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Department of Theology and Religious Studies  
**MA Systematic and Philosophical Theology (Distance Learning) V691**  
Programme Handbook  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/theology](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/theology)



# Contents

- 02 Welcome
- 03 Application and registration
- 04 Course structure
- 05 Resources
- 06 Annual residential seminar
- 07 Academic aims of the course
- 10 Modules
- 17 Staff profiles
- 19 Marking standards
- 20 Fees
- 21 Academic dress
- 22 Contacting us

# Welcome to the Department of Theology and Religious Studies

We are delighted that you're interested in this distance learning programme and welcome the opportunity to tell you more about it.

This handbook is designed to provide you with an overview of the modules available to study on the MA in Systematic and Philosophical Theology, as well as information on resources, assessment and key contacts for each module.

The University of Nottingham is consistently ranked within the top 10 universities in the UK and within the top 100 worldwide. We are a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities. Our priorities are therefore world-leading research, excellence in teaching, and the highest quality of support for students and staff.

The University has grown exponentially since 1877, when WE Gladstone laid the first foundation stone in the city centre. Generously funded in the early 20th century by the chemist-philanthropist and committed Wesleyan Sir Jesse Boot, the University was granted its Royal Charter in 1948. We now have five sites in the UK and campuses in Malaysia and China. Despite our size, the University still operates very much on a human scale. Enquiries to the central administration are dealt with promptly and efficiently. There is a dedicated Distance Learning Administrator within the School of Humanities, and a dedicated subject librarian based at the Hallward Library.

With a permanent academic staff of 17, the Department of Theology and Religious Studies is large enough to be able to offer an exciting range of modules and research opportunities, but small enough for staff and students to get to know each other and enjoy friendly and productive relationships.

Theology and religious studies is a challenging and varied discipline, ranging from ancient history and the close study of texts, to modern thought and the grappling with great ideas.

Established over 50 years ago, we have research expertise across a wide range of areas. All of our academic staff have international recognition in their fields of research. Much of the work carried out in the department is interdisciplinary; engaging with history, literature, philosophy, critical theory, politics, economics, and natural science.

The department is the home of the Centre of Theology and Philosophy under the Directorship of Professor John Milbank and Assistant Directorship of Dr Conor Cunningham: [www.theologyphilosophycentre.co.uk](http://www.theologyphilosophycentre.co.uk)

The centre is the focus for some of the most exciting and vibrant research currently being undertaken in Christian theology. With three book series (*Illuminations*, *Veritas* and *Interventions*), frequent international conferences which attract the world's leading theologians and philosophers, an extensive fellowship of international scholars, and large-scale collaborative research projects, the Centre of Theology and Philosophy is widely recognized as world-leading.

Through the establishment of the MA in Systematic and Philosophical Theology by distance learning, together with its sister programme, the MA in Church History by distance learning, the University is making it possible for students who are unable to take advantage of a period of full-time residence in Nottingham to enjoy the benefits of studying for a Nottingham masters degree.

We also hold an annual residential seminar each Spring, at which the photos in this brochure were taken, and which you are encouraged to attend if you can. See page 06 for more information.

**We welcome you to the department and wish you every success with your studies.**

**Associate Professor Simon Oliver**  
Head of Department of Theology and Religious Studies

# Application and registration

The normal admissions requirement for the degree is a 2:1 (upper second class honours degree or international equivalent) in a relevant subject (for example, theology, history, philosophy or classics). Applications will be considered from prospective students who, while not possessing a first degree in a cognate discipline, can demonstrate a work or voluntary commitment to the subjects included within this programme.

You can apply for the MA in Systematic and Philosophical Theology by completing the online application form. Go to [pgapps.nottingham.ac.uk](http://pgapps.nottingham.ac.uk)

The University will usually begin processing your application on the day that it is received.

You may begin the degree on either 1 October or 1 February in any year.

# Course structure

The structure of the distance learning degree is the same as the structure of Nottingham's other taught masters degrees in theology and religious studies. It is possible for you to interchange modules from the distance learning courses and the on-campus courses, if it is practical for you to do so. The major differences are that you study for the qualification over a period of two to four years, rather than over one year full-time, and you study from home.

## Modules

We operate a modular system in which all modules are credit-bearing. In US parlance, a module is known as a 'class'. You need to pass a certain number of credits in order to qualify for an award. The masters comprises 180 credits in total; 120 credits worth of modules, and a 15,000-word dissertation which is worth 60 credits.

Unless you are granted an exemption, you must take the compulsory modules Research Methods and Resources, (worth 20 credits) and Faith and Reason (worth 30 credits.).

