



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Course Outline

VTBS002 Exploring the New Testament

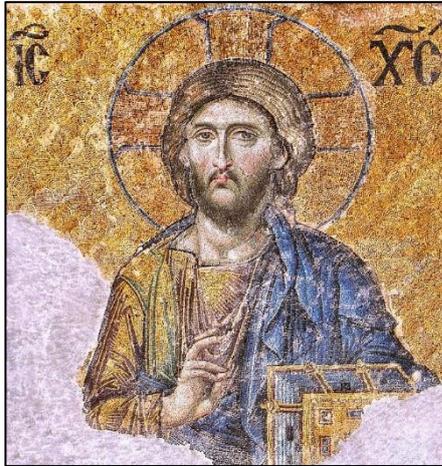
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eLM – Equipping Leadership for Mission



equipping Leadership *for Mission*



Jesus Christ Pantocrator

By Danelos Georgoudis - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=33098123>

Online Format

Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania



Greetings, and thank you for registering to be part of the **Exploring the New Testament** Course. In this Course Outline you will find details about the course, the outcomes and course content, a suggested 15 week study program, the assessment and other helpful information.

This course has been developed to be a time of discipleship-forming and faith-expanding learning.



This course is an indispensable resource for individuals and church study groups who want to learn more about their faith within a Uniting Church context.

The course is also foundational for Lay Preachers, Worship Leaders, Mission Workers, and people engaged in other forms of Christian Leadership. The course integrates the study of theology with the study of scripture.

We encourage you to approach your studies with a positive attitude and a willingness to be open to learning. Remember don't be daunted by what lies ahead, as there will be help along the way.

Thanks again for committing this time to your journey of understanding.

We pray it will be a time of learning, with some challenge, and a time of deepening faith in God.

MODES OF LEARNING

Your Presbytery may offer different modes of learning:

- Individual
- Face-to-face groups
- Online groups
- A mixture of all or some of the above

Talk with the person who looks after education in your Presbytery and find out how what learning modes are available.

HOURS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR FULL COURSE: 60 hours (10 Units x 5 to 6 hours) – not including Biblical reading. Generally it is expected it would take someone 5-6 months to work through the course (see Study Guide), although it can be completed in less time.

EXPECTATIONS OF ADULT LEARNERS:

- Participants will have computer abilities in research, assignment writing, and electronic submission **OR** will work alongside someone who can assist them with these tasks.
- Participants will take responsibility for their own learning – ask questions when uncertain or are unsure about what is required of them. Manage their time well/efficiently. Read the learning and assessment Task questions carefully. Read the Course Outline carefully to ensure they are familiar with all requirements for the Course. Seek assistance from their Presbytery, peers, identified local mentors/tutors.

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INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVE

This course introduces participants to the various witnesses to Jesus and more generally to the writings of the New Testament. It also acts as a foundation for subsequent study of the New Testament and the exegesis of Scripture.

For those wishing to become Lay Preachers, this course caters to the academic requirements for accreditation within the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

OUTCOMES

At the completion of the Exploring the New Testament course participants should be able to:

1. Read and understand the New Testament writings, their history and main theological themes more confidently and in a more informed way, with regard to current scholarship and the various ways of interpreting the Scripture.
2. Clearly articulate their own understandings arising from the study of New Testament Scriptures in the context of UCA perspectives.
3. Integrate and connect this developing understanding with their faith relationship with Jesus Christ and in relation to their ministry context.
4. Demonstrate the ability to exegete texts using recognised approaches and criteria as well as using appropriate reference materials (such as recent commentaries and dictionaries)
5. Communicate their understandings of New Testament Scripture in a variety of ways.

