a group project. 4,000 words is about 12 pages of A4 double-spaced, **excluding footnotes and bibliography**. Essays should not exceed the stated length, and those in excess of the word length will be penalised. **The word count for your essays must be given at the end or beginning of each essay**. Please note that you are welcome to submit an outline of your essay plan (one page, A4, **maximum**) to your module Coordinator, or lecturer for your topic, before you write your essays and dissertation: this is a helpful way to ensure that, at an early stage in the process, your research and writing are on target.

The School essay submission cover sheet, which is available on the [Current Student](#) page of the School website, should be used in submitting essays.

The essay should include detailed references (either in-text, or endnotes, or footnotes) and a bibliography laid out in alphabetical order. Your pages should be A4 size, numbered, and your typing double-spaced. Correct and consistent spelling, grammar and clear presentation are essential.

Retain a copy of each essay that you submit. Your assessments will be submitted *via* Turnitin on Blackboard. Details on how to do this will be provided by your module Coordinators. Submit each of your essays no later than 5 PM (17.00) on the day on which the essay is due, unless otherwise specified.

4.2 Dissertation

Researching and writing your dissertation is the culmination of your studies in the School. All courses within the School include compulsory modules on research methods and skills, where you will receive guidance for your research proposal and for choosing your dissertation topic.

Your dissertation topic must be relevant to your course's modules and themes. Your dissertation title must be registered before you engage in study on a particular subject; this is to ensure both that the topic is acceptable for assessment and adequate supervision is available. Please note that permission to study a specific topic depends on adequate expertise existing in the School. The topic should not normally coincide with any of your other assessment essays, but you **may** be granted permission to extend the topic of one of your essays into a dissertation, or choose a related topic, subject to your supervisor's agreement.

You will be asked to notify us of the area in which you wish to write your dissertation, and a supervisor will normally be allocated to you by semester two.

Once you are allocated a supervisor, please arrange to meet her or him as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to arrange an appropriate working relationship with your supervisor, and to submit work in a timely fashion so that there is adequate time for them to provide you with feedback. In general, students should meet with their supervisors at least twice to discuss their dissertation. Your dissertation, like your essays, is marked in the School before being read by the External Examiners and considered at the Court of Examiners.

In terms of feedback during the writing process, please note that your supervisor will read and provide comments on your **proposal and two other chapters**. You may also submit short chapter outlines to your supervisor for feedback.

4.3 Submitting Your Dissertation

You are required to submit an electronic copy via Blackboard by the submission deadline. The dissertation must be typed A4 size, using double spacing. Pages must be numbered, starting after the Table of Contents.

The current regulations set a minimum of 15,000 and a maximum of 20,000 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography. Dissertations over 20,000 words may be penalised.

The word count for your dissertation must be given at the end of the last chapter or the conclusion.

Students are required to adhere to the word count in the context of the overall assignment; if the submission is under or over the 10% leeway on the word count, the student will be required to edit to the specified word count and resubmit. Submissions after the deadline will also be subject to the penalty for lateness.

The structure of the dissertation should be (in this order):

1. Title page, including title and author (this is the name under which you are officially registered in College).
2. Declaration. Use the following wording:

DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of M.Phil. has not been submitted for a degree at any other University, and that it is entirely my own work. I agree that the Library may lend or copy the dissertation upon request.

Signed:

Date:

3. Acknowledgements (if any)
4. Abstracts. You must provide a one-page Abstract at the start of your dissertation. The Abstract of the dissertation (in single spacing) outlines its content and mode of investigation. It should be headed by title and author and entitled “Abstract”.
5. Table of Contents
6. Introduction
7. Chapters
8. References (if you are not using the Harvard system whereby references are in brackets in the text)
9. Bibliography

You must also include:

- (i) a list of **abbreviations** used in the dissertation (if such abbreviations are extensive), placed either before the Introduction or immediately before the Bibliography. This should be noted in the Contents.

You may also include:

- (ii) **appendices**, containing any important extra material you **need** to include. Any appendices are placed after the conclusion but before the bibliography.

Your name must appear on the front page of the dissertation exactly as registered. If in doubt, please check with the Postgraduate Administrator at srpostgrad@tcd.ie First name initials are not allowed.