The structure of the programme is as follows:

- One optional module worth 30 credits
- Research Methods and Resources (20 credits)
- Two optional modules worth 20 credits
- Faith and Reason (30 credits)
- Research dissertation (60 credits)

Faith and Reason will be the last module you take prior to the dissertation. All six specialist faculty in systematic and philosophical theology contribute to this 'capstone' module. It draws together the key themes and issues in the programme through a consideration of the relationship between faith and reason, and theology and philosophy. This module focuses particularly on the latest publications and research in systematic and philosophical theology.

The difference between 20- and 30-credit modules is partly in the amount of course material that you have to study. A 20-credit module requires 200 hours of study (including the preparation and writing of an essay for assessment), while a 30-credit module requires 300 hours of study. Particular modules are not tied to particular semesters. You can begin a new module at any time during the academic year.

## Assessment

Assessment for each module is usually in the form of one 5,000-word essay for 20-credit modules and one 7,000-word essay for 30-credit modules, with the 30-credit essay titles intended to be more challenging.

There are no written examinations for the masters.

## Dissertation

At a suitable point in the course, you will be expected to start work on a dissertation proposal. The course director will advise you on how to do this, and on which member of staff can most appropriately act as your dissertation supervisor. It is very important that you find a topic that is genuinely interesting to you, and which can be sensibly treated in the space of 15,000 words.

# Resources

## The University library

Studying for the masters requires you to engage with a mixture of printed and electronic resources. Some of these may be originally printed materials, now available to you in electronic format; for example, downloads of journal articles, or books printed before 1800 (the University library has electronic versions of all books that were printed in Britain before 1800).

Where possible we have arranged that some of the library resources will be available to you online via the University's 'e-library' gateway. This allows you to access the digitised resources of The University of Nottingham.

You will also be expected to visit libraries to research topics and to obtain books, either through your local university library, through the University's postal loan scheme (which is available to students in the UK) or through purchasing your own copy of key texts. The University library offers a photocopying service which is subject to a small charge. Part-time postgraduate students are entitled to £25 a year of free photocopying in the library, and £20 a year of inter-library loan vouchers.

There are also often good theological libraries in seminaries, theological colleges and cathedrals, and they warmly welcome new readers. The residential library at St Deiniol's Hawarden, Flint (known as Gladstone's Library – [www.st-deiniols.com](http://www.st-deiniols.com)) is very good for our subject area, and can be an excellent retreat for people who need a quiet focus on study for a few days. County library services can also be very helpful in obtaining books for students. Experience has shown that obtaining good printed resources is rarely a problem for distance learners based in the UK, and with sufficient planning, difficulties can usually be overcome by those who are living abroad.

## Moodle and the internet

We make use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called Moodle. To access Moodle you will need to log in to the student portal with your username and password. You can use Moodle to download course materials and contact fellow distance learners through the student forum.

Although your modules will be sent to you in hard copy, they will also be accessible to you via Moodle, allowing you to access links to texts immediately. Moodle also enables you to access film and sound clips, or view images relevant to your modules. The course tutors will be developing and updating the Moodle resources as an ongoing part of the programme development.

You can use the telephone to keep in touch with your tutors, although in practice email is usually the most efficient method. Many students also communicate with their tutors by making an appointment for a tutorial via Skype or Facetime. We hope to hear from you regularly, and particularly at the point when you are deciding which essay to write. As part of the programme development, the department is currently exploring the provision of 'webinars' – seminars that are delivered using webcams via the internet.

# The annual residential seminar

Experience has shown that distance learners make the best progress when they have some opportunity to get together face-to-face with other students and with their tutors, even if this is limited to a few days in the year. The pay-off for what often seems like a very brief contact period is considerable: it helps you to feel part of a community of fellow learners, and getting to know your course director and other staff can help immeasurably when you make contact subsequently by email or phone. Equally, we like to get to know you, and to keep on track with how you are enjoying the course.

We hold an annual residential seminar each spring. You are strongly encouraged to come every year if you can, and at least once during your studies. In addition to meeting with other distance learning students, you will have the opportunity to meet full-time, campus-based students, and academic and administrative members of staff.

A programme of seminars and lectures is provided, and there is time to use the library, meet your tutors and soak up the atmosphere on campus.

The dates of the forthcoming residential seminars are

- Tuesday 6 May to Thursday 8 May 2014
- Tuesday 14 April to Thursday 16 April 2015

Although it is most beneficial for distance learning students to visit Nottingham for the annual residential seminar, many visit at other times of the year. Distance learning students, whether from the UK or overseas, are always welcome to visit campus and arrange to meet their tutors for consultation. Very often affordable accommodation can be found on campus for one or more nights.



