



# In Touch

## From the Director

Welcome to those who have begun studying with SOCS this semester. We hope that you will find this newsletter informative and come to appreciate that the SOCS community extends far and wide. At present over 70% of our students are studying for the Australian College of Theology awards by distance. They are located in almost every state in Australia and some are at present living overseas. Part of SOCS' development strategy is to improve the learning experience of all our students. This year we have had three main foci

- Providing a wider range of ACT units to meet individual student needs.
- Transferring all our distance material to online using the Moodle platform.
- Improving the range of library resources and introducing a searchable catalogue that integrates the SOCS and MCSI collections.

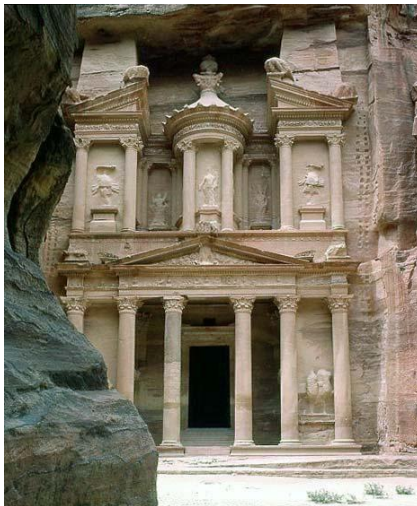
I am able to report that we have introduced a number of new units each semester. Unfortunately some have been cancelled because of insufficient enrolments. I draw your attention to the new ones for the Summer Semester, below. At the last count we have some 37 units now available online. Most include the full lecture notes and MP3s of the lectures when last delivered. Over the next year or two we will be introducing more dynamic aspects by way of online tutorials, forums, quizzes and study helps. Finally, we are currently re-cataloguing our library and integrating the two collections on the shelves. We expect that by the start of first semester 2012 students anywhere in the world will be able to access a searchable catalogue. In addition we are extending the range of externally

hosted databases that can be searched for information and articles (see below).

If you have ideas about how any of these improvements can better meet your needs or those of students generally, I would love to hear from you. I can be contacted at [grant.maple@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:grant.maple@rmc.nsw.edu.au).

*Grant Maple*

Grant Maple  
Director



## Bible lands tour 2012

There has been strong inquiry for places on the Paul Barnett led tour of Israel and Jordan in September 2012. The trip has been fully booked and a waitlist has been started. For those who were unable to secure a spot on this trip, we will be looking at organising a similar tour in 2013. For SOCS/ACT degree or graduate diploma enrolments FEE-HELP will cover all expenses except lunches each day.

For those who have secured a spot, (and wish to apply for FEE-HELP assistance) it will be necessary to complete a Semester 1, 2012

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enrolment. The deposit you have paid will be refunded as soon as the first FEE-HELP payment is received in April 2012 or if you withdraw before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. Later withdrawals will incur a charge.

The detailed itinerary and dates for the tour will be available in October.

## ACT Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas

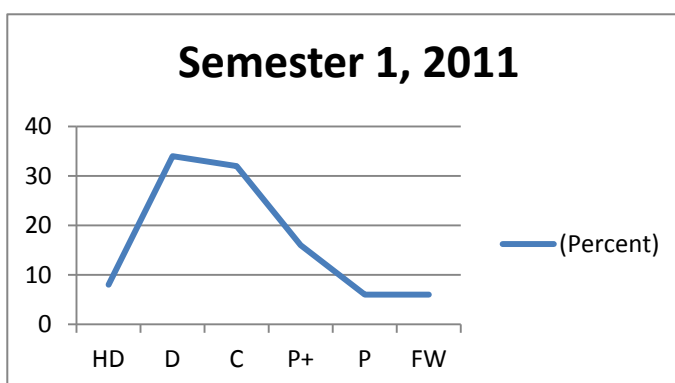
It is anticipated that proposals to change the number of units needed for these awards will be approved by the end of September 2011. This will see a reduction in the number of units to bring these awards into line with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

If you have completed eight or more units towards an ACT Diploma or four units towards an Advanced Diploma, you should contact SOCS Registrar, Aaron Rose (Tel. 02 9936 6020 or email: [socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au)) to discuss how these changes will affect you.

## Semester 1 results

It is gratifying at the end of each semester to see the level of achievement of SOCS students. The grade arrays compare very favourably with those of the Australian College of Theology as a whole.

Congratulations and well done!

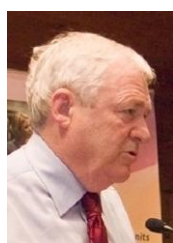


## Semester 3 units

To broaden the number of units available to our students, we are offering the following units in semi-intensive or intensive lecture mode over the Summer Semester

### *Semi-intensives* (enrolments close Monday, 7th November)

(Lectures from 9 am to 4 pm each day)



### **NT421/431 and NT621/631 Paul and Corinthian Christianity (English or Greek):** Paul Barnett – 18 & 19

November, 2 & 3 December 2011 and 3 & 4 February 2012.



### **CH421/621 Continental Reformation:** Drs Grant Maple & Roger Chilton and Rev David

Sandifer – 18 & 19 November; 2 & 3 December, 2011; 3 & 4 February, 2012.



### **OT205/420/430/620/630 Pentateuch (English or Hebrew):** Drs

Grenville Kent and Doug McNaught – 25 & 26 November; 9 & 10 December, 2011; 10 & 11 February, 2012.