CONTENT

Introduction to interpreting Scripture with Uniting Church perspectives

The World of the New Testament, the Scriptures and the emerging Christian communities

The life of Jesus, his teaching and preaching, and death and resurrection

The earliest written witness – Paul's life, theology and influence through his epistles

The Gospels – Mark, Matthew, Luke and John

The emerging Church – Acts, Hebrews and the other epistles

"And finally..." – Interpreting Revelation

METHOD

Depending on the **mode** (eg. face-to-face, online, blended) in which these courses are offered, participants will be exposed to these types of learning experiences:

- Seminar, Workshop, and Webinar times will be focused on developing knowledge and skills.
- Video and online resources will be used to supplement information gathering.
- Key ideas will be discussed in class and in small group tutorials.
- Key ideas will be presented online and discussed through forums and Webinars.
- Ideas and interpretations will be discussed and debated in the learning community.
- Groups will construct some working definitions to better be able to articulate faith and talk about God.
- Course Participants will be encouraged to read the set text and become familiar with a broad range of other texts.
- Course Participants will have an opportunity to work with a range of resources and people in applied exercises.
- Course Participants will be expected to personally reflect on and respond to the course materials.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS

For those studying for accreditation:

- A. Personal Reflection – reading the New Testament through the eyes of faith
- B. Response to a specific question relating to your reading from the text books and one other chosen reading
- C. Creative or Digital Presentation from a chosen topic – alternative assessment
- D. Short essay – choice of a topic – alternative assessment

All course participants are required to have a copy of William Loader, *The New Testament with Imagination, A fresh approach to its Writings and Themes*, Eerdmans, 2007,
and **PHEME PERKINS, *Reading the New Testament: an Introduction* (3rd Edition), Paulist Press, 2012.**

**The Course allows participants to engage in
MULTIPLE LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT:**

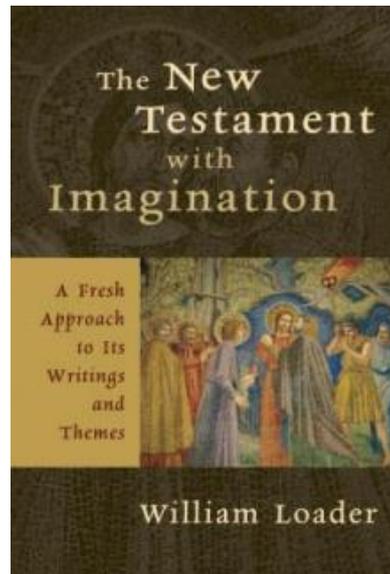
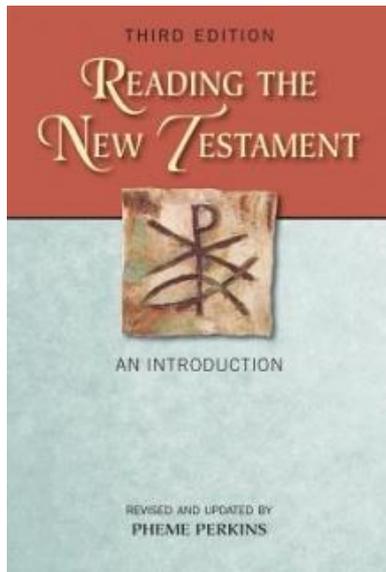
1. The person, or group, who wishes to dip into all, or part, of this course in order to create or supplement Bible studies/group studies, etc. You are encouraged to use the materials, including assessment questions, in creative ways that provide opportunities for faith and discipleship growth.
2. The person wishing to study, update, or refresh their understanding but not seeking formal accreditation – perhaps a Lay Preacher looking for some continuing education. In order to deepen your learning experience, you are encouraged to work through the activities, readings, and reflections in the Units, and to complete all the Task A activities.
3. The person wishing to explore the course for their own learning, or to meet the academic requirements for the Specified Ministry of Lay Preacher - i.e. the person seeking formal accreditation. You will need to work through the activities, readings, and reflections in the Units, **and** to complete all Task A and Task B activities.

Course Learning Materials and Guides to Study

1) There are two key texts for this course which all participants are required to have:-

PHEME PERKINS, "Reading the New Testament: an Introduction" (3rd Edition), Paulist Press 2012. **and**

WILLIAM LOADER, *The New Testament with Imagination, A fresh approach to its Writings and Themes*, Eerdmans 2007



Copies can be purchased online or check at Christian bookstores. For a comparison of prices from various book retailers consult <http://booko.com.au/> Both Perkins' and Loader's books are available in either eBook or Kindle format. If using Kindle, please contact your course facilitator for information on corresponding sections.

PHEME PERKINS' book forms the basis of the course and you will be required to work through most of the chapters in this book.

WILLIAM LOADER, an Australian Uniting Church Minister, has produced an appealing book complementing Perkins' text bringing fresh perspectives to understanding the New Testament.

Each Module or unit in the course has a relevant chapter/section from Perkins and usually a reading from Loader. The interplay of these two authors should prove stimulating, challenging and encouraging. It is important that you read both.

2) **Other readings** for the course are provided. These readings may either complement or offer another viewpoint to the two texts above. They will assist with specific assessments and particularly **Task B** for each Module. These readings are available in the online site in folders in each Module.

Studying “Exploring the New Testament”

Course Outline

New Testament Modules	Study Requirements
Module 1 – Introduction to Interpreting Scripture	Readings provided in the online module
Module 1 – The World of the New Testament	Perkins Chapter 1 and 2 Loader pages 184 to 187
Module 2 – The Life of Jesus, teaching and preaching, and death and resurrection	Perkins Chapter 3, 4 and 5 Loader Chapter 1 and 2
Module 3 – Paul and Paul’s place in the story of faith	Perkins Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 Loader Chapter 3
Module 4 – The Synoptic Gospels; Matthew Mark and Luke	Perkins Chapters 12 to 14 Loader Chapter 4
Module 5 – John and the literature of John	Perkins Chapters 15 and 20 Loader Chapter 5 pages 143 to 173
Module 6 – The emerging Church – Acts, Hebrews and other epistles	Perkins Chapters 16, 17, 18 and 19
Module 7 – “And finally...” Interpreting Revelation	Perkins Chapter 21 Loader Chapter 5 pages 173 to 183

A suggested week by week study guide for 15 weeks:

New Testament Modules and Units	Study Week	Study Requirements and Assessment Guide
Module 1, Unit 1 - Introduction to Interpreting Scripture	Week 1	Task A: John Chapter 1:1-14 No Task B
Module 1, Unit 2 – The World of the New Testament	Week 2	Task A: Mary and Zechariah Luke 1 Task B: Perkins Chapter 1 and 2 Loader pages 184 to 187
Module 2 – The Life of Jesus, his preaching and resurrection		
Module 2, Unit 3	Weeks 3, 4 & 5	Task A: The Sermon on the Mount Mt 5 OR Matthew Chapter 6:5-13 OR Luke Chapter 23 Task B: Perkins Chapter 3 & Loader Chapter 1 OR Perkins Chapter 4 & Loader Chapter 1 OR Perkins Chapter 5 & Loader Chapter 2
Module 3 – Paul and Paul’s place in the story of faith		
Module 3, Unit 4: Paul’s World and Life	Week 6	Task A: Romans Chapter 8 Task B: Perkins Chapters 7 and 8
Module 3 Unit 5: Paul and Conflict	Week 7	Task A: 1 st Corinthians Chapter 13 Task B: Perkins Chapters 9,10 and 11 Loader Chapter 3
Module 4, Unit 6 – The Synoptic Gospels; Matthew Mark and Luke	Weeks 8 & 9	Task A: Mark Chapter 1:16-20 Task B: Perkins Chapters 12 to 14 Loader Chapter 4
Module 5, Unit 7 – John and the literature of John	Week 10	Task A: John Chapter 14 Task B: Perkins Chapters 15 and 20 Loader Chapter 5 pages 143 to 173
Module 6 – The emerging Church – Acts, Hebrews and other epistles		
Module 6, Unit 8: Acts and Hebrews	Weeks 11 & 12	Task A: Acts Chapter 10
Module 6, Unit 9: Pastoral Epistles and the Catholic Epistles		Task A: 1 Peter Chapter 1:3-16 Task B: Perkins Chapters 16,17,18 and 19
Module 7, Unit 10 – “And finally...” Interpreting Revelation	Week 13	Task A: Revelation Chapter 21 Task B: Perkins Chapter 21

A Guide to Studying this course:

The Course Outline above is your key guide to studying each module or unit.