# Academic aims of the course

**The field of systematic and philosophical theology concerns the articulation of the meaning and implications of Christian 'doctrina' or 'teaching'. This doctrina includes claims relating to, for example, God, Christ, creation, salvation, the nature of the Church, human identity and ethics. Systematic theology refers to the attempt to relate these areas of doctrine to one another in a coherent and orderly fashion in such a way that the various aspects of doctrine become mutually illuminating.**

The practice of systematic theology is undertaken in various ways throughout the Christian tradition. From the earliest years of the Church, theologians have deployed philosophical learning as a tool in clarifying Christian teaching. This has given rise to the very closely related field of philosophical theology. Here, the particular application of philosophy to the study of Christian doctrine is examined, along with the attendant issues of the relationship between philosophy and theology, and faith and reason. The relationship is complex - on the one hand, both theology and philosophy are concerned with the metaphysical and its relationship to the physical. On the other hand, theology is thought to contain a historical revelation which perfects and goes beyond the reason exhibited in philosophical learning.

Philosophy has tended to set the intellectual climate in which the study of Christian doctrine is undertaken. However, in recent years, and in the wake of the theological liberalism which dominated the post-war period, Christian theology has undergone a revival of nerve in the face of the demands of philosophical reason. This has renewed the encounter between theology and philosophy in new and exciting ways that challenge the sufficiency - or even legitimacy - of purely secular modes of reason.

The MA in Systematic and Philosophical Theology is concerned with a field at the heart of the task of Christian theology, and therefore at the heart of human intellectual endeavour. Students may pursue an interest in theologies of many kinds, although always critically and rigorously. The course is particularly concerned with the historical tradition of Christian theology, its engagement with philosophy, the relationship between faith and reason, the critique of secular reason, and the nature of the theological task in the contemporary world.

Our students pursue a masters degree for a range of reasons: in preparation for doctoral research, as part of their professional development (teachers, clergy, academics in other disciplines, church workers) or simply for the good of learning.

## The educational aims of the MA in Systematic and Philosophical Theology are to:

- foster in students the ability to understand and critically analyse texts in systematic and philosophical theology at a level appropriate to postgraduate study
- enable students to make the transition from undergraduate study to study based on research so that those students who wish to proceed to a research degree are suitably equipped to do so
- provide training and experience in research methods in systematic and philosophical theology
- use the research interests of staff to inform and enhance student learning

The masters programme seeks to enable students to acquire a sophisticated and critical understanding of Christian theology and philosophy alongside a certain set of intellectual and practical skills. Upon successful completion of the programme, you should be able to:

- demonstrate an intelligent engagement with, and critical comprehension of ancient, patristic, medieval and/or modern theological and/or philosophical texts and themes
- demonstrate a critical comprehension and sophisticated analysis of current debates and issues, both substantive and methodological, within the areas of systematic and philosophical theology with particular reference to the relationship between theology and philosophy, and faith and reason
- analyse critically a range of primary and secondary sources, including materials from diverse disciplines
- deal with complex issues systematically and creatively
- engage in independent learning
- communicate effectively with varied audiences both orally and in writing
- make discriminating use of a range of library and information resources in order to identify appropriate source material, compile bibliographies, and inform research
- communicate ideas, arguments, principles, theories and develop sophisticated arguments





# Modules

All our modules are written and tutored by subject experts, who are also engaged in teaching, researching and supervising postgraduates at The University of Nottingham.

## Research Methods and Resources

**Module convenor:** Dr Simon Oliver and Dr Frances Knight with other members of the course team  
**Status:** Compulsory 20-credit module (unless an exemption is granted)  
**Module code:** V84327

### Module content

This module introduces the skills and resources you will need for academic research, writing and oral presentation at postgraduate level, and introduces you to methodological and theoretical issues which arise in many areas of theology and religious history. Topics to be covered may include IT skills, library resources, use of the web, the development of arguments, academic style and sensitivity to language, formatting and referencing, presentation skills, and the relationship between academic research and religious commitment.

### Module aims

- Present written work according to professional academic standards for the humanities.
- Use relevant IT programmes and resources to conduct research, including the online library catalogue and the internet.
- Make discriminating and critical use of a range of sources both primary and secondary, including journal articles, books and internet-based materials.
- Demonstrate critical knowledge of recent developments in systematic theology or church history, displaying knowledge of a range of research projects and methods.

## Systematic and Philosophical Theology for Newcomers

**Module Convenor:** Dr Simon Oliver  
**Status:** Optional 30-credit module; may be a requirement for certain students  
**Module code:** V84318

### Module content

This module is particularly intended for students who are entering the programme from disciplines other than theology and/or philosophy. It may be a requirement of your admission that you take this module. It will introduce you to the language and method of systematic theology and philosophical theology through a study of key themes and texts. These will include portions of Plato's 'Republic', Aristotle's 'Metaphysics', St. Augustine on the nature of evil, St. Thomas Aquinas on theological language, Karl Barth on the Trinity and Revelation, and general themes in Christology.