### *Intensives* (enrolments close Friday, 6th January 2012)

(Lectures from 9 am to 4 pm each day)



### **IN432 Science and Christian Belief:** Associate Professor Frank Stootman – 6-10 February 2012



### **PE403/603 Christian Social Ethics:** Rev Greg Burke, Dr Grant Maple and Rev David Sandifer –

6-10 February 2012.



### **DM214/414/614 Chaplaincy in Educational Settings:** Drs Thomas Smith and Grant Maple – 16-

20 January 2012.

## All online units are available in Semester 3.

Visit [www.socs.org.au/online-units](http://www.socs.org.au/online-units) for the range that is currently available.

The lecture program for 2012 will be posted on the SOCS web site [www.socs.org.au](http://www.socs.org.au) at the beginning of October.

## SOCS Library and Resources

The Australian College of Theology grade descriptors used by lecturers in assessing your written work require three things

- An understanding of the foundational features of the discipline you are studying
- Engagement with the primary sources
- Awareness of scholarly viewpoints on the topic you are considering.

Primary sources may include not only the Bible but other relevant source documents. These and the range of scholarly viewpoints are to be

found by good use of the library facilities.

With this in mind SOCS has in recent years subscribed to the EBSCO databases prepared by the American Theological Libraries Association (known as ATLA and ATLAS). These provide indexing of all monographs and serials (journals) respectively. ATLAS covers 187 journals and over 335,000 articles and book reviews. It is here that current scholarly viewpoints are to be found.

You can access these through the SOCS website [www.socs.org.au](http://www.socs.org.au) Library and Resources, Student Resources page. Use the password you have been given as a current SOCS student to log in.

## SOCS Library Catalogue

SOCS is also upgrading its own catalogue so that it will be searchable using title or author's name or keywords or ISBN. This will make it much easier to locate books on a subject of interest than the present spreadsheet listing affords. We hope to have this in place for early Semester 1, 2012. Part of this library development will be to give distance students, particularly those studying at degree or graduate diploma level, quick access to our library resources. More details will be given in the December *In-Touch Newsletter*.

You will find that the full text of many journal articles is available online and may be downloaded. In other cases you will find an abstract (summary) of the contents. If the article seems relevant you can often purchase it online.

Alternatively, you may need to locate a library that holds that journal. SOCS does not subscribe to many journals (because of the very high cost of annual subscriptions), so you may need to explore the library catalogues of other theological colleges or universities that you can easily access. Remember that SOCS has a memorandum of understanding that allows SOCS students to use the Emmaus Bible College Library at Epping.

If you have difficulty accessing the EBSCO site, please let Aaron Rose, the SOCS

Registrar know immediately, so that it can be rectified.

## ERIC database

We are about to add another search engine to our Student Resources page. This is the ERIC database managed by the United States Education Resources Information Centre. ERIC provides unlimited access to more than 1.3 million bibliographic records of journal articles and other education-related materials, with hundreds of new records added multiple times per week. If available, links to full text are included.

Within the ERIC Collection, you will find records for:

- journal articles
- books
- research syntheses
- conference papers
- technical reports
- policy papers
- other education-related materials



## Australian College of Theology fees for 2012

The ACT has announced the fees for 2012. These represent a 5% increase on 2011 fees:

Diplomas	\$1,104
Degree	\$1,492
MDiv/ Grad dip	\$1,652
MA	\$2,168

### Bursary assistance

SOCS has a significant amount set aside each year as Bursary Assistance to help those who are paying fees rather than using the Australian Government's FEE-HELP system of deferred payments. Most of our up-front fee-paying students are enrolled at diploma level. Although we have advertised this in the past, no-one has availed him or herself of this, even though the unit costs of our diploma level subjects has more than doubled in the past five to six years.

We believe that the level of fees is becoming a barrier for many people preventing their enrolment at diploma level. Therefore we will be taking a more proactive stance in contacting those who pay their

fees upfront to offer bursary assistance if needed. Please do not be offended, but see this as an attempt on our part to help people become better equipped to serve our Lord.

### Fundraising and benefactions

At the end of August \$4710 has been donated to our appeal to introduce the new SOCS Library Catalogue system. This appeal is still open and donations may be made by cheque or credit card. Please contact SOCS Registrar, Aaron Rose, for more details on (02) 9936 6020 or by email [socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au).

If you would like to support the ongoing work of SOCS in bringing quality theological education to lay people wherever they live in urban, regional or rural Australia, could I urge you to consider leaving a lump sum to SOCS, either for a specific purpose (such as scholarships, subsidies for rural and remote students, library development, or faculty appointments) or for more general purposes so that we can maintain this important

ministry to the Australian churches.

### Training resources

We are in the process of putting together training resources to assist our students and lecturers in adapting to the new technologies that we are implementing (eg. SOCSOnline.org and the new library catalogue). This will involve a series of training videos which will use the actual websites to show you how to do various things.

If there is anything in particular that you would like to learn more about, please email Aaron Rose ([socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au)) and let him know what sort of training resource will be handy for you.

As we start to put the videos and resources together, they will be accessible on the SOCS website at:

[www.socs.org.au/training-resources](http://www.socs.org.au/training-resources)

Videos currently in development for SOCSOnline.org include:

- logging in,
- editing your profile, and
- navigating your units.

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