Each of the New Testament Units in this Course Outline in the pages above, is supported by a chapter or pages from the two texts. Other readings are sometimes provided in the modules.

A suggested approach:-

1. Read the **relevant chapter or part of the texts** highlighting the key points made and making notes to assist you in understanding. This will assist with your assessments listed in the Course Tasks section of this Course Outline.
2. Some **readings** are provided as additional to the texts to provide you with a Uniting Church perspective and/or a different viewpoint to the main texts. You will need to choose one reading from these to complete Course Completion Task B (see the Course Tasks section of this Course Outline).
3. Become familiar with **Assessment Tasks** (see "Course Tasks" section of this Course Outline) and what is required. Keep this in mind when you are working through your readings for the course. Task B directly relates to your reading of the text.

It may help your successful completion of the course if you make an early choice from the short essay questions in the Tasks and keep them in mind when reading and making notes.

4. Seek support and advice for your study from other sources:-
 - a. Approach a local minister as a mentor/tutor for you – someone you can talk to about the course materials and any questions you may have.
 - b. There may be someone in your congregation that has completed a degree in Biblical studies or Theology. A recently accredited Lay Preacher in your congregation may also prove helpful.
 - c. Pair up with someone else undertaking the course as 'study buddies'. Your Presbytery can help you link up to another course participant.
 - d. Join your Synod's Theological Library. Staff are very helpful and will provide assistance. As well as hard copy library books they can loan you, there are often e-books as well.

5. You must make use of footnoting and a bibliography in those tasks that identify this to cite the sources you are using to support your ideas. You will also need to refer to the "Guidelines for Writing an Essay" and "Examples of referencing for common information sources" in the online section: "**Assessment Tasks Information**".

ASSESSMENT TASKS

Exploring the New Testament

Course Task	Study Requirement and Assessment	Length	Due
New Testament Assessment			
Task A	Personal Reflection – reading the New Testament through the eyes of faith	No more than ½ A4 page typed for each response	At end of each Unit using the upload page provided
Task B	Response to a specific question on the set reading	No more than ½ A4 page typed for each response The response must be referenced in the required manner	At end of each Unit using the upload page provided
Course Assessment C - alternative	Creative and/or Digital presentation	500 words	By the end of the Course using the upload page provided
Course Assessment Task D - alternative	Short essay	1000 – 1200 words The response must be referenced in the required manner	By the end of the Course using the upload page provided

All participants studying the New Testament for accreditation will complete Tasks A, and B.

Tasks C and D are offered as alternative assessment pieces and would need to be negotiated with your Presbytery/assessor.

*To assist you with each of these learning tasks a Criteria Sheet for each assessment has been developed. You will find these in the folder called "**Criteria Sheets**" in the "**Assessment Tasks Information**". Please ensure that your submission takes these criteria into account when preparing your submissions. **Please also pay attention to the referencing information provided.** If you find referencing difficult, please ask for help.*



When uploading your submission, please put your full name, and the Task in the file name. For example: **JoanBloggsTaskC**

Your submissions also need to be either able to be opened in Microsoft Word, or in PDF format.

Grading is based on reaching Competency (C) or not yet achieved (NYC). Please negotiate with your markers about resubmission.

TASK A – Personal Reflection

Task A requires a different kind of response to the other Tasks
- more of a faith or spiritual response, than an academic one
- involving **heart, mind and soul**.