### Module aims

- Introduce students entering the programme with academic experience in other disciplines to the nature and methods of systematic and philosophical theology. Progress will be accelerated and therefore this module will move from basic material to more complex themes very rapidly. As such, it will be particularly demanding in scope and depth.

## Christology

**Module Convenor:** Dr Aaron Riches and Dr Simon Oliver  
**Status:** May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84310 (20 credits) V84307 (30 credits)

### Module content

This module concerns the development of Christological doctrine from the Apostolic Age to the present. Through a close reading of a range of thinkers (including Irenaeus of Lyon, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo the Great, Maximus the Confessor, Thomas Aquinas, Anselm of Canterbury, John Duns Scotus, John Calvin, Karl Barth and Sergei Bulgakov) we will examine some of the key issues of Christology including the doctrines of the hypostatic union and the 'communication idioms', the nature of what is 'revealed' in Christ, different theories of 'soteriology' (how the work of Christ 'saves'), among others.

### Module aims

- Develop your understanding of the development of Christological doctrine through the study of primary texts from across the history of Christianity.
- Enable you to apply the tools of Christological doctrine in the exploration of fresh questions or new constructive issues in Christology.

## Aquinas and Thomisms

**Module Convenor:** Dr Simon Oliver  
**Status:** May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84308 (20 credits) V84309 (30 credits)

### Module content

This module concerns the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274) and the associated theological and philosophical school known as Thomism. In fact, in studying this module you will learn that there is not just one Thomist school, but a range of 'Thomisms', hence the title of the module! Through a close reading of a range of primary texts, we will examine some key themes in Aquinas's work, including the relationship between theology and philosophy, the doctrine of creation, Christology and the sacraments. This will lead to an examination of the most significant moments in the history of the interpretation of Aquinas, from Suárez (1548-1617) to the present day.

### Module aims

- Develop your understanding of the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas through the study of primary texts from across his body of work.
- Enable you to study the reception of Aquinas's theology and philosophy and the varieties of interpretation in Thomist thought.

## La Nouvelle Théologie

**Module Convenor:** Dr Simon Oliver with Professor John Milbank  
**Available from:** January 2012  
**Status:** May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84312 (20 credits) V84313 (30 credits)

### Module content

'The New Theology' is a pejorative term coined by the French Dominican theologian Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964) to describe a new wave of 20th-century Catholic theology which offered a fresh interpretation of Aquinas and called for a return to the Church's patristic and high medieval resources. This movement, which was a reaction against 19th-century neoscholasticism, is also known as 'ressourcement' theology – a theology which looks to the depths of the Church's traditional theological resources to meet the intellectual and cultural challenges of late modernity. Particularly influential figures in 'La Nouvelle Théologie' include Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), Yves Congar (1904-1995), Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895-1990) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988). They were deeply influential at the Second Vatican Council and form a core element of the theological vision of the current Pope. This module will introduce you to the origins of 'La Nouvelle Théologie', its revival of the tradition, the understanding of theology's position in the context of late modernity, and the very recent indication of a renewal of neoscholastic priorities, particularly in the US.

### Module aims

- Familiarise you with the key aspects of 20th-century Catholic theology with particular reference to the ressourcement movement. This will involve a consideration of themes which lie at the heart of this degree programme, particularly the relation between nature and grace.
- Advance your understanding of current debates in theology and philosophy with reference to the confrontation between neoscholasticism and 'La Nouvelle Théologie'.
- Enhance your understanding of the current Papacy and wider ecclesial relations.

## Early Christian Writings (outside the canonical collection)

**Module convenor:** Professor Thomas O'Loughlin  
**Status:** May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84328 (20 credits) V84329 (30 credits)

### Module content

The module will be a close reading of four or six of the earliest Christian documents of various lengths in their entirety. The concerns of each text will be given priority rather than viewing them as sources for other thematic concerns. This will lead to an examination of how these documents bring before us the history of the earliest churches, and exhibit both their theological concerns and styles of theology. There will be close attention paid throughout the module to how these texts have been used in theology in the past and how they can be used in theological understanding today.

### Module aims

- Enable you to develop a thorough familiarity with documents which you will have already heard much about but which are rarely given the direct attention they need if they are to be used competently and confidently within theological investigations or historical research.
- Provide training in the academic discipline of patristics and historical theology such that other early documents (not read as part of this module) can be used effectively by you.
- Introduce you to the boundaries within early Christianity between the documents commonly known as the New Testament and other texts, and the relationship between all these texts and the communities in which they arose.

