Humanities Divisional Board

Communication from the Board of the Faculty of Theology and Religion

Master of Philosophy in Theology

Brief note about nature of change: Rewording of current regulations

With effect from 1 October 2014

In Examination Regulations 2013

[1] p.597, delete ll 29–p.598, l. 29 and substitute:

1. All candidates will be required to follow a course of instruction and directed research for six terms and present themselves for examination in one of the following subjects: Old Testament; New Testament; Christian Doctrine (one of seven subsections, as presented below); Ecclesiastical History; and Christian Ethics.

2. Candidates will be expected to attend such lectures and seminars as their supervisor shall recommend.

3. The examination shall consist of:
   (i) two three-hour written examinations (or in Old Testament, route II, one written examination), as prescribed in the regulations for each course.
   (ii) either three essays of not more than 5,000 words each, or one long essay of not more than 15,000 words, on topics proposed by the candidate with the approval of his or her supervisor, and accepted by the Theology and Religion Faculty Board.
   (iii) a dissertation of not more than 30,000 words on a topic proposed by the candidate with the approval of his or her supervisor, and accepted by the Theology and Religion Faculty Board. For candidates intending to proceed to doctoral study, the topic of the thesis should be such as to provide a foundation for doctoral research.

4. Proposals for essays must be submitted for consideration by the Faculty’s Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) not later than Monday of Week 5 of Trinity Term in Year 1. The dissertation proposal must be submitted for consideration by the GSC by Monday of Week 0 of Michaelmas Term in Year 2. All of these proposals should comprise a title, a short statement of how the subject will be treated, a bibliography of core texts (both primary and
secondary), and the signature of the supervisor indicating his or her approval. The titles and
content of the essays and dissertation should not substantially overlap with each other.

5. Two copies of the completed essays, together with a signed statement by the candidate
that it is his or her own work, must be submitted for examination not later than fourteen
days before the first day of the written examination in Trinity Term of Year 2. The written
examinations take place in Week 10 or 11 of Trinity Term in Year 2.
Two copies of the completed dissertation, together with a signed statement by the
candidate that it is his or her own work, must be submitted for examination by Friday of
Week 8 of Trinity Term.

Candidates must not put their names on the written examination papers or on any
submitted work. All submitted work must be printed and sent in a parcel bearing the words,'M.Phil. in Theology', to the Chair of Examiners, c/o the Examination Schools, High Street,
Oxford.

Each candidate will be required to present himself or herself for an oral (viva voce)
examination, which will take place within a few days of the written examination, and may
include discussion of the candidate’s work in any of the three elements listed above.'

[2] p.598, delete l. 31-p.599, l.19 and substitute:

‘Two routes are possible, route I involving two written examinations and route II only one:
I.
(i) Candidates take a written examination in Prescribed Hebrew Texts, and then another in
either unseen passages from the Hebrew Bible or the Aramaic portions of the Old
Testament or passages from the Septuagint.
(ii) In addition they write either a long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up
to 5,000 words each) in one of the following subject areas: the Literature of the Old
Testament and Apocrypha in its Historical Setting; Old Testament Theology; the History
and Principles of Biblical Study.
II.
(i) Candidates take a written examination in Prescribed Hebrew Texts.
(ii) In addition they write both a long essay (up to 15,000 words) in one of the following
subject areas and three short essays (up to 5,000 words) in another: the Literature of the
Old Testament and Apocrypha in its Historical Setting; Old Testament Theology; the History
and Principles of Biblical Study.
I and II
(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.
The prescribed texts will be listed in the Course Regulations for the Master of Philosophy in
Theology for the year in which the candidates commenced their course.'

[3] p.598, delete l.21-p.600 l.21 and substitute:

‘(i) There will be two written examinations, one in the Religion and Literature of the New
Testament: the Four Gospels and Acts in Greek, and the other in the Religion and
Literature of the New Testament: The Epistles and Apocalypse in Greek. Candidates will be
required to translate and to comment on matters of literary, historical and theological
importance from a selection of these prescribed texts.
(ii) In addition they write either a long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up
to 5,000 words each) in one of the following subject areas: New Testament Theology.
Varieties of Judaism, 200 B.C. – C.E. 200; the History and Principles of Biblical Study.
(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.'

[4] p.600, delete l.36-p.601, l.41 and substitute:
(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. The Development of Christian Doctrine to A.D. 451. Candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics, showing knowledge of the main lines of development of Christian Doctrine, and discussing particular developments in relation to the historical conditions which influenced them.
2. Either (a) Hellenistic Philosophy and Christian Theology or (b) Christology of the Patristic Era. In each case the examination will consist of two essays on different topics and passages for translation and comment. Candidates may choose whether to translate and comment on Greek or Latin texts.

The prescribed texts for both examination papers will be listed in the Course Regulations for the Master of Philosophy in Theology for the year in which the candidates commenced their course.

(ii) Candidates will write either one long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up to 5000 words each) on a topic or topics falling within the Patristic era.

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.

[5] p.601, delete l.43-p.602, l.18 and substitute:

'(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. Doctrine and Methods. Candidates will be expected to show knowledge of major theologians in the period 1050-1350 by commenting on passages from prescribed texts in Latin and writing two essays on different topics.
2. The Thought of Aquinas. Candidates will be expected to display knowledge of the thought of Thomas Aquinas by commenting on passages from prescribed texts in Latin and writing two essays on different topics.

The prescribed texts for both examination papers will be listed in the Course Regulations for the Master of Philosophy in Theology for the year in which the candidates commenced their course.

(ii) Candidates will write either one long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up to 5000 words each) on a topic or topics falling within the Scholastic era.

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.'

[6] p.601, delete ll.20-39 and substitute:

'(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. Theology in Western Europe from Gabriel Biel to Jacob Arminius. Candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics, showing familiarity with the tenets of the most seminal theologians of this era and discussing them in relation to the political, social and economic tendencies of the age.
2. Protestant and Tridentine Teaching on the Doctrines of Grace, Freewill and Predestination. Candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics.

(ii) Candidates will write either one long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up to 5,000 words each) on a topic or topics falling within the Reformation era;

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.'

[7] p.602, delete l.41-p.603, l.12 and substitute:

'(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. Methods and Styles in Theology from 1780 to the Present. Candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics, discussing problems of theological method, showing a critical understanding of the main themes in systematic theology, and taking account of the impact on Christian theology of contemporary philosophy, critical historical studies, the natural and social sciences and non-Christian religions and ideologies.
2. Either (a) The Development of Christian Doctrine to 451 A. D. (as for (i) 1 of Section A above) or (b) Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christian Thought (as for (i) 2(a) of Section A
above) or (c) Christology in the Patristic Era (as for (i) 2(b) of Section A above). In (b) and (c) candidates will be expected to comment on passages from prescribed texts in English, which will be listed in the Course Regulations for the Master of Philosophy in Theology for the year in which the candidates commenced their course.

(ii) Candidates will write either one long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three long essays (up to 5000 words each) on a topic or topics falling within the Patristic era.

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.

[8] p.603, delete ll.14-41 and substitute:

'(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. Methods and Styles in Theology from 1780 to the Present (as for (i).1 of Section D above);
2. Either (a) Doctrine and Methods (as for (i) 1 of Section B above) or (b) The Thought of Aquinas (as for (i) 2 of Section B above). In (b) candidates will be expected to comment on passages from prescribed texts in English, which will be listed in the Course Regulations for the Master of Philosophy in Theology for the year in which the candidates commenced their course.

(ii) Candidates will write either one long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up to 5000 words each) on a topic or topics falling within the Scholastic era.

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.'

[9] p.603, delete l.43-p.604, l.16 and substitute:

'(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. Methods and Styles in Theology from 1780 to the Present (as for (i) 1 of Section D above).
2. Either (a) Theology in Western Europe from Gabriel Biel to Jacob Arminius (as for (i) 1 of Section C above) or (b) Protestant and Tridentine Teaching on the Doctrines of Grace, Freewill and Predestination (as for (i) 2 of Section C above).

(ii) Candidates will write either one long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up to 5,000 words each) on a topic or topics falling within the Reformation era.

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.'

[10] p.604, delete ll.18-27 and substitute:

'(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. Methods and Styles in Theology from 1780 to the Present (as for (i) 1 of Section D above).
2. Either (a) Modern Theology or (b) Theology and Modern European Thought from 1780 to the Present or (c) Theology and Literature from 1780 to the Present. In each case candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics.

(ii) Candidates will write either three short essays (up to 5000 words each) or one long essay (up to 15,000 words) on a topic or topics falling within one of the three options specified under (i) 2 above;

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.'

[11] p.604, delete l.29-p.605 l.12 and substitute:

'(i) There will be two general papers, assessed either by two written exams, or by one written examination and three essays of up to 5,000 words in length:
1. General paper on the Nature and Practice of Ecclesiastical History. Candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics, discussing the nature of ecclesiastical history as a sub-discipline within History through study both of the writing of the history of the Church from the Early Church to the modern day and of shifts in historical method, with

...
particular reference to methodological debates within History since the mid-nineteenth century.

2. A General paper, in which candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics within one of the following fields: (a) The Early Church, A.D. 200-476; (b) The Western Church, A.D. 476-1050; (c) The Western Church, A.D. 1000-1400; (d) European Christianity AD 1400-1800; (e) European Christianity AD 1800-2000.

(ii) Candidates will write either one long essay (up to 15,000 words) or three short essays (up to 5,000 words each) on a topic or topics in ecclesiastical history.

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.'

[12] p.605, delete ll.14-40 and substitute:

‘(i) There will be two written examinations:
1. Christian Moral Concepts and Methodology. Candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics, showing understanding of basic conceptual and methodological issues as these are discussed in relevant classical and contemporary texts.
2. Select Texts and Practical Issues in Christian Ethics. Candidates will be expected to write three essays on different topics, showing careful interpretation of classic texts and a capacity to analyse a range of moral issues arising in practical fields.

(ii) Candidates will write three essays (up to 5,000 words each);

(iii) All candidates offer a dissertation of up to 30,000 words.’

Explanatory note

These regulation changes greatly simplify the assessment structures and remove the need to maintain a list of set texts within the Examination Regulations.