

NT 3P1160/OT 3P1130

On the Road to Emmaus: The Gospel in the Old Testament

Course Information

Instructor:	Ambrose Thomson, PhD Assistant Professor of Old Testament McMaster Divinity College Hamilton, Ontario	
Applicable Specializations:	Biblical Studies, Pastoral Studies	
Term:	Spring/Summer 2025	
Mode:	In-Person + Livestream Option	
Schedule:	Class will meet in person and via livestream on the following Saturdays:	
	May 10	Class from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
	May 24	Class from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
	June 7	Class from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
	June 21	Class from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Course Description

The life, death, and resurrection of the man Jesus from Nazareth are remarkable and inspiring events. But what do these events mean? What is their significance? This course explores the answers to these questions that can be garnered from a deep engagement with the theology of the Old Testament. More than merely fulfilling specific prophetic predictions or repeating and enlarging precursor elements and characters from the Old Testament, the Gospel to which New Testament authors witness draws its meaning and significance from the deep, consistent, and permeating structure of the Old Testament's theology. In this course we will explore the structure of the Old Testament's theology with this question in mind: What is the Gospel and how does the Old Testament's theology help us to make sense of it.

Course Objectives

Through active engagement with all aspects of this course, students will come to:

- Knowing** Analyze the theological structure of the Gospel and articulate its major contours.
 Related Course Components: *Class Preparation & Participation, Gospel Conversation, Gospel Tract*
- Describe the relationship between the Old and New Testaments
 Related Course Components: *Reading Analysis, Major Paper*
- Evaluate major issues and views in contemporary scholarship on the relationship between the Gospel and the Old Testament.
 Related Course Components: *Reading Analysis, Major Paper*
- Explain the significance and impact of the Gospel on all aspects of Christian life, discipleship, and ministry.
 Related Course Components: *Major Paper, Gospel Conversation, Gospel Tract*
- Being**
- Reflect on the Glory of Jesus revealed in the Gospel and discover new motivation to give him worship and adoration as the King of the entire Cosmic Order.
 Related Course Components: *Bible Reading & Reflection*
- Cultivate a posture of humble listening to God's Word as a life-long learner.
 Related Course Components: *Bible Reading & Reflection, Gospel Conversation, Major Paper, Reading Analysis*
- Examine and account for the impact of their own cultural and theological location in their understanding of the Gospel and the Bible's theology in general.
 Related Course Components: *Gospel Tract, Gospel Conversation, Major Paper*
- Model a greater living witness to the truth of the Gospel in the world.
 Related Course Components: *Bible Reading & Reflection, Gospel Conversation*
- Doing**
- Perform biblical exegesis and theological synthesis by conducting detailed analyses of biblical texts and integrating their theological messages.
 Related Course Components: *Bible Reading & Reflection, Major Paper*
- Conduct critical, integrative research in contemporary scholarship and report findings in various formats.

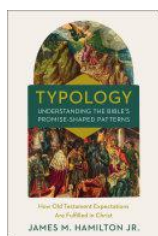
Related Course Components: *Major Paper, Reading Analysis, Gospel Conversation*

Implement discipleship ministry practices in real contexts, testing and evaluating the application of course concepts in Gospel ministry settings