Selected Readings for Personal Reflection:

Module 1, Unit 1 - In the beginning was the Word. John 1

Module 1, Unit 2 - Mary's Song of Praise. Luke 1: 46-55 **or** Zechariah's prophecy
1: 67-79

Module 2, Unit 3 - The Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5 **or** Praying. Matthew
6: 5-14 **or** The Passion Narrative. Luke 23

Module 3: Unit 4 - Life in the Spirit. Romans 8

Module 3, Unit 5 - The Greatest of These is Love. 1st Corinthians 13

Module 4, Unit 6 - Called. Mark 1:16-20

Module 5, Unit 7 - The Way and the Helper. John 14

Module 6, Unit 8 - The Gentiles. Acts 10

Module 6, Unit 9 - Being called into a Living Hope. 1 Peter 1:3-16

Module 7, Unit 10 - A New Heaven and a New Earth. Revelation 21

Over the duration of the course, read each of the above texts. To help you, they are identified in each Module that you study. Prayerfully read, and re-read each of these passages **identifying their meaning and what is significant for you**. Meditate on the part you have selected asking God to illuminate your "*heart, mind, soul and strength*".

Place yourself within the passage as a participant or observer. Imagine what it would be like. Allow the passage to have a conversation with your own life. Be conscious of your thoughts and feelings about the passage. Your personal reflection will come from all this - the Scriptural passages, your life and experiences (similarities and contrasts to the Scripture). How do you believe the Spirit is speaking into your life at this time?

For each text provide a response of not more than 150-200 words.

You are encouraged to vary your responses using at least **four (4)** of the forms identified below

- prayer – written by you
- poetry – written by you
- a banner that you have created yourself (with a SHORT explanation)
- a photo or image that you have created yourself (with a SHORT explanation)
- lyrics for a song that you have written yourself (can be provided with audio)
- an item in a church newsletter (eg. a reflective paragraph or a poem written by you)
- photos of a piece of your own artwork in clay or paint, etc (with a SHORT explanation)
- a PPT slide/s – consider copyright issues for any images used (with a SHORT explanation)
- OR a dialogue, a letter, a brochure or another form as negotiated with the Course lecturers

Your response will reflect the **text's meaning and its particular relevance to you.**

All participants undertaking this course for accreditation, will complete this task as evidence of your engagement in the course and upload onto the assignment page in your online course. This should be completed and submitted at the end of each Module studied. All other students are encouraged to undertake this Task as a way of increasing the depth of their learning.

**Grading is based on reaching Competency (C)
or competency not yet achieved (NYC).
Please negotiate with your markers about resubmissions.**

TASK B – Response to a specific question

You will provide a response to a specific question related to the text book readings **and** one further reading chosen from the online folder of readings provided for that Module in the Course.

For each Unit, participants will prepare a response to the question for Task B of **no more than half an A4 page**. You may use dot points, and they must be clearly understandable to the assessor.

1. You will provide a **short personal response to the question summarising your own thoughts**. This must demonstrate what you have learned as well as your analysis of what you have read.
2. You will **refer to the assigned readings** from your text book/s ***and*** one other reading of your choice from those provided in the Unit.

This assessment requires you to use and acknowledge the authors of the readings. You must provide footnotes and a bibliography as part of your response to the specific question. These will not be counted in your word length.

Information on the correct form for presenting your footnotes and bibliography can be found at the end of the "Assessment Tasks Information" module in the online course.

All participants undertaking this course for accreditation, will complete this task as evidence of your engagement in the course and upload onto the assignment page in your online course at the end of each Unit.

Task B questions for each Module/Unit are:

Module 1, Unit 1: Introduction to interpreting Scripture – there is no Task B

Module 1, Unit 2: The World of the New Testament (Perkins Chs 1 & 2, Loader pp 184-187)

Discuss the place and authority of the New Testament in your life. How might an understanding of the context in which Jesus lived and preached, help you interpret the New Testament for your life and others today?