### Early Christian Writings

We will examine these texts:

The Didache

The Letter of Barnabas

The Letter of 'Clement' to the Corinthians (I Clement)

The Letters of Ignatius of Antioch

The Letter of Polycarp

The Martyrdom of Polycarp

### The Developing Tradition: Theologians of the 2nd Century

**Module convenor:** Professor Thomas O'Loughlin  
**Status:** May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84318 (20 credits) V84320 (30 credits)

#### Module content

The module will be a close reading of four or six 2nd-century Christian documents of various lengths in their entirety. This will lead to an examination of how these documents bring before us some central questions of Christian theology. There will be close attention throughout the module to how these texts have been used in theology in the past and how they can be used in theological understanding today.

#### Module aims

- Help you develop a thorough familiarity with theological texts from the time when Christian theology was acquiring its distinctive form, and to use these texts competently and confidently within theological investigations or historical research.
- Provide you with advanced training in the academic disciplines of patristics and historical theology.
- Develop your understanding of how Christian doctrine developed.

#### Pre-requisite

Before taking this module, you must complete Early Christian Writings (outside the canonical collection). It is assumed that a student taking The Developing Tradition has an established skill-set for working with ancient documents resulting from having already completed Early Christian Writings. That skill-set will enable you to undertake a more sophisticated examination of the texts treated in The Developing Tradition and to work with texts that are more problematic, both historically and theologically.

#### The Developing Tradition

We will examine these texts:

Fragments of lost gospels, and the Agrapha  
Hermas, The Shepherd  
The Epistle to Diognetus  
The fragments of Papias  
The Homily known as II Clement  
The Protoevangelium of James

### The Emergence of the New Testament Canon

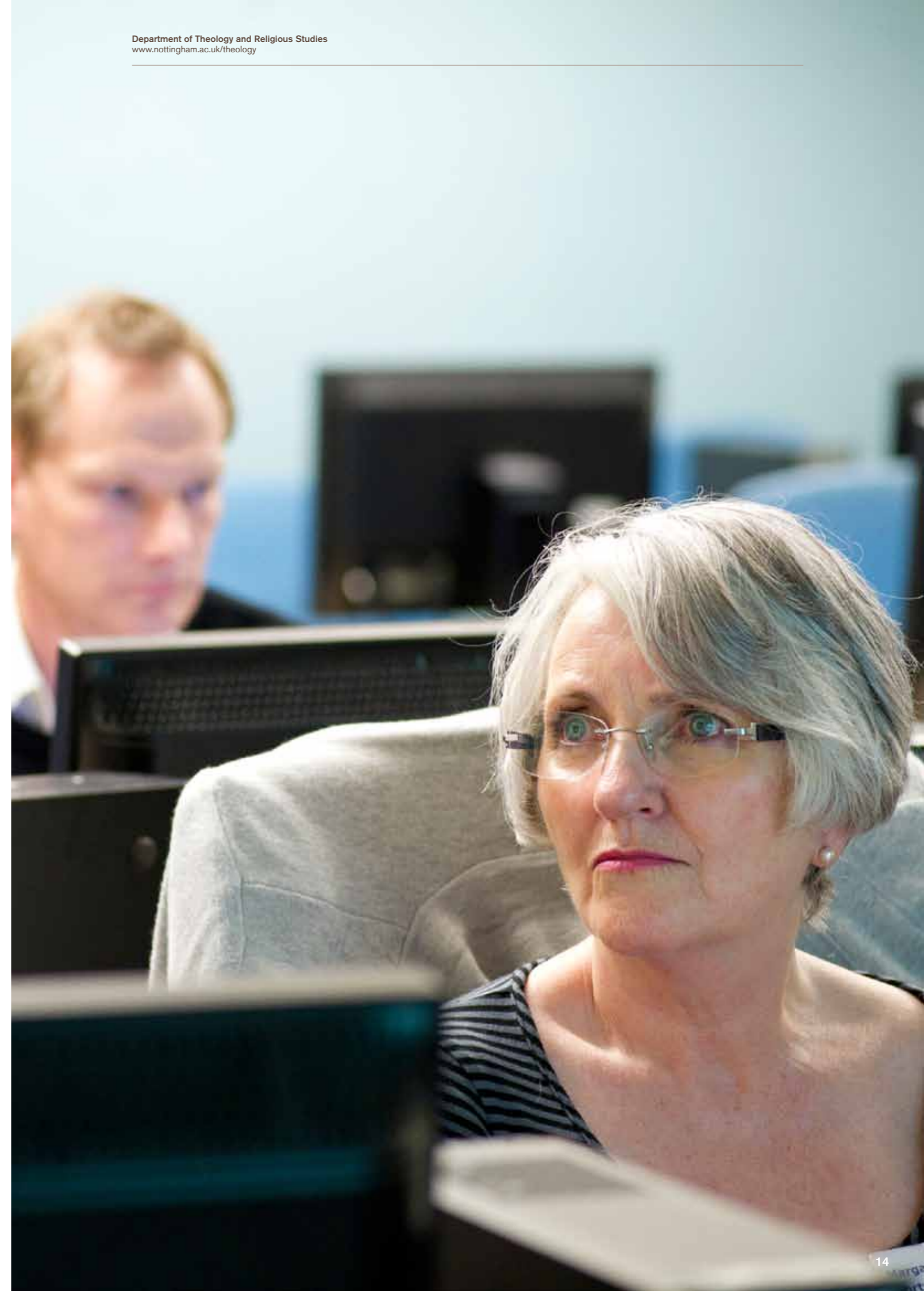
**Module convenor:** Professor Thomas O'Loughlin  
**Status:** Optional. May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84321 (20 credits) V84322 (30 credits)