4.4 Referencing

Clear and accurate referencing is an important part of the scholarly task. Your reader should be able to see when you are quoting directly from a source, when you are summarizing a source, and when you are advancing your own judgement on the sources to which you have referred. The reference that you provide should enable your reader to check the sources that you have used. And, as section 5 on Plagiarism, below, makes clear, clear, and accurate referencing is essential to the scholarly enterprise.

Quotations (and references generally) must be made with care for accuracy. Quote the exact words; if you have to add extra words to clarify the sense, put them in square brackets; if you omit any, indicate that you have done so with three dots; so, for example:

It is instructive to note the comment of Henry Kissinger: “[In such cases] ... it is essential to bear in mind the role of personal humility in the exercise of diplomacy.”

If a quotation is going to take up more than two lines in your script, or if you wish to give it a special emphasis, make a distinct paragraph of it: indent the whole paragraph five places in from the left-hand margin, with single spacing and without quotation marks. Always when you quote or refer, supply a precise reference to the work and page or pages to which you have referred.

It is a standard and essential academic requirement to cite the source of ideas taken from other authors and to place direct quotes in quotation marks. Where the idea or quotation is second-hand, i.e., drawn from a citation in another source, that fact should be noted in your list of references, e.g.: Sen, 1999, p. 75, as cited in Todaro, 2009, p. 16.

Web-based resources should be referenced with the following information: author of the document, title of the document, website address, and the date at which you accessed the site.

The work of compiling an accurate bibliography and footnotes is immeasurably lightened if proper care is taken from the beginning of your research to keep such details. When you note down a quotation or other reference, take care to record with it the full and precise details of publication.

A useful book concerning references and the use of sources and related issues in particular is Charles Lipson (2004) *Doing Honest Work in College*, Chicago University Press, Chicago.

4.5 Reference Styles

College does not require you to employ a particular reference style – you may, therefore, use styles that rely on endnotes or footnotes (e.g., Chicago), or that provide references in parentheses in the body of your text (e.g., Harvard), as long as you are consistent in their use – **never** mix the referencing styles.

Endnotes or footnotes serve two chief purposes: (i) to give a reference or several references; or (ii) to discuss a point which is incidental to your main argument, but which you wish nevertheless to acknowledge, or which serves to supplement or clarify your text. Most of your footnotes or endnotes will be of the first type.

Footnote and endnote references should be in single spacing and may be placed at the bottom of the relevant page (footnotes) or in numerical order before the bibliography at the end of the dissertation or essay (endnotes).

In the bibliography for your essays and dissertation, books, journal articles, online resources or book chapters should be listed alphabetically by the author's surname. The bibliography should include all works that you quote or mention in your references. Full publication details of the books and articles should be given, and you should follow a consistent pattern for doing this. The titles of books and journals should be italicised (or underlined), but not the titles of articles in journals, which should be put in inverted commas or quotation marks.

The following methods of citing a work are recommended for CTIR students:

- (1) Linda L. Gaither, *To Receive a Text: Literary Reception Theory as a Key to Ecumenical Reception*, American University Studies, Series VII Theology and Religion, Vol. 192, New York: Peter Lang, 1997, 138.

You must give full details of the source in footnotes and endnotes when you first quote from it, as well as when you list it in your bibliography. Subsequent quotations from the same text may use an abbreviated form, e.g., Gaither, *To Receive a Text*, 155-160 or Todaro, 2000, pp. 175-176.

Bibliography

David G. Kamitsuka, *Theology and Contemporary Culture: Liberal, Postliberal and Revisionary Perspectives*, Cambridge: CUP, 1999.

Ephraim Radner, *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Cambridge U.K.: Eerdmans, 1998.

In the case of book chapters or articles in edited volumes, the citation should include the author, the title of the article, the journal or periodical title, the volume and issue numbers, the date and page numbers. For example:

Arthur Wells, 'Bishop Christopher Butler at Vatican II: His Role in *Dei Verbum*,' *The Downside Review*, Vol. 120 No. 419 (2002), 129-154.

5. PG Religion Policy on Generative AI

Beyond limited legitimate uses of generative AI, **presenting the output of generative AI tools as your own work, without acknowledgement, violates the principles of academic integrity and is academic misconduct.** In other words, you cannot use AI tools to generate all or part of the content for an exam or assignment and submit it as if it was your own work.