Module 2, Unit 3: Choose one of the three options below –

- (Perkins Ch 3, Loader Ch 1) – 'Jesus' life embodied the "Good News"'. Discuss what you understand by this statement. In your answer refer to parts of the Gospels that support this.
- (Perkins Ch 4, Loader Ch 1) – Using the stories we have in the Gospels, what would be the focus of Jesus' teaching in our 21st century society?
- (Perkins Ch 5, Loader Ch 2) – Read the resurrection story in Lk 24:13-35. Discuss what and who are four witnesses to Jesus' resurrection that are mentioned in this account?

Module 3, Unit 4: Paul's World and Life (Perkins Chs 7 & 8)

Who was Paul? Write a brief profile of Paul including his life experiences, and some ways in which he engaged with the society and people of his time.

OR

Compare Paul's conversion in Acts (9:1-19) with his account of it in Galatians (1:11-16).

Module 3, Unit 5: Paul and Conflict (Perkins Chs 9, 10, 11, Loader Ch 3)

Paul was involved in conflict. What do his letters indicate about how to engage in conflict in the church and how to resolve it?

Module 4, Unit 6: The Synoptic Gospels (Perkins Chs 12, 13, 14, Loader Ch 4)

Describe some key differences and similarities in the three Synoptic Gospels.

Module 5, Unit 7: John and the literature of John (Perkins Chs 15 & 20, Loader pp 143-173)

In what ways does the literature attributed to John style him as the "Apostle of Love"?

Module 6, Unit 8: Acts (Perkins Chapter 16)

What do the stories of Peter, Paul and others in the early church teach us about engaging mission in context?

Module 6, Unit 9: The Emerging Church (Perkins Chs 17, 18, 19)

What are some common messages for the church today from the Catholic Epistles?

Module 7, Unit 10: "And Finally..." Interpreting Revelation (Perkins Ch 21, Loader pp 173-183)

What are the key underlying messages of Revelation for today?

**Grading is based on reaching Competency (C)
or competency not yet achieved (NYC).
Please negotiate with your markers about resubmissions.**

TASK C – Creative and/or digital presentation (10 minutes) - alternative

You have been asked to prepare a presentation to a study group in your church. They have invited friends who do not belong to the church for this event.

The choice of topic is **up to you**, but it must be something from the New Testament. You may work with another person for this Task, though, if you do, each of you must present 10 minutes.

Your presentation will be your own original work and could take the form of:

- a PowerPoint display;
- a song or song lyrics you have written to a well-known tune;
- a painting, image or sculpture that you have made
- engaging and interesting handout notes with a map, chart or table which also includes questions the group would discuss.

Your presentation must be accompanied by a short description (no more than 500 words) of the points you are seeking to achieve in the presentation. This can be in note form with dot points provided they are understandable to the assessor.

There are readings from your course materials that may help you research and develop your presentation. You will have to research other information and you are expected to refer to this research in your presentation notes. It is also expected that your presentation notes will use Inclusive language (see below for further information), and have footnotes and a bibliography.

You will be assessed on your competency to:

- identify and discuss the key information relating to the chosen topic
- provide a presentation that is creative and engages the intended audience
- support your presentation by referring to contemporary scholarly thought

The written part of this task is to be uploaded before the end of the course.

**Grading is based on reaching Competency (C)
or competency not yet achieved (NYC).**

Please negotiate with your markers about re-submissions.