#### Module content

This module will examine the factors in early Christianity which led to certain documents being given special status within the community's worship, memory, and theological perception. It will look at how this collection of documents expanded and evolved in theological significance until it became generally accepted to be a body of sacred scripture, which was the Christian analogue of the inherited 'scriptures'. The module will also explore the impact of the emergence of a Christian canon of theology, and its significance for Christianity as a lawful religion within the Roman empire.

#### Module aims

- Enable you to appreciate how the New Testament (as a book), came into existence within a very specific church setting.
- Enable you to acknowledge and understand the impact of the development of the New Testament and how its contents were viewed as objects by Christians and read within theology.
- Teach you to appreciate how canonical status had long term implications for church law.
- Provide you with the critical base for reviewing the notion of canonicity within theology and its implications for particular debates.





## Reading Medieval Theologians from Anselm to Ockham

**Module convenor:** Professor Thomas O'Loughlin  
**Status:** Optional. May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84316 (20 credits) V84317 (30 credits)

### Module content

This module will examine a range of primary texts, in translation, that extend in time from Anselm (c.1033-1109) to William of Ockham (c.1285-1347). The texts will vary in genre from formal academic works to liturgical texts composed in the period. Through a close reading of these texts you will come to understand how Anselm's theological method marked a break with the past; how the rise of the university affected theology; how the recovery of Aristotle and the reception of Islamic thought affected theology; and how some texts looked at the characteristics of scholasticism.

### Module aims

- Develop your ability to read and use a variety of medieval theological styles as sources for your own theological speculation, using the medieval authors competently, appropriately and contextually.
- Provide a thorough survey of a critical period in the development of the western Church and its theology, with an appreciation of how the issues that first appeared in the scholastic period continued to shape western Christianity from the time of the Reformation to today.

## The Virgin Mary in Christian Tradition

**Module convenor:** Dr Mary Cunningham  
**Status:** Optional. May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84304 (20 credits) V84306 (30 credits)

### Module content

This module seeks to develop core skills in historical and systematic theology with reference to Christian doctrine and devotion concerning the Virgin Mary. The module will study the historical development of the Marian cult in eastern and western Christian traditions, with emphasis on its spiritual, doctrinal, and liturgical importance. It will show how Christian interest in the Virgin Mary increased in the course of the first five centuries of the Church, especially with regard to three main aspects: her central role in the incarnation of Christ, her status as a model of virginal asceticism, and her capacity to act as protector or intercessor for Christians. Moving to the medieval period, the module will then explore scholastic theologians' interest in the Virgin Mary's relationship with both God and the human race. Was she free from original sin, or immaculately conceived, in view of her special role as birth-giver of Christ, or Mother of God? The final unit of the module will investigate differences in modern perceptions of Mary, for example between eastern and western Christianity, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism, and feminist and more traditional theologians.

### Module aims

- Introduce you to a subject which spans doctrinal, spiritual and liturgical aspects of Christian tradition. You will be invited to explore the cult of the Virgin Mary from a variety of perspectives and within all of the main Christian churches, including Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant.
- The main focus of the module will be on reading primary sources which date from the 1st through to the 21st centuries and learning to assess their importance within the Marian tradition as a whole.

## Richard Hooker: Prophet of Anglicanism?

**Module convenor:** Dr Andrea Russell  
**Status:** Optional. May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84314 (20 credits) V84315 (30 credits)

### Module content

Richard Hooker (1554-1600) is the great theologian of English Anglicanism. This module considers how he has helped shape the development of the Church of England's self-understanding over the centuries. Particular attention will be paid to Hooker's own writing; not simply the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, but also his sermons, and the many and varied ways in which these have been interpreted. The module will conclude by offering a reading of the ways in which Hooker's work speaks directly to modern theology.