This implies that **undisclosed and/or inappropriate use of generative AI tools may violate the principles of academic integrity.** Accordingly, the School of Religion,

Theology, and Peace Studies requires a declaration of generative AI use to be completed and submitted with all work (exams, assignments). This declaration is made in addition to the standard declaration of academic integrity as part of a revised assessment cover page (Available on Blackboard Page or via the [link](#). Any assignment submitted without the declaration will not be marked. Such assignments will be returned to the student and must be resubmitted with the cover page, potentially resulting in a delayed mark.

This policy recognises that generative AI tools may have some legitimate uses to support your learning and to help you to research for or to polish an assignment. For example, you might use generative AI to summarise your notes in preparation for an exam or assignment, to perform some initial research into a topic (bearing in mind the limitations noted above), or to polish your own writing in terms of grammar or spelling or to make it more concise. All such uses must be declared. No credit/marks will be awarded for use of generative AI, nor are students expected to use generative AI for any purpose. You should also reflect on whether relying on such tools to do this work for you will reduce opportunities for you to develop and hone your own academic skills.

Where generative AI tools have been used to generate content, they must be clearly cited and full details of how the content was generated must be declared in the appendix. A helpful and detailed description of how to cite ChatGPT (which can be applied to other generative AI tools) can be found on the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

You should assume this policy applies to **all assessments/exams in Religion**, but please note that individual module coordinators may supplement this policy with further restrictions or permissions regarding generative AI use. Please check the module assessment information on the Blackboard for that module, and if in doubt, please email the module coordinator.

As part of the declaration, students are asked to select either (A) or (B), below.

(A) Nothing to declare. I did not use generative AI software as part of the work for this assessment.

(B) I used generative AI as part of the work for this assessment.

Where (B) is selected, students are required to include an appendix containing a <350-word explanation of how generative AI was used (which tool (name, version, publisher, URL); how the output was generated; how this output was used in the assignment) and

how that use conforms with the principles of academic integrity. Questions and/or prompts and the generative AI output should be included as part of the appendix. These are not included in the word count for the assignment. Where these are not included,

they may be requested as part of the marking process. 4.1 Oral Exam

Regardless of the declaration, as part of the marking process, markers may require students to complete a 10-minute oral exam to ensure that work submitted by the student is their own work and that it evidences their attainment of the learning outcome.

5.2 Further Information

Generative AI tools are a family of tools that incorporate natural language processing and deep learning techniques to generate answers (text, code, images etc.) to questions and prompts. The purpose of this policy is to outline how students' use of generative AI fits in to our expectations regarding academic integrity.

It is first important to be aware that there are a number of serious concerns about generative AI tools and there are significant limitations to the outputs they produce.

These include (please see links for further information):

- *Accuracy of the information produced.* Generative AI tools work by predicting the next most likely word in a sequence. [This means that the tools are susceptible to so-called "hallucination"](#) – producing text that is grammatically correct and which may have face validity but is not factually correct.
- *Plagiarism and lack of source attribution.* [The sources of information relied upon to construct the text produced may not be appropriately acknowledged](#) and, where sources are provided, the references may be fabricated.
- *Ethical issues related to data sourcing.* Many generative AI models were trained on materials obtained from the internet and include [text](#), [images](#), [code](#) etc., that were proprietary, copyright-protected, or protected by non-commercial commons licenses. Using generative AI output risks these forms of plagiarism and copyright infringement.
- *Breach of TCD copyright.* If university module materials (e.g., slides, syllabus) are used to prompt or to guide the response of AI tools, this is a breach

of TCD copyright and is illegal (see

<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/assets/pdf/Intellectual-Property-Policy-2022.pdf>).

- *Bias.* As part of training, the models that underlie generative AI were exposed to data obtained from the internet, which may be biased in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other protected characteristics. Although guardrails may have been put in place, [text produced by generative AI models can reproduce these biases](#).
- *Ethical issues related to training.* To guard against toxic material (e.g., violent, illegal, distressing) being included in training data, outsourced content-labellers were used to review training data and remove unwanted text. Such outsourcing often involves exploitative practices – for example, [employees who are resident in the Global South and are paid very little for distressing work](#). Similar content moderation practices are commonly used by social media platforms.
- *Climate & environmental impact.* Training generative AI models requires vast amounts of [energy](#), [hardware](#), and [water](#) to keep that hardware cool. Such impacts, [which will only continue to grow](#), are rarely considered in the rush to adopt the technology.

