

URBAN LIFE and Bristol Baptist College

Practical Theology for Mission (TMM42920 Advanced Theory and Method
Practical Theology)

2019/20

Module Handbook

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Summary

In this module we will draw on students' experiences of mission and ministry in marginal situations to undertake a detailed exploration of Practical Theology as a discipline and as an approach to life, faith and ministry. Practical Theology is often associated with pastoral care and/or theological reflection as a distinct activity which resources ministry. However, in this module we will consider the ways in which Practical Theology is foundational for mission, and is an approach which fully integrates the action and reflection of ministry. The module will give students an opportunity to critically engage with their mission practice and contemporary research in Practical Theology. They will be equipped to experiment with participatory and ethnographic research methods as tools to further understand their contexts and develop their missional practice.

Aims

- To enable students to identify the place of practical theology within the historical development of theology.
- To provide students with an overview of the differing approaches to practical theology in academic and pastoral contexts.
- To enable students to examine approaches to relating theory and practice in theology and non-theological disciplines.
- To evaluate the place of empirical research (quantitative and qualitative) within practical theology. To foster in students an empathy with theological positions other than their own.
- To increase students' capacity to be reflexive.
- To encourage students' openness to critical perspectives on their own theological tradition - being willing both to witness to cherished beliefs and to risk considering other perspectives.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module students will be able to:

Subject Knowledge [SSK 1, 2, 3]

1. Articulate a comprehensive and nuanced definition of practical theology that is informed by current research and thinking in the field.
2. Identify, differentiate and evaluate key approaches and methodological issues within contemporary practical theology, drawing on contemporary research in the field.
3. Express critical appreciation of a range of theoretical and practical contexts within which practical theology operates.

Subject Skills [SSS 3]

1. Apply their understanding of practical theology to undertake independent analysis of complex pastoral situations, reaching valid conclusions and communicating them clearly, sensitively and effectively.
2. Evaluate and apply the methods of practical theology to integrate and evaluate understanding derived from theory and practice.
3. Apply practical theological method to relate together interpretations of practice from theological and non-theological disciplines.

4. Evaluate a specific, contemporary, complex area of practice, or a particular social situation, by drawing systematically and creatively on theological and non-theological sources of theory, exercising sound judgment.

Key Skills [KS 1, 2, 3]

1. Carry out systematic and creative research into complex issues and communicate their findings with clarity, sensitivity, fairness and imagination to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
2. Demonstrate initiative, self-direction and independence in tackling and solving problems, and in planning and implementing tasks.
3. Exercise their independent learning skills to pursue further professional development or academic study.

Modes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- Seminars offer students an opportunity to present, evaluate and apply their knowledge to specific contexts, and to engage with teaching staff and peers in debate and reflection.
- Guided reading in conjunction with lectures encourages independent learning and underpins the knowledge and understanding gained in lectures and seminars.
- Small group learning creates an environment where students learn to articulate their knowledge and understanding effectively and in a way that is relevant to the group and its context.
- Independent study enables students to demonstrate their ability to carry out and research and draw their own conclusions from it.

Contact Hours

This module carries a workload of 200 hours. 20 hours will be spent in class, 180 hours will be spent preparing for class (reading and exercises) and on the necessary reading and writing of the required assessable work.

Evaluative Questionnaires

Evaluative questionnaires are provided for students in the penultimate session of teaching.

Summative Assessment

Component 1

Mode of assessment	Seminar presentation and written reflection
Length	30 minute presentation, 1000 word written reflection
Weighting	50%
Date	27/4/2020
Submission	Electronic via moodle

Details:

During the first residential block of this module you will be introduced to Practical Theological methods of research and encouraged to plan a missional experiment to carry out before the second part of the module. Your presentation will be part of the second part of the module and will be an opportunity to report back on your missional experiment, what you did, what happened and what you have learned. It should include an exploration of the practical theological approach you have taken and engage that with the experience you had carrying out your missional experiment.

See Common Awards assessment criteria and guidance for more information on presentations and accompanying written reflections.

Component 2

Mode of assessment	Written assignment – Research project or essay
Length	3,000 words
Weighting	50%
Date	TBC
Submission	Electronic via moodle

Details:

This assignment gives you the opportunity to carry out some further research into an area of your mission practice. You have two options, **either**:

Design, carry out and write up a small scale research project on an aspect of your missional practice taking a practical theological approach and using qualitative research methods.

Your write up should include information on your theological approach, your methodology, what you did for your research, your findings and analysis in connection with themes within Practical Theology and/or Missiology.

Or:

Write an essay in answer to the following question: *To what extent can the values and methods of Practical Theology resource mission in contemporary contexts?*

In your answer you need to make reference to literature within Practical Theology and your own experiences of mission.

See Common Awards assessment criteria and guidance for more information on research project and essay assignments.