### Module aims

- Develop your understanding of the Elizabethan Church and Richard Hooker's role within it, together with a broader appreciation of the emergence of a distinct Anglican identity and Hooker's contribution to that.
- Through a close examination of Hooker's own writing you will be encouraged and enabled to make your own assessment of Hooker's theological and ecclesiastical beliefs.

## Directed Reading

**Module convenor:** An appropriate member of the course team.  
**Status:** May be taken at 20 or 30 credits  
**Module code:** V84269 (20 credits) V84302 (30 credits)

### Module content

This module provides considerable flexibility for those wishing to pursue a particular academic interest. You will pursue a plan of guided reading in an area of systematic and/or philosophical theology, in consultation with an appropriate supervisor. The area of study must normally be different from any of those covered by other MA modules, and also distinct from your dissertation. The course director can offer initial advice on topics and supervisors.

*You may take this module as your final or penultimate module with the approval of the course director.*

## Faith and Reason

**Module Convenors:** Dr Simon Oliver, Dr Conor Cunningham, Professor John Milbank and members of the course team  
**Status:** Compulsory 30 credits  
**Module Code:** V84311

### Module content

This will be your final module prior to commencing the dissertation. All the department's specialists in systematic and philosophical theology contribute to the module. It is a 'capstone' module which draws together the key themes of the programme, particularly the relationship between theology and philosophy.

### Module aims

- This module seeks to familiarise you with the most important current issues in systematic and philosophical theology, with a particular focus on the relationship between faith and reason.
- You will gain an understanding of the blending of faith and reason in patristic and high medieval theology, the separation of faith and reason in modernity, the nature of theology in relation to other disciplines, and the varieties of reason at play in contemporary theological, philosophical and cultural debates.

## Further reading

If you are curious about current debates in systematic and philosophical theology and want to know more, many prospective and new students find the following work particularly useful. It is available through Amazon or The Book Depository and includes an interview with two members of the course team, John Milbank and Simon Oliver:

Rupert Shortt (ed.), *God's Advocates: Christian Thinkers in Conversation* (London: DLT, 2005)

# Staff profiles

**Dr Simon Oliver**, Associate Professor of Systematic and Philosophical Theology, is the course director and Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. His research interests focus particularly on the doctrine of creation, the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274), the relationship between theology and philosophy, and theology's engagement with science. He is the author of *Philosophy, God and Motion* (2005) and recently edited, with John Milbank, *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader* (2009). His forthcoming book is entitled *Creation's Ends: Teleology, Ethics and the Natural*.

e: simon.oliver@nottingham.ac.uk

**Dr Conor Cunningham**, Associate Professor in Theology and Philosophy, is Assistant Director of the Centre of Theology and Philosophy and a leading expert on theology and postmodernism. His recent book *Genealogy of Nihilism* (2002) is a celebrated and widely-discussed critique of any philosophy which aspires to autonomy from theology. He is a well known broadcaster, having recently written and presented a critically acclaimed BBC documentary on the impact of Darwinism on Christianity. His much awaited book *Evolution: Darwin's Pious Idea* was published in 2010.

e: conor.cunningham@nottingham.ac.uk

**Dr Mary Cunningham**, Lecturer in Historical Theology, is an expert on 8th and 9th-century Byzantine Christianity. She is a leading researcher on the theology of the Virgin Mary and is involved in a number of international and collaborative research projects in this area. Her recent publications include *Wider than Heaven: Eighth-century Greek Sermons on the Mother of God* (2008). She has also co-edited, with Elizabeth Theokritoff, *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology* (2008).

e: mary.cunningham@nottingham.ac.uk

**Professor Philip Goodchild**, Professor of Religion and Philosophy, is an expert on continental philosophy of religion. His research is particularly focussed on religious responses to globalisation, religion and politics, and inter-faith relations. His numerous publications include *Theology of Money* (2007) and *Capitalism and Religion: the Price of Piety* (2002).

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**Dr Karen Kilby**, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, is an expert on the thought of the 20th-century Catholic theologian Karl Rahner (1904-1984) and the author of *Karl Rahner: Theology and Philosophy* (2004). Her wider research interests include the theology of the Trinity and the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274). She is currently preparing a critical appraisal of the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988).

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**Professor John Milbank**, Research Professor in Religion, Politics and Ethics, is one of the world's leading and most discussed theologians. Among his many publications are the acclaimed *Theology and Social Theory* (2nd ed. 2005) and *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (2003). His research is particularly concerned with political theology, gift and sacrifice, and theology in the context of late modernity.