Beyond these concerns, the use of these tools has significant implications for our expectations about assessment in the university. The goal of assessment is to support learning and to ascertain the attainment of learning objectives. A key assumption is that the work submitted for assessment is **original work completed by the learner, and that the learner is the sole author**. To earn your degree, you must be able to demonstrate full ownership of, and accountability for, the work submitted, and must appropriately acknowledge all sources used in the preparation of the work.

These assumptions are encoded in the principles of **academic integrity**, defined by the National Academic Integrity Network¹ as, “**the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting**.” The principles of academic integrity entail that, “It is the responsibility of the enrolled learner to ensure that all submitted work for assessment purposes in an academic setting, which includes but is

not limited to, text, graphics, tables, formulae, or any representation of ideas in print, electronic or any other media, in addition to artefacts, computer software and algorithms, correctly **acknowledges the source of any data which is not original to the learner.**”

Further concerns about academic integrity will be addressed under the Academic Integrity Policy and procedures: <https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity>.

6. The Role of External Examiners

Your essays and dissertation are assessed first in the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies and then made available to the University’s External Examiners for their consideration. Essays pass or fail on the final judgement of the External Examiners, not on the opinion of the teaching staff, although this counts in the final decision. External Examiners usually meet in late November to monitor assessment procedures and outcomes in all modules and for the dissertation. Final marks for essays and dissertations are decided at this Court of Examiners. Final responsibility for the standard of an essay rests with the student.

Student assessed work (exam scripts, coursework, and research theses) is regarded as ‘personal data’ under the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into effect on 25th May 2018. The external examiner, to allow for appropriate preparation, will receive all documents required for the effective conduct of their role in advance of their attendance (physical or remote), at the Court of Examiners. Students will be informed if their assessed work is being sent outside of the EU for the purposes of external examination.

6.1 The CTIR External Examiner

Revd Dr Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar, Global Theologian with USPG, Associate Tutor Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford.

The internal examiner of your essay (typically the module Coordinator, or lecturer for the essay topic) will provide you with a report on your work, together with the grade that will be proposed to the Court of Examiners. All fails, distinctions and borderline grades will be marked by a second internal examiner.

7. Course Deadlines

Deadlines for your assessments are distributed at the beginning of each academic year / made available on Blackboard (Key Dates). **Accomplishing the assignment within the set time limit is a key element of the assessment.** If you do not succeed in submitting your essay on time, a 10% penalty is imposed on the grade that you receive. If you are aware in advance that you are unable to meet the set deadline solely due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g., bereavement or illness), you should contact your Course Coordinator and request an extension of the deadline; you will be asked to provide appropriate evidence, for instance, a medical certificate. Should you fail to meet the deadlines for one or more essays during the course of your studies, you will be asked to discuss the matter with your Course Coordinator. Please see the [Calendar, Part III](#) for College attendance / extension regulations.

8. Absence Policy

Postgraduate students who consider that illness may prevent them from meeting deadlines should consult their medical advisor and request a medical certificate for an appropriate period. If a certificate is granted, it must be presented to the student's Course Coordinator **within three days** of the beginning of the period of absence. Such medical certificates must state that the student is unfit. Medical certificates will not be accepted in explanation for poor performance. Further details of procedures subsequent to the submission of medical certificates are available from Course Coordinators. Postgraduate students who consider that other grave cause beyond their control may prevent them from attending College (or any part of their course) must consult and inform their Course Coordinator. The Course Coordinator will then make representations to the Dean of Graduate Studies requesting that permission be granted for absence. The acceptance of

medical disability is entirely at the discretion of the Dean of Graduate Studies, who may ask for a report from the medical officers in charge of the Student Health Service. The report will be strictly confidential to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Course participants who fail to meet deadlines and who have not been granted an extension, will be notified that no further work will be accepted from them and that their assessment will be based on work already submitted.

If you have not completed your module requirements before the deadline for your dissertation outline in your final year, then you will not be permitted to submit a dissertation for the M.Phil. degree, nor to receive the postgraduate Diploma. Please see the [Calendar, Part III](#) for College attendance /extension regulations.

9. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity and Referencing Guide

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. It is commonly accepted also, however, that we build on the work and ideas of others in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the work or ideas of others as one's own, without due acknowledgement. Plagiarism can arise from deliberate actions and also through careless thinking and/or methodology. The offence lies not in the attitude or intention of the perpetrator, but in the action and in its consequences. It is the responsibility of the author of any work to ensure that he/she does not commit plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered academically fraudulent, and an offence against academic integrity that is subject to the disciplinary procedures of the University. To ensure that you have a clear understanding of what plagiarism is, how Trinity deals with cases of plagiarism, and how to avoid it, you will find a repository of information on the Library website re [Plagiarism](#).

Please:

- i. Visit the [online resources](#) to inform yourself about how Trinity deals with plagiarism and how you can avoid it. You should also familiarize yourself with the 2024-2025 [Calendar, Part III](#) entry on [plagiarism](#) located on this website and the sanctions which are applied.
- ii.
- iii. Familiarise yourself with the declaration that you will be asked to sign when submitting course work and which is included on the essay cover sheet, available on the [Current Student](#) page (Student Form) of the School website.

Contact your Course-Coordinator or your Lecturer if you are unsure about any aspect of plagiarism.

[References / Sources:](#)

[Calendar, Part III, General Regulations & Information, Section I 'Plagiarism'](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Library Guides - Avoiding Plagiarism](#)

[Plagiarism Declaration](#)

As Ireland's leading university, we recognise that academic integrity must underpin all aspects of our educational ecosystem, including all activities relating to research, learning, assessment, and scholarship. Indeed, academic integrity is a core feature of Trinity's academic culture and is the cornerstone of university life.

Accordingly, in 2022, the University's Council renewed Trinity's commitment to 'acting responsibly and ethically, embracing integrity in all our actions and interactions as members of the College community'. As part of its [Statement of Principles on Integrity](#), the College insists that staff and students 'give credit where credit is due, recognizing and acknowledging the contributions and achievements of others in scholarship, teaching, research and service.'

Academic integrity can be described as a commitment to, and compliance with:

ethical and professional principles, standards, practices and consistent system of values, that serve as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research and scholarship ([NAIN Lexicon](#), p.3)

Recognising our responsibility to our students and to wider society to nurture and safeguard academic integrity, Trinity is working collaboratively with peer institutions in Ireland, with the active support of national and international networks, to assure and enhance academic integrity at every level of the University ([Calendar Part III, Section 1, page 30](#)) For further information see:

- [National Academic Integrity Network](#)
- [European Network for Academic Integrity](#)
- [International Center for Academic Integrity](#)

References/Sources:

[Calendar Part III, Section 1: General Regulations & Information, 'Academic Integrity' Statement of Principles on Integrity](#)
[RTPS Academic Integrity Policy](#)
[Library Guides – Academic Integrity Coversheet Declaration](#)

10. Postgraduate Appeals Process

The Postgraduate Appeals Process is outlined in the Trinity College [Calendar Part III](#). All appeals should be heard first at School level. The grounds for appeal against the decision of Taught Course Committees are outlined in the *Calendar* under General Academic Regulations for Graduate Studies and Higher Degrees – Section 1.

A student who wishes to appeal should first write to their Course Coordinator, within two weeks of the publication of results, stating clearly the grounds for appeal and, where necessary, enclosing documentary evidence.

The Course Coordinator will then discuss the case with the relevant parties and attempt to find a solution.

If the Course Coordinator cannot resolve the matter, the student may appeal to the School Appeals Committee (Taught Postgraduate). The Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate (DTLPG) will convene and chair this committee which will be composed of one Course Coordinator (of a programme **not** taken by the student) and another member of academic staff. At the School Appeals Committee, the student concerned should have representation appropriate to the formality of the process, for example, a supervisor, Course Coordinator, or other appropriate staff member.

No one will be appointed to an Appeals Committee where a conflict of interest might arise. Should the DTLPG experience a conflict of interest, she or he will be substituted by the Head of School.

Appeals against the decision of a School Appeals Committee (Taught Postgraduate) may be made in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who has the discretion to grant or deny the appeal. Appeals against the decision of the Dean of Graduate Studies may be brought to the Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Taught). This committee will consider appeals concerning events occurring more than 4 months prior only in the most exceptional circumstances. For further details of appeals at College level, please consult the [Calendar Part III](#).