Reading and Resources List

Practical Theology

- Bass, D., Calahan, K., Miller-McLemore, B., Nieman, J., Scharen, C., Christian Practical Wisdom: what it is, why it matters. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2016.
- Bennett, Z. Using the Bible in Practical Theology. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Bold, Christine. Using Narrative in Research. London: Sage, 2012
- Cameron, H., Bhatti, D., Duce, C., Talking About God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology. London: SCM, 2010.
- Cameron, H., Richter, P. and Davies, D., Studying Local Churches: A Handbook. London: SCM, 2005.
- Ellis, Carolyn. The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2004.
- Graham, E., Walton, H. and Ward, F., Theological Reflection: Sources. London: SCM, 2005.
- Lartey, E., In Living Colour: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counselling 2nd ed. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003.
- Osmer, R. R. Practical Theology: An Introduction. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Reddie, Anthony G. (2018) Now you see me, now you don't: subjectivity, blackness, and difference in practical theology in Britain post Brexit, Practical Theology, 11:1, pp4-16.
- Slee, N. Women's Faith development: patterns and processes. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Stoddart, E., Advancing Practical Theology: Critical discipleship for disturbing times. London: SCM, 2014.
- Swinton, J. and Mowat, H. Practical Theology and Qualitative Research. London: SCM, 2006.
- Veling, Terry A. Practical Theology: On Earth as It Is in Heaven. New York: Orbis, 2005.
- Walton, Heather, Writing Methods in Theological Reflection. London: SCM Press, 2014.
- Ward, F., Lifelong Learning: Theological Education and Supervision. London: SCM, 2005.
- Ward, P., Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, ministry and the life of the church. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Willows, D. and Swinton, J., Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000.

Socio-scientific Research Methodologies

- Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T., Doing Action Research in Your Own Organisation. (2nd ed.). London: Sage, 2005.
- Crang, M. and Cook, I. Doing Ethnographies. Los Angeles and London: SAGE, 2007.
- Fox, M., Martin, P., & Green, G., Doing Practitioner Research. London: Sage, 2007.
- Gilbert, N. Researching Social Life. London, United Kingdom: Sage, 2008
- Kvale, S. Doing Interviews. London, United Kingdom: Sage, 2007.
- Mason, J. Qualitative Researching 2nd ed. London, United Kingdom: Sage, 2002.
- May, T., Social Research: Issues, Methods and Processes 3rd ed. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001.

McNiff, J. *Action Research in Organisations*. London: Routledge, 2000.
Pink, S. *Situating Everyday Life*. Thousand Oaks, CA. and London: SAGE, 2012
Punch, K. F. *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (3rd ed.). London: Sage, 2014.
Skeggs, B., *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*. London: Sage, 1997.

Practical theological approaches to mission

Cloke, Paul and Pears, Mike. *Mission in Marginal Places: The Theory*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2016.
Cloke P. and Pears, M., eds., *Mission in Marginal Places: The Praxis*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2016.
Cloke P. and Pears, M., eds., *Mission in Marginal Places: The Stories*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2019.
Davey, A. Ed. *Crossover City*. London: Mowbray, 2010.
Graham, E. *Apologetics without Apology: Speaking of God in a World Troubled by Religion*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017.
Graham, E. *Between a Rock and a Hard Place : Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age*. London: SCM Press, 2013.
Graham, E. and Lowe, S. *What Makes a Good City: Public theology and the urban church*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2009.
Green, L., *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology*. London: Mowbray, 2010.
Scharen, Christian, and Vigen, Aana Marie. *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*. London and New York: Continuum, 2011.
Scharen, C. *Fieldwork in Theology: Exploring the Social Context of God's Work in the World (The Church and Postmodern Culture)* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.
Pears, M., "Urban Expression: Convictional Communities and Urban Social Justice." In *Working Faith: Faith-Based Organizations and Urban Social Justice*, edited by Paul Cloke, Justin Beaumont and Andrew Williams. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013.
Grobler, R., & Nell, I. (2014). An Exploration of Fresh Expressions as Missional Church: Some Practical-theological Perspectives. *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal*, 55(3 & 4) 747-768.
Ward, P., *Perspectives on Ecclesiology*. Grand Rapids, MI. and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2012.

Session Guide

Preparatory work for the module:

There will be preparatory reading, watching and listening for this module. Texts and links to online resources will be added to Moodle in the Autumn term 2019.

Monday 30th March 11am – 9pm Venue: TBC, likely to be Birmingham

Introduction to Practical Theology for mission

We will review the history of Practical Theology as a discipline, situate it in relation to other theological disciplines and identify the differing approaches within Practical Theology. We will look at the worldview of Practical Theology and ask what potential it has for an approach to life and mission.

Introduction to research methods in Practical Theology

Following considering PT as a discipline we will discuss the various qualitative and quantitative research models commonly used by Practical Theologians, including ethnography, participatory research and Action research.

Tuesday 31st March 9am – 3.30pm Venue: TBC, likely to be Birmingham

9:30 – 3:30 Stepping out in practical theological research

This day will include trying out ethnographic methods and reflecting on the experience and designing missional experiments to practice before we meet again. Your experiment design will constitute your formative assessment and the experiment will be the basis for your presentation and reflection assignment.

Monday 27th April 11am – 5pm Venue: TBC, ideally hosted by a participant in the module.

Challenges & Issues in Practical Theology for mission

We will hear participant's presentations and reflect together on what happens when we engage in practical theological research. We will engage with our context for the day and address the issues of relating research to organisations and church contexts, the place of the Bible in practical theology, what happens to theology in the course of attending to experience and the need for reflexivity within mission and research.

Tuesday 28th April 11am – 5pm Venue: TBC, ideally hosted by a second participant in the module.

Practical theological mission

We will hear more participant's presentations and engage with our context for the day. We will address the scope for the tools of practical theology to resource long term mission practice in contemporary contexts. Time will be given to introducing the second assignment and how the content of this module might enable participants to continue to develop in their mission practice and learning.

Practical Details

This is a split block week module conducted in two sets of 2 days. The first (30-31 March) will be based in one location, most likely Birmingham. The location for the second (27-28 April) will be confirmed in Autumn 2019 as we would like the second two days to be hosted in two different participants' local contexts but this will depend on the locations of the group members.

Participants are responsible for arranging and funding their own overnight accommodation for the module. If you need help with this please contact us for advice.