

# In Touch

The School of Christian Studies Newsletter

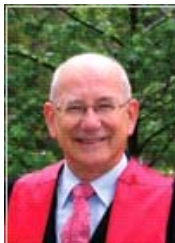


## From the Principal

As you know SOCS is now approved by ACT to teach Masters degree level units. This could be seen as a kind of stretching after academic credibility, for which the editor of Ecclesiastes would surely say 'Meaningless'! What excites us about this development is the opportunity it will give SOCS students to do significant research work on major projects with mini-theses of 8,000-12,000 words length in areas of immediate interest to their own work and ministry. Here is a great way to relate Bible and life, to read widely so as to be critically aware of the alternate views of life on offer, and to contribute to ongoing debate in a constructive way.

I want to express thanks to SOCS lecturing staff and especially our Registrar, Aaron Rose for a recent concerted effort to get as many units of study as possible on-line. This development is a key to SOCS advancement in its quest to assist many distance learning mode students. It has been facilitated by the rapid developments in IT that we see around us but which require the appropriate 'tech savvy' people such as Aaron as well as lecturing staff who understand the power of the new media to deliver content.

Professor Chris Bellenger  
Principal



## Bible lands tour 2012

We are pleased to announce that Dr Paul Barnett has agreed to lead a Bible lands tour of Israel and Jordan in September 2012. It will include eighteen days of visits to historical sites as well as preparatory and on tour talks by the tour leader. This three week study tour may be taken for credit at diploma, degree or graduate diploma/MDiv levels (NT 445/645 The Bible in Context). Consequently, the cost of approximately \$7,000 (excluding lunches but including all travel and accommodation) is covered by FEE-HELP.

More details are available at <http://socs.org.au> by clicking the link under **What's new?**

Because places will be limited, you should register your interest by contacting the SOCS Registrar, Aaron Rose on [socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au) or (02) 9936 6020.



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## Winter school

We would draw your attention to our intensive courses being offered over the Winter (June & July). They include three new units:

**Evangelicalism: Its Nature, Spirituality & Significance** (Masters level: TH752)

Drs Roger Chilton & Grant Maple and the Rev David Sandifer - *June 27 - July 2*

**Hermeneutics** (Diploma, Degree and Graduate Diploma level:

OT203/303/503)  
Drs Doug McNaught & Grenville Kent - *July 5 - 9*

**Christian Worldview** (Diploma, Degree and Graduate Diploma level: PE210/310/510)

Drs Grant Maple and Thomas Smith, and others - *July 12, 13, & 21-23*



# School of Christian Studies

**Hermeneutics and Christian Worldview will be available for distance study via SOCSOnline from Semester 1, 2012.**

## Semester 2 lectures

The following units will be offered as weekly lectures:

**Biblical Hebrew B (LA003B)**  
Dr Greg Fox (by arrangement)

**New Testament Greek B (LA004B)**  
Dr Greg Fox (by arrangement)

**Intermediate Greek (LA410)**  
Dr Greg Fox – Wednesdays, 4-6pm

**History of the New Testament Church** (Diploma, Degree and Graduate Diploma levels:  
NT202/302/502)

Dr Doug McNaught – Thursdays,  
6.30-9 pm

**The Church from 1550 to Modern Times** (Diploma, Degree and Graduate Diploma levels:CH202/302/502)  
Associate Professor Stuart Piggin –  
Wednesdays, 6.30-9 pm

In addition four other units will be offered in semi-intensive mode (between 9am and 4pm each day):

**Theology for Everyday Life**  
(Diploma and Degree level  
PC221/421)  
Ms Kara Martin and others – 22 & 23  
July; 19 & 20 August; 23 & 24  
September

**Science and Christian Belief**  
(Degree level: IN432)  
Associate Professor Frank Stootman  
– 29 & 30 July; 26 & 27 August; 14  
& 15 October.

**Schooling in Christian Perspective**  
(Degree level: IN425)  
Drs Grant Maple & Thomas Smith –  
5 & 6 August; 2 & 3 September; 21  
& 22 October

**Towards a Christian Theory of Education III – School Education**  
(Masters level: DM755)  
Drs Grant Maple & Thomas Smith –  
5 & 6 August; 2 & 3 September; 21  
& 22 October

These will be available (with the exception of DM755) for distance study in 2012.

## SOCS Library



We are about to change the way students can access books and other resources for their courses. During the second half of 2011 we will be installing and testing new library software which will better serve the needs of all our students. A key feature will be a searchable database that enables students to use keywords, author's names or book titles to discover what the holdings are in both the SOCS and MCSI libraries. We believe that this will immeasurably enhance the learning experience and do away with the present cumbersome spreadsheets that give insufficient information.

An appeal is being made to SOCS alumni and supporters to help fund this development. Further information on this development will be included in the next newsletter.

## Daytime lectures in 2012

To meet the needs of numbers of our students who are retired or soon to be retiring, in part-time work or for other reasons are available during the day, we propose to offer a number of lectures during the day in 2012. Initially, these are likely to be the core units but it may be expanded if there is the demand.

These are likely to be fortnightly lectures between 10am and 2.30pm. They are also likely to suit parents who have school-aged children.

If you would like to find out more or to register an interest, please contact the

SOCS Registrar, Aaron Rose, on  
socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au or (02) 9936 6020.

## Residential accommodation available for SOCS students

The expansion of Robert Menzies College in 2012 to provide accommodation for another 102 student members will enable SOCS to offer full-time theological education courses from the start of the academic year in February, 2012.

Information about the new building program may be found at <http://rmc.org.au/growingrmc/the-new-building/>. If you would like to find out more or to register an interest, please



contact the SOCS Registrar, Aaron Rose, on  
socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au or (02) 9936 6020.