TASK D – Short Essay (1000 - 1200 words) - alternative

Choose **ONE** of the following topics and prepare a 1000-1200 word essay:

1. Choose ONE of the four Gospels in the Bible and briefly describe the key themes and concerns that the author is seeking to address to the audience of that time? As part of your response discuss how Jesus is portrayed in this Gospel.
2. How do the parables, as a specific form of literature, function in the proclaiming the reign of God? Specifically investigate the purposes of the Gospel authors in the parable of the Lost Sheep in Matt 18:10-14 and Luke 15:1-7. Note the introduction and conclusion given to the two parables shape how we might understand it differently in each place (*Look at Matt 18: 10 and 14, and Luke 15: 1,2 and 7*). You may find assistance in the Perkins' text pages 57-59
3. What are the key issues/elements/ideas that the book of Acts presents in its description of the development of the early Christian community? In your response discuss to what extent, if any, the early church in Acts remains a model for the church now.
4. Discuss Paul's understanding of Christ and the gospel in his epistle to the Galatians. In your response describe how this letter shows the range of issues that the early Church encountered during the time of Paul's life. From this identify what we might learn for our church today.
5. How do we interpret the book of Revelation today? In your response discuss the main themes of this book and their meaning. You should discuss the special type of biblical literature that is found here and any issues in interpretation.

You will be assessed on your competency to:-

- identify and discuss the key biblical passages and themes that relate to the question
- demonstrate appropriate exegetical skill when handling biblical passages
- support your essay by referring to contemporary scholarly thought
- identify and provide your own response to the biblical interpretations and ideas presented by the scholars you have researched for this question

IMPORTANT: You will need to refer to commentaries and other reference material to prepare this Course Assessment Task. Your texts and other course material contain material that will be helpful. The websites below may also be of use.

The Synod's Theological Library will provide useful books and articles.

You must make use of footnoting and a bibliography in your essay to cite the sources you are using to support your ideas. An example to guide you is provided in the online course materials in the Assessment Tasks area. You will also need to refer to the "Guidelines for Writing an Essay" in the **Assessment Tasks Information**.

This task is to be uploaded by the completion of the course.

Grading is based on reaching Competency (C) or competency not yet achieved (NYC).

Please negotiate with your markers about re-submissions.

Websites that may prove useful are:

1. UCA perspectives [Assembly Doctrine Resources](#) and [Assembly Worship Resources](#)
2. Peer reviewed publications are recommended as they have undergone the 'test' of critical review by independent academics. <http://scholar.google.com.au/> - contains 'peer reviewed' articles – they have been checked ('critically reviewed') by other academics in the same field.
3. Websites that do not have the same academic rigour but may be useful include:

Bill Loader's website - <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/home.html>

N.T. Wright is a prominent New Testament scholar. His official Facebook site provides access to his work in this area - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/N-T-Wright/260878103965254>

NT Gateway - <http://www.ntgateway.com/>

Early Christian Writings: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/>

The Text this Week - <http://www.textweek.com/> has useful introductory materials for the Gospels and most other Biblical books. These can be accessed through the "Scripture Index" section, select the Biblical book, then 'General Resources'

Some Universities have open courses – this one from Yale University is an example <http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/rlst-152>

The Religion Online site - <http://www.religion-online.org/> New Testament section

A Roman Catholic site called E.N.T.E.R - <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/> provides a range of Catholic focused resources

A Lutheran site called Enter the Bible - <http://www.enterthebible.org/> has short articles relating to the Old and New Testaments

The Society for Biblical Literature has a website at Bible Odyssey <http://www.bibleodyssey.com/>

Please note these sites have not been closely reviewed by course facilitators and care should be taken when using any materials from these in your assignment. They must reflect a UCA perspective.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

SUBMISSION OF TASKS

All Course Tasks are to be submitted by uploading to the online platform in accordance with the timetable in the "Course Tasks" table above.

Make sure you read the relevant Criteria Sheet (see the folder in the section "Assessment Tasks Information") **BEFORE** beginning the Task, so you know what is expected of your submission.

When uploading your submission, please put your full name, and the assessment task name in the file name.

Participants are advised to keep a copy of all work submitted.

This is an important safeguard in case your submission somehow goes astray. (It is also a good idea to make regular backups of work being done on a computer at each stage of your work – saves many headaches.)

