

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY

Do I have to be Christian or believe in God?

No, not at all. Theology involves intellectual reflection on the Christian traditions, their histories, sacred texts, beliefs and practices. The programme is very much open to students of any background, Christian or another religious tradition or none. The study of Christianity also covers the broad range of the many traditions of Christianity, and so the programme is not tied to any particular Christian denomination.

All students are encouraged and supported in an hospitable environment to explore intellectual questions having to do with the study and understanding of Christianity.

Do I have to have studied Religion in the HSC or have read the Bible to enrol in Theology?

No. Lecturers make no assumptions about students' background knowledge. Entrants are not expected to have read or studied the Bible, and there are no particular prerequisites for entry into the program other than those appropriate to the disciplines in the School of Humanities and Social Science.

What is Theology?

Theology is broadly the study of the Christian traditions. It involves the following subject areas: biblical studies, church history, systematic theology and ethics, and practical theology. These sub-disciplines cover a wide range of different intellectual approaches such as the following: history, literary studies and criticisms, politics, religious studies, anthropology, sociology, classics, philosophy and ethics, gender studies, culture, film and media studies, and so on.

Will I get to explore other religious traditions?

Yes, and this can make theology particularly interesting. THEO coded courses mainly emphasise Christian studies, but students can also enrol in RELI coded courses such as World Religions, Islam or other religions as part of the degree.

What other courses can I do in the Bachelor of Theology?

There are a number of disciplines within the university that you can study courses in as part of the BTh degree, for e.g., History, Ancient History and Classics, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Aboriginal Studies, Politics, Sociology, English Literature, and many others. You also take two 'elective' courses during your degree.

Can I just do a few courses as part of another degree?

Yes. There are several possibilities here: (1) if your other degree allows you to do electives; (2) if you're on the Bachelor of Arts you can do THEO coded courses as part of Religious Studies; (3) Church History courses can be taken as part of the History major, and Biblical Studies courses can be taken as part of the Classics/Ancient History major. Many students in first year theology courses are doing a BA, majoring in areas like drama, English and languages. But students in any other courses such as health sciences, architecture, teaching and others are also very welcome to enrol in THEO coded courses.

Can I study a special topic or area of religion I'm interested in?

This is possible, but best discussed with your Program Officer. There are certain required courses for the BTh degree. But in third year there are two Advanced Study courses in which you may be able to pursue supervised studies in depth (eg. Bahai worship, Islamic architecture or in-depth biblical studies) using a learning contract that you will be required to complete as part of your studies.

What resources are available to study Bachelor of Theology?

Apart from the vast array of online journals and texts in theology and religious studies, the Auchmuty Library (Callaghan campus) holds a substantial and impressive historical collection texts, plus a superb and growing collection of archives, rare books, and other special collections from Australia and worldwide.

What other sort of degree or training could I tack on the end of this to qualify me?

Those interested in doing social work or counselling should seek further advice on academic qualifications from these areas of the University. As a professional teacher or chaplain in private or public schools, you may need to do a Diploma of Education or equivalent program. Those considering full-time positions in religious ministry - either lay or ordained - should seek advice on vocational discernment and training from authorities in their Faith or denomination as soon as possible.

Where can I find further information?

For more information contact Associate Professor Grahame Feletti or Prof. John McDowell by sending an email to feletti@hunterlink.net.au or john.mcdowell@newcastle.edu.au