## Exams

With exams just around the corner, this is just a friendly reminder for those sitting exams—please remember to include the exam paper with your exam answers. This helps us keep everything together, and helps markers not have to go searching for the exam paper.

## Submitting assessment

A number of you have been using the new email address—  
assess@socsonline.org to submit work. Currently we are receiving assessments in a variety of ways (email, online, fax, mail), but as we continue to roll out and develop online units, the facility for submitting work within SOCSOnline.org will be included within each unit. This will increase the efficiency for processing assessments, as well as giving you instant feedback that we've received your work.

# School of Christian Studies

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## New website

As part of the ongoing development of SOCS, we have recently updated our web site ([www.socs.org.au](http://www.socs.org.au)) to make it more user-friendly and to meet the expanding requirements of the SOCS community. We have tried to present a contemporary dynamic image and to provide as much relevant information as our students need.

New features include:

- an integrated search function for easy access to information;
- a rotating highlight panel and direct links under the headings of **What's new?** and **Public lectures** on the home page;
- easy access from the home page to the lecture program for each semester and to enrolment forms;
- a section devoted to distance study with a live link to **SOCSONline**;
- and live links from Study options to the unit descriptions in the Australian College of Theology Handbooks.

All the features of the previous site have been retained

We would value your feedback on how you have found the site and what else you think should be there.

## SOCSONline.org update

In Semester 1 this year, over 80% of SOCS students were studying by distance. Our move to online learning has facilitated this as we see more people looking for diploma and degree level courses that can be studied part-time wherever they live.

As we prepare for second semester, we are pleased to report that eighteen units are now available for students at SOCSONline. A number of new units are currently being developed and more will be added during the second half of this year. To watch these developments, go to [www.socsonline.org](http://www.socsonline.org).

It is important to note that, if you enrol in an online unit, changes may be occurring to earlier lectures as the lecturer adds further valuable interactive features to them. Normally the lecturer will contact you to let you know. However, you should check regularly to see whether new elements have been added.

## Invitation

*Would you like a place to interact with others who work in community?*

*Would you like to belong to a forum specifically to reflect on your work/ministry?*

Why not become a member of [forum.communitychaplain.org](http://forum.communitychaplain.org)?

*Community Chaplain forum*  
**Reflective + Social + Collaborative**



*(This forum is an initiative of SOCS lecturer Rev Dr Melissa Baker)*

## Projects

Special Interest Projects {\*\*290 (4cps), \*\*490 (4cps), \*\*650 (4 cps) and \*\*690 (8cps)} and Graduate Diploma and Masters of Christian Studies Projects {IN650 (4cps), IN691 (8cps), IN692 (12cps)} provide an opportunity for students to explore an area of theological studies in more depth or to apply their studies to an aspect of their lives, work or ministry.

At SOCS we are very keen to assist our students to develop their skills and understanding in order to enhance their effectiveness as Christians. We see projects as a great way to do this. We would encourage anyone nearing the end of their diploma, degree or graduate diploma studies to consider this option.

A few points need to be borne in mind.

Projects may be an individual or group activity.

The topic needs to be developed in consultation with the SOCS Director in the first instance and then with the appointed supervisor. A topic needs to be of manageable length so that it can be completed within a semester and the required word length (see the ACT Handbooks for each of the above requirements, which vary from 4,000 to 12,000 words).

The best time to start thinking about this is in the semester before you plan to complete the project. A project may be completed over two semesters.

In Phase 1, the Project Supervisor will help you

- define the general area of research
- establish the aims of the research and prioritize the aims
- propose a plan of work including the relationship to previous work
- develop a project management plan
- translate the aims into objectives.

In Phase 2, the Supervisor will monitor the process of writing. This may include detailed feedback as well as friendly reassurance that you are on track and that the finished work will be worthwhile. During this time an Examiner will be appointed. This will usually be someone other than the Supervisor. Marking will be on the basis of the published ACT Assessment Criteria.

Phase 3 is all about preparing for submission. The final draft should be delivered to the supervisor at least two and preferably three weeks before the final submission date.

Normally the report is to be written in standard essay format and be fully referenced. However, it may take the form of a creative response to the challenge of ministry in the student's vocational context, in which case the report

may consist of text plus material in some other medium. Any text in the report should be on A4, single-sided pages, and conform to the ACT guidelines for essays as found in the ACT Handbooks.

If you are intending to commence a project please obtain a copy of the Project Guidelines called *Getting Started* from the SOCS Registrar at [socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au).

I look forward to hearing from any who want to begin a project, so email me on [grant.maple@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:grant.maple@rmc.nsw.edu.au).

## Library book and Journal donations

As a growing provider of quality theological education for lay people, SOCS is offering a greater range of units across all coursework degrees and diplomas. This involves us in an expenditure of around \$12,000 a year on new titles.

We would be interested in hearing from any supporters who are looking to reduce or dispose of their theological libraries. Our chief interest is in classic works and recent (post-1980) titles. For those with substantial collections, there are tax advantages in having your library professionally valued and then donating it to a recognised tertiary provider.

Please contact SOCS Director, Grant Maple, on (02) 9936 6021 if you would like to make arrangements for an inspection of your collection.

## Become a SOCS Ambassador

We find that many of our students first come to us because a friend who has already studied with SOCS brings our courses to their attention.

Together with this newsletter, you will receive a small bundle of DL cards setting out our lecture program. Would you try to give three or four of your friends one of these cards with the encouragement that they might consider taking a unit or two to help them in their life, work and ministries?

If you need more cards, simply phone Aaron Rose on (02) 9936 6020 and he will post you some.

Also, details of all we can offer are set out on our new web site [www.socs.org.au](http://www.socs.org.au). Our online studies program is at [www.SOCSONline.org](http://www.SOCSONline.org).

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