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**Professor Thomas O'Loughlin**, Professor of Historical Theology, is a leading authority on early Christianity, Latin patristic theology and the theology of the Middle Ages. He is the author of numerous essays on early liturgy, primitive Christian writings, the cult of the Virgin Mary, and Celtic Christian history. He has published *Discovering St. Patrick* (2005) and is currently researching the early church historian and Bishop, Eusebius of Caesarea (c.263-c.339).

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**Dr Aaron Riches** is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Centre of Theology and Philosophy. His recently submitted doctoral thesis, entitled *Sequela Christi: Towards a Christological Humanism*, investigates what kind of conception of the human person is tenable in light of that the Christian doctrine that Christ is both fully human and fully divine. He has recently published a number of articles in leading international journals and is preparing the publication of his first book.

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**Dr Andrea Russell** originally studied law at King's College London, and has completed BA, MA and PhD degrees in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Nottingham, the latter funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Her research interests are mainly focussed on Richard Hooker and 16th-century theology, and she is particularly interested in seeing how 16th-century arguments work out in the 21st-century Anglican Church. She is currently tutor in Theology at St John's College, Nottingham, but retains oversight of the module on Richard Hooker.

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You can find out more about all of the staff in the department by consulting the Staff Look-up on the departmental web pages:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/theology/people](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/theology/people)

# Marking standards

## Exit points

Most students will take all 180 credits and complete the MA. You can, however, exit from the programme with either a postgraduate certificate (60 credits of modules) or a postgraduate diploma (120 credits of modules).

If it appears that you will be unable to complete the masters within the permitted time allocation (four years) the course director will recommend that you exit from the programme with a postgraduate certificate or diploma, as appropriate.

## Marking standards and degree classification

Your work will be assessed and awarded a percentage, where 0% is the lowest possible mark, and by convention, 85% is the highest possible. To pass, it must be rated 50% or above.

A detailed guide to the assessment criteria will be available to you on Moodle.

Postgraduate diplomas and certificates will be awarded with merit to students who achieve a final credit-weighted mark of at least 60% and with distinction to students who achieve a final credit-weighted mark of at least 70%. Masters degrees will be awarded with merit to students who achieve a final credit weighted mark of 60% or higher and a dissertation mark of 60% or higher. Masters degrees will be awarded with distinction to students who achieve a final credit weighted mark of 70% or higher and a dissertation mark of 70% or higher.

# Fees

**When you apply for the degree, you will be asked to decide whether you wish to study over two, three or four years. The fee that you pay will then be divided over the period of your proposed registration, but the overall amount that you pay remains virtually the same. The only financial penalty for studying over a longer period is that you will be paying a proportion of the annual fee in any particular year, and in common with other universities, the expectation is that the fee will rise slightly in each year.**

If you have a good deal of time to devote to your studies you may wish to opt for a two year registration. However, if you are busy, perhaps with a demanding job, family responsibilities or church and community commitments (or all three!) you should consider registering for three or four years. Postgraduate study requires time and energy, so before you make your application, you need to plan how you will fit it in. Realistically, you need to have time to study for at least two modules per calendar year.

Current fee information may be obtained from The University of Nottingham website:  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/fees](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/fees)

There is no additional fee for tuition at the annual residential seminar, although you will be expected to pay a modest charge for campus accommodation and meals.

There are no examination fees.

## How to pay

Fees can be paid in different ways and you can pay in advance via any of the following methods:

- In person at your bank.
- Online through the student portal.
- Over the phone.
- In person at the Student Services Centre.
- Through bank transfer or by cheque.

The pro-rata fee for each year varies according to fee status, course duration and APL and ELQ if applicable. Each year this yearly fee will be divided into two and two invoices are raised.

Students will have to pay the full amount outstanding by each due date. In practice this means that a lump sum will need to be paid within the first month of the course. After this, it is possible to pay in instalments as long as the full amount outstanding is paid by each due date as stated on the invoice. Fees can be paid at any time through the student portal.

Students need to re-register in August each year, so if any fees remain outstanding you won't be permitted to re-register until they have been settled.

Fees will be billed in October each year with 50% due in October and 50% due in January.

# Academic dress

On the award of your degree, you are naturally entitled to wear the academic dress of The University of Nottingham. The hood for the MA is black lined with light blue silk, edged in cherry red, in the Cambridge shape.



# Contacting us

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Details of other useful contact people can be found on the University website [www.nottingham.ac.uk](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk)

The University of Nottingham has made every effort to ensure that the information in this handbook was accurate when published. Please note, however, that the nature of the content means that it is subject to change from time to time, and you should therefore consider the information to be guiding rather than definitive.

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