11. Feedback

Much of this Handbook is taken up with rules and procedural requirements. This is unavoidable if we are to ensure that the School's courses are well-structured and that the degree you obtain is of real value. But the experience of postgraduate study should be richer than the mere passing of assessment requirements and the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies encourages you to participate in our continuing efforts to improve our procedures as the year advances and to make an evaluation of your experience at the end.

Your suggestions on every aspect of the programme will be invited throughout the year. At the end of each semester, you will be asked to complete an assessment of each of the

modules that you have undertaken. The information that you supply is invaluable to staff in the further development of the School. You may also be asked to take part in an online survey conducted by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Please note that in any official survey you will remain anonymous, and your assessment of your experience in the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies – whether positive, negative or both – is fed into a structured assessment of teaching and learning. Of course, you do not have to wait for these formal assessments to take place: staff are available at regular office hours (communicated at the start of the year), and they welcome your concerns and suggestions. Your class will also elect a class representative, who will be able to articulate your concerns through the appropriate channels.

12. Links to University Policies / Reference/ Sources

Students may also wish to avail of the following online resources and/or refer to the Postgraduate Student Support Handbook available on the School's Current Student Page on the website:

[My TCD](#)

[Blackboard](#)

[Academic Registry](#)

[Trinity LinkedIn Alumni Tool](#)

[IT Services](#)

[Library](#)

[Data Protection](#)

[PG Student Learning Development](#)

[Student complaints](#)

[Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

[Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy](#)

[Equality Policy](#)

[Learning Technology Guides for Students \(Blackboard\)](#)

[Trinity Careers Service, Trinity Teaching and Learning - Trinity College Dublin](#)

[\(tcd.ie\)](#)

[Overview of careers resources for postgraduate taught students](#)

Appendix A - Module Descriptors

A full list of modules with ECTS weighting, learning outcomes and recommended reading along with the full syllabi for individual modules are available in Blackboard. All registered staff and students automatically have accounts in Blackboard.

If you are not enrolled in your modules check with your School Office to ensure you are timetabled for the modules. All data in Blackboard is based on the College timetabling systems and information taken from your student record on my.tcd.ie. Blackboard requires an active [TCD computer account](#) for access. For more information on access and enrolment issues visit the [IT Services VLE page](#).

The School reserves the right to amend the list of available modules and to withdraw and add modules. Timetabling may restrict the availability of modules to individual students.

First and Second Semesters

The Core Module: EM7479 Research Methods in Contextual Theologies and Interfaith Relations (Dr Andrew Pierce, John O' Grady and Dr Jude Lal Fernando)

This module will engage the students in conducting a needs-analysis towards their fruitful pursuit of research, including choosing appropriate modular pathways; research writing (essays and dissertation) seminar presentation, fieldwork, library resources, study skills, peer interaction and supervision. It will discuss the role of hermeneutics in relation to substantive religious traditions in their texts, contexts, and cultures, acknowledging their uniqueness and interaction with other belief systems. The module will critically evaluate a range of research methods – deductive, inductive, analytic, action-based, social, participative, with particular attention to the challenges raised by research activity in the interests of justice, peace, and integrity of creation. It will distinguish between proper academic use of the work of others and inappropriate plagiarism. In the second semester, each student will be given an opportunity to present their work in class in preparation for the dissertation.

EM7477 Religions, Politics and Ethics in a Pluralist World (Prof Linda Hogan, Dr Andrew Pierce, Dr Kevin Hardigan, Dr Cathriona Russell, Dr Michael Kirwan, and Dr Jude Lal Fernando) Intensive module

The module examines the changing meaning of religion and secularity in contemporary society by drawing on historical and recent debates in ethics, theology, philosophy, sociology, and politics. It explores the interdependence/conflict between religion and secularity, and ethics in societies that are at once secular and multi-religious and considers how political deliberation on issues of critical moral global concern (sexuality, gender, race and ecological relations, human rights, religious freedom/freedom of speech, political economy, state formation, war, peace, and geopolitics) can be pursued. In particular, key insights in the debate on modernity, secularisation and pluralisation will be discussed while delving into the questions; is critique secular and can religion be critical. A range of case studies representing particular regions, religions and ethical traditions will be conducted in scrutinising varying relationships between religion, secularity, and ethics. Having analysed the key points of reference in historical and contemporary debates this module will then focus on the concept of justice, peace, and integrity of cosmos (or Common Good) as it has been understood, theorised, and debated in different political theologies and philosophies in various religious and ethical traditions, and cosmovisions of indigenous traditions. The main objective is to identify the prospect of shared values in a globalised world self-reflectively, contextually, dialogically with a praxis-based orientation towards the public sphere.