LATE WORK and EXTENSIONS

Markers will certainly try to be flexible and generous about getting work in on time, *but this is part of the discipline of study that you need to develop*. This Course must be completed within the time frame given.

The recommended pre-reading for the course is a pre-requisite for people to be able to fully participate in the group activities. This too reflects the type of activity a Lay Preacher, Chaplain, Pastor, Elder or leader will need to do to prepare and work effectively in a leadership team in a congregation.

Extensions on submission of Course Tasks will be considered where a satisfactory explanation is provided. It is essential that the Course Coordinator is contacted well in advance of the due date to allow planning for ongoing assessment of the task.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledging it either by referencing the author in your writing or in your bibliography. This is unacceptable and does not honour the work another person, such as an author of a book, article or website, has done to provide information that you choose to use. Course participants who plagiarise another's work will be asked to resubmit their tasks in an appropriate form.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

For many years the Uniting Church in Australia has a policy on inclusive, or careful language. The following guidelines have been provided to assist the process of using inclusive language. You will be expected to follow these guidelines in written and spoken presentations in this Course.

The use of careful, or inclusive language, is not simply an exercise in 'political correctness'. Rather it is about not placing limits on God by referring to God only in a narrow number of ways, and about helping a greater number of people to feel included by God's loving embrace. Here are a few suggestions about incorporating careful language into our spiritual life.

1. The Spoken Word

Language is a means of communication and needs to convey meaning in ways which are intelligible and acceptable to the listener. People will not hear the message if they feel excluded, patronised, denigrated or stereotyped by the language used.

Such feelings are a barrier to effective communication. Whether in conversation or in more formal situations, we can be better communicators if we are more aware of our audience and more intentional in avoiding the use of language which may cause offence. Non-discriminatory language is considerate. It values and includes all people.

2. Written Expression

It is hard to change the habits of a lifetime, but constant self-criticism can bring about a more careful use of language. The generic use of the word "man" and male pronouns makes women invisible and may give the impression they are inferior.

Such impressions can usually be avoided by rephrasing, using inclusive terms, or using both feminine and masculine terms. In rephrasing, be careful to avoid grammatical errors. Apart from syntax, the general context should be considered, to ensure that men and women are equally represented, where appropriate. Quotations from texts using language which is sexist or otherwise exclusive should be acknowledged as such or paraphrased; for example, "All men [sic] are loved by "God", or "All [people] are loved by God".

3. Liturgy

(a) Bible Reading. Choose a translation (such as the NRSV) which best expresses the meaning of the original text. Where there is a cultural bias, a brief explanation which sets the reading in its historical context should be given. Inadequate affirmation of women

and minority groups in the lectionary may be acknowledged and compensated for in other parts of worship.

(b) Hymns and Songs. The "Australian Hymn Book" has some limitations in its language. "New Journeys Song Book" and "Sing Alleluia" are more sensitive. The Australian Hymn Book II, "Together in Song", pays particular attention to careful language. Various other sources may be used. Copyright considerations limit alterations to words, apart from minor ones announced orally. Often this is all that is needed to make a significant impact.

(c) Prayers

The language and content of public prayers provide an excellent opportunity to emphasise the inclusiveness of our faith and the richness of the imagery by which God may be known, understood and worshipped.

4. References to God

The social and historical context in which the Bible was written and translated colours its meaning and has produced a traditional emphasis on the masculine imagery of God. This imagery has been perpetuated by much of the theological language of the past. Exclusively feminine images of God may be appropriate in certain situations, but can be just as offensive as exclusively masculine images. Inclusiveness is not satisfactorily achieved by making God impersonal. Combining or alternating feminine, masculine and inclusive images can more nearly express the reality of our relationship with God. By the use of appropriate language people can be helped to recognise that God is personal but beyond our categories of male and female.

The historical Jesus was male and it is appropriate to refer to him as such. But the redemptive role of Christ is not associated with his masculinity and should be expressed in terms which emphasise his humanity for all people.

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