PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM
Dr. Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer
King’s College KCS12 (by appointment)
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Email : j.leonhardt-balzer@abdn.ac.uk

Discipline Administration:
Mrs Claire Hargaden
50-52 College Bounds
Room CB001
01224 272366
divrs@abdn.ac.uk
**TIMETABLE**
Tuesdays 14:00-15:00 in weeks 1 (15 September), 4 (6th October), 10 (17th November) KING'S COLLEGE, KCF9

*Students can view their university timetable at [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php)*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**
This course involves the writing of a dissertation in one of the sub-disciplines in Divinity and Religious Studies. Independent Research work is done under the supervision of a member of staff.

**WHAT IS AN HONOURS DISSERTATION?**
The dissertation is an extended essay, of **10,000 words** (inclusive of bibliography and references). This component of the honours degree is designed to show that you’re able to

- carry out independent research on a subject
- analyse and evaluate the work of scholars who have written on that subject
- reach your own conclusions on the basis of this analysis and evaluation
- write up the results of your research in a clear and coherent manner

**INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**
The general aims of the course include:

- to provide an opportunity for students to contribute to the design of an extended research project
- to assist students to develop independent research skills (bibliographic work, analytical skill)
- to foster the capacity to write a substantial research paper (constructing an argument, developing a structured thesis)

Students participating in the course will achieve the following:

- acquire substantial knowledge in a specific area of knowledge
- develop enhanced independent research skills
- develop a greater capacity to write a substantial academic argument
- foster greater confidence to function as an independent researcher
LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME
Most of the work of the dissertation will be done independently, as students focus on their individual projects. This will be done in consultation with your supervisor. Students should seek to arrange at least three meetings with your supervisor over the course of the half-session. The supervisor will not schedule these – it is up to the student to arrange for these meetings.

In addition to these supervisory meetings, students are required to attend the three seminar sessions (in weeks 1, 4, 10) conducted by the course coordinator, which focus on information about writing a dissertation.

You are expected to attend the support sessions connected to this course, and to negotiate at least three supervisory sessions with your supervisor. Failure to discuss your dissertation and its development with your supervisor can result in the loss of your class certificate.

HOW DO I FIND A TOPIC AND A SUPERVISOR?
Once you’ve come up with some initial ideas about a topic, you should approach a Divinity and Religious Studies staff member who teaches in that general area (e.g., in Religious Studies, Practical Theology, Church History) and ask whether he or she will act as your supervisor.

Your supervisor will give you help with clarifying your topic.

That topic should not duplicate material covered elsewhere in the honours syllabus.

WHAT ROLE DOES MY SUPERVISOR PLAY IN MY DISSERTATION?
Your supervisor’s job is to help you focus and plan your dissertation.

This help will usually involve the following:

• An initial meeting to discuss the topic, title, research method and techniques for locating relevant books, articles and other resources
• A review meeting at which you’ll discuss your progress and the bibliography you’ve put together
• A meeting at which you will submit a preliminary outline of your dissertation and discuss this with your supervisor (the outline will normally the form of a
summary, a table of contents, and a statement of your main argument(s) (i.e. your thesis)).

- A meeting to discuss a plan of your draft chapters

Your supervisor will not read or discuss any full length drafts or final draft of your dissertation. Note also that it is not your supervisor’s job to proof-read or correct the drafts of your dissertation or to give you ongoing coaching. You are responsible for arranging appointments for supervision meetings and for handing in material on time.

ASSESSMENT

One 10,000 word dissertation (100%)

Click to view the University Level Descriptors (ANNEX A).

Click to view the University Assessment Scale Band Descriptors (ANNEX B).

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

14 January 2015 (the Thursday after the end of the Christmas break)

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Submit TWO bound paper copies with completed essay cover sheet to the drop boxes in CB008 in 50-52 College Bounds and one electronic copy to Turnitin via MyAberdeen. All copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Please note: Failure to submit both an electronic copy to TurnitinUK and an identical paper copy, with the digital receipt attached, will result in a deduction of marks. Failure to submit to TurnitinUK will result in a zero mark.

HOW SHOULD I PRESENT THE RESULTS OF MY RESEARCH?

First of all, your dissertation needs a:

- TITLE PAGE stating the author and title of the dissertation.

This should be followed by a:
• TABLE OF CONTENTS listing your chapter headings and the pages on which the chapters begin, and a
• TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS explaining any abbreviations you’ve used throughout the dissertation

There is no standard format for the body of the dissertation, but most are set out as follows:
• INTRODUCTION stating the main objectives of the thesis and the main sources of information on which it will be based.
• CHAPTERS (usually three or four) each following the structure of
  • chapter introduction
  • chapter body
  • chapter conclusion
• CONCLUSION which doesn’t just repeat the points made in each chapter, but states the overall conclusions to which the chapters point together.

Along the way you will have to back up your analysis and arguments with evidence drawn from your research materials. This is normally done in the form of FOOTNOTES

For further information on when and how to footnote see:
http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/index.html

or

At the end of the dissertation you should include a:
• BIBLIOGRAPHY listing all the books, articles and other resources you have used in the preparation of the dissertation. In historical dissertations it is customary to separate primary texts (e.g. 6 manuscripts, early printed texts) from secondary ones. Entries in the bibliography should follow a conventional style such as the Turabian style or the Modern Humanities Research Association style (See above)

One last thing worth noting is that typing slips, spelling mistakes, and poor written style are likely to have an adverse affect on the examiner’s assessment of even a good dissertation. Before you hand in your final draft, check it yourself. If possible have a second person check it as well. By the time you finish the dissertation you will probably have become so close to it that you miss mistakes or passages in which you might have expressed yourself more clearly. A second pair of eyes will help you identify these shortcomings.

HOW SHOULD MY DISSERTATION LOOK?

The final draft should be typed or printed in double spacing on A4 pages and inserted in a loose-leaf or spring binder (you can have it soft-bound at the library, but this is not required). As noted above, the dissertation should be 10,000 words (that’s about 32—40 A4 pages of double-spaced type) and there should be a declaration of the number of words at the beginning of the dissertation. You’ll need to hand in two copies. One of these can be collected from your supervisor once the degree results have been published. It will come with the marker’s assessments of the dissertation. These marks may differ, but a final mark will have been reached by the two examiners acting in consultation with the external examiner, who may act as arbitrator.

Recommended Reading: