



Master of Arts in Biblical Studies

Level 9 (NFQ)

POSTGRADUATE



THE PRIORY INSTITUTE
A Dominican Centre for Theological Studies

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Master of Arts in Biblical Studies provides:

- a detailed study of the world of the Bible
- an in-depth appraisal of historical and contemporary methods of biblical interpretation
- an introduction to Biblical Greek and Hebrew for exegetical purposes
- a thorough exegesis of one book from each of the Old and New Testaments
- an exploration of contextual applications of scripture
- an opportunity to engage in supervised research at postgraduate level

Year 1

SEMESTER 1

1. Research Methods in Biblical Studies (5 Credits)

This module provides students with the tools to undertake research and writing at postgraduate level. It focuses on specific research methods for scripture including hermeneutics, exegesis, linguistic and textual analysis and also provides guidelines for preparation and submission of dissertations.

2. History and Cultures of the Biblical World (10 credits)

This module provides students with the skills to engage with the "world behind the text". It examines the historical, sociological, cultural, linguistic and religious contexts of the communities and the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds from which the Bible emerged.

3. Biblical Greek for Exegesis (5 credits)

This module gives students a familiarity with biblical Greek for exegetical purposes. It introduces key vocabulary and basic grammar to enable translation of a selection of New Testament texts from Biblical Greek to English.

SEMESTER 2

4. Biblical Hebrew for Exegesis (5 credits)

In this module students are introduced to the study of Biblical Hebrew for the purposes of exegesis. They become familiar with the Hebrew alphabet, verbs and syntax and develop a beginner's level of translation from Biblical Hebrew to English.

5. The Book of Genesis: Interweaving Themes (10 credits)

In this module students examine the overarching themes of Genesis, applying various methods of biblical criticism and analysing what draws it together as a single literary work. There is a particular focus on different hermeneutical and theological approaches to the stories of Creation and the Fall.

6. Choose One Elective* from:

- (i) Women in Scripture (5 credits)
- (ii) The Bible and Ecology (5 credits)
- (iii) *Lectio Divina: A Way of Praying and Doing Theology* (5 credits)



Year 1

SEMESTER 2

6(i). Women in Scripture (5 credits)

This module explores the theme "Women in Scripture" from two key perspectives: (1) women in the Bible - how women are portrayed in biblical texts, and (2) the question of interpretation - how these stories have been presented. Students are invited to profile several women in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and consider how these women are represented in the biblical text and the lectionary, as well as in art, literature, music and film.

6(ii). The Bible and Ecology (5 credits)

In the context of present-day environmental concerns, this module considers the Bible afresh through the lens of ecology. St Ephrem, the Syrian poet, once said: "Nature and scripture bear witness to the Creator; nature, through our use of it; scripture, through our reading of it."

6(iii). *Lectio Divina*: A Way of Praying and Doing Theology (5 credits)

This module helps students explore the central place of *lectio divina* in the Church in the early Christian centuries and its re-emergence in the past 50 years. They learn that it is a way of meeting God in life and prayer and a way of doing theology - theology defined as faith seeking understanding - exploring what God has revealed about himself, ourselves and the world in which we live.

In doing *lectio divina* with others, students experience its power to build community and to inspire Christian living.

***The electives offered will be subject to student numbers and interest.**

Year 2

SEMESTER 3

7. The Bible and Its Interpretation (10 credits)

This module aims to assist students in reading the Bible as the inspired word of God, with reference to hermeneutical approaches from the Church Fathers, medieval theologians, the Reformers, the mystical traditions as well as contemporary approaches. Students explore the Bible as the basis for theology and the Christian life. The module enables students to identify different literary genres across both Old and New Testaments by engaging with a representative sample of primary texts.

8. The Gospel of John: Encountering Jesus Again at the End of the First Century (10 credits)

This module acquaints students with the distinctiveness of the Fourth Gospel and provides an opportunity to explore selected themes. Scholarly issues of interpretation in the Fourth Gospel are evaluated and different exegetical tools are applied.

SEMESTER 4

9. MA in Biblical Studies Dissertation (30 credits)

In the second year students begin research for a minor dissertation (15,000 words) on a topic selected in agreement with the course leader and the dissertation supervisor. This module aims to assist students develop and apply research skills to a selected topic in biblical studies, formulate a research question following a review of relevant literature in the field, devise and apply appropriate methodology to address the research question and analyse the results deriving conclusions. It also provides students with opportunities for peer review.



Course Overview

This MA in Biblical Studies by blended learning is particularly suitable for those who cannot attend classes regularly. The modules are delivered by suitably qualified and experienced scripture scholars who are specialists in their disciplines. The MA provides an excellent foundation for further studies, teaching, pastoral and retreat work.

An option exists to exit with a Graduate Diploma in Arts in Biblical Studies.

Assessment

There is a taught component consisting of eight modules (60 credits in total) delivered over three semesters of 15 weeks. A dissertation of 15,000 words (30 credits) is completed in the fourth semester.

Course Duration

Two years (part-time)

Course Delivery

Delivery is through blended learning (a combination of onsite and online learning). Attendance at two onsite weekends in each of semesters 1, 2 and 3 is required.

Validation

The MA in Biblical Studies is validated by Technological University Dublin and is aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Admission Requirements

The degree is suitable for students with a Level 8 (honours) degree in which theology or religious studies is a major component. Candidates must have obtained at least a second class honours degree. An interview will normally be part of the selection process. Not all candidates with the minimum requirements will be automatically accepted.

Fees

Fees are payable at the beginning of the first semester for the forthcoming year and at the beginning of the third semester for the second year. An instalment payment plan is available.

The total fee is €4,995

Application Fee	€ 40
Year one	€3,170
Year two	€1,785

Application Deadline

1 September 2023

Further Information

The Priory Institute is a centre for theological, biblical and philosophical studies, established by the Irish Province of the Dominican Order and is Catholic and ecumenical in its approach. It seeks to engage with the best thinking of our times and brings the insights of different philosophical and religious thinkers to bear on the study of theology and religious studies.

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