EM7480 Reimagining Ecumenical Theology: Dialogue and Difference (Dr Andrew Pierce)

Privileging liminal and dialogical perspectives, this module explores Christian theological approaches to the experience of *oikoumene*. The module engages explicitly with the Faith & Order ecumenical tradition of theological reflection in an inter-confessional context.

‘Christian unity’ became a widely-acknowledged ecclesiological imperative in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its emergence went hand-in-hand with a broader late-modern cultural distrust of the imperial and colonial mechanisms through which Christianity had emerged as a global presence (a ‘world religion’) in the nineteenth century. This experience of *oikoumene*, therefore, presupposes a critical, self-critical, and explicitly *repentant* dynamic in efforts to articulate Christian identity in a religiously and non-religiously pluralist world. Having begun as an intra-Christian attempt to stage and contain conflict, Faith & Order concerns have also – inevitably – been implicated more widely in discussions of how non-doctrinal factors (gender, politics, society, culture, etc.) help to shape normative claims about Christian identities. This module incorporates materials that are deeply ecclesiocentric, alongside approaches that attempt to relativise ecclesiocentrism. After exploring key developments in ecumenicity, the module focuses on how ecumenically pivotal themes (authority, tradition, and experience) might be expanded through engagement with disciplined extra-theological reflection.

EM7485 Issues in Buddhist-Christian Dialogue (Dr Jude Lal Fernando, Dr Seema Chauhan, and Dr John O’Grady)

This is NOT a meditation course, NOT an exercise in comparative religion, and NOT an actual dialogue with Buddhists, though it contains elements of all three. The course discusses Buddhism as a specific historical, geographical, and ethical-religious tradition that represents one of the strands within the Indic Movement. Buddhism’s diverse doctrinal, political, and ideological interpretations, and interactions with primal traditions in Asia are explored in appreciating its heterogeneous nature (including its later Western variant). Issues arising from Buddhism’s encounter with Christianity within colonial and postcolonial settings are identified in an attempt to understand the challenging complexities in Buddhist-Christian dialogue. The course aims to provide students in Contextual Theologies and Interfaith Relations with the basic historical and doctrinal information they need to develop theological perspectives on Buddhism, and to introduce Peace Studies students to the problems involved in understanding the peacebuilding potential of an Indic or ‘Eastern’ worldview in its manifold Asian and Western contexts.

Attention also will be paid to issues in Buddhism, Conflict and Peace within interreligious contexts. Issues related to Buddhist-Hindu and Buddhist-Muslim relations in Asia will be discussed as a way of overcoming the Christianity-centred approach to interreligious dialogue. The course is structured in such a way that the students will be equipped with the disciplinary and methodological tools to correlate issues in Buddhist-Christian dialogue and the public sphere of the present historical moment of globalisation.

EM7544 Fundamentalism & Radicalization (Dr Carlo Aldrovandi, Dr Andrew Pierce and Dr Jude Lal Fernando)

This interdisciplinary module will provide students with a critical understanding of the global resurgence of religious fundamentalism in the wake of 9/11. We will tease out and unpack fundamentalism's key theological underpinnings within the Abrahamic spectrum and other world religions and address its historical emergence within US Protestantism as well as different cultural contexts. The course will also discuss the drives behind religious fundamentalism's involvement in (or withdrawal from) the realm of politics, while mapping out the doctrinal responses that different religious traditions have deployed to tackle the so-called 'fundamentalist challenge' within their midst. Furthermore, we will probe the validity of the common assumption that the 'fundamentalist mind-set' represents some sort of religious-ethnic tribalism or a form of deviant psychology. Building on seminal ideas from various scholarly fields, we will interrogate fundamentalism as a complex, multiform, and evolving phenomenon which creatively reacts and adjust to rapid cultural-social change. An emphasis will be placed on the controversial relationship that fundamentalism entertains with globalization trends, post-colonialism as well as the secular values of Western Modernity.

EM7478 Liberationist and Interreligious Theologies (Dr Jude Lal Fernando)

In our modern age, a pressing need has arisen to take other religions seriously other than one's own. Both proximity and polarization of diverse religions and their various traditions have increased as never before in history. At the same time an awareness has grown that there is no one single universal theology or philosophy of one religion that can dominate the entirety of its communities of believers across the globe. Traditional understanding of religion is changing rapidly. Instead, there is a call to recognise its contextual expressions associated with *culture/other religions* and *social structures*. The main aim of the module is to identify key Christian theological shifts in theology of religions (theologies of religions), both in theory and practice and explore the interrelationship between pluralism and liberation (justice, peace, and integrity of creation). It will identify similarities and differences between interreligious studies and interreligious dialogue and introduce a range of contextual interreligious theologies that will provincialize the dominant Western theological thinking. The debate between theologians of religions and comparative theologians will be examined. The module will engage in a critical reflection on the relationship between dialogue and common ethical concerns based on experiences of multiple forms alienation and empowerment and introduce alternative theological/Christological perspectives that interlink religious pluralism, indigenous traditions, and liberation.

EM7489 Nature, Grace, and Place: Theology, Maps and Territories (Dr Andrew Pierce)

This module analyses the contentious relationships in Christian tradition between understandings of the mystery of God on the one hand, and of the human person on the other. This relationship is pivotal to the experience of ruptured communion amongst Christian churches; between East and West; between the Churches and communities shaped by the Western Reformations; and, more recently, between churches of the Global North and South. Focusing on the paired theological themes of Nature and Grace, module-participants interrogate the extent to which existing tensions may be addressed in the

context of ecumenical convergence, closely focusing on the continuing reception of the paradigmatic Lutheran-Catholic *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999).

EM7482 Muslim God, Christian God: Islam and Muslim-Christian Comparative Theology (Dr Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, Dr Jude Lal Fernando)

This module has two parts. The first part will focus on Jesus in Islam while exploring diverse sources for the Islamic Jesus and making an attempt to craft a biography of Islamic Jesus as the word and spirit of God and the Messiah (birth and salvation vs. crucifixion). It will also reflect on Mary in Islam. As a way of conclusion of this part the module will discuss Jesus in the teachings of contemporary North American Muslim preachers. The second part of the module will start by examining the origin of Islam; Islam as critique and its relationship with the People of the Book and Tribal Religions. Furthermore, it will critically reflect on the history of changing political and theological dynamics of portrayals of Muhammad in Christian Europe and the history of Muslim-Christian relations. In search for a dialogical relationship, the module will examine modern Christian and Islamic theologies of liberation by reflecting on the works of Malcom X and Martin Luther King, Jr and discuss diverse possibilities of imagining Jesus and Muhammad as Prophets in relation to issues of gender, class, race, and imperialism. As a way of conclusion, it will map new initiatives and possibilities for the future of Muslim-Christian dialogue.

EM7460 Religion, Conflict and Peace in International Relations (Dr Carlo Aldrovandi)

The module provides an understanding of the on-going saliency of religion (broadly defined here as the main world religions) in the contemporary globalized era. It will address the ways in which religion has been marginalized or excluded from the secular perspectives of diplomacy as well as social and political sciences, whilst providing the intellectual basis for how religiously inspired spheres of thought can be brought back into the picture. Students will be offered a comprehensive overview of the various scholarly debates around the concepts of secularism and post-secularism, while tracing the genealogies of such concepts in various cultural settings. The module also draws

attention to the fact that ‘religion’, ‘religious violence’ and ‘religiously-inspired peace-making’ are highly contested concepts, while challenging the common view that the politicization of religion is always a threat to international security and inimical to the resolution of world conflict.

EM7484 Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations (Dr Andrew Pierce)

This module aims to present an overview of Judaism and the history of Jewish-Christian relations over the centuries to explicate the key points of dissent and disagreement between the two traditions. This will provide the context to understand the progress that has been made in the field of modern Jewish-Christian dialogue especially since the Shoah and help identify significant questions with which the two traditions continue to grapple. By the end of the module, students should be able to recognise the major contentious issues that have plagued Jewish-Christian relations and identify areas, texts, and figures relevant for reconciliation. This module also hopes to help students appreciate the diversity within Judaism as a living and dynamic religious tradition.

EM7490 Internship in Praxis of Contextual Theologies and Interfaith Relations

If you are interested in taking the Internship module, please consult with your course coordinator early in the academic year so that appropriate arrangements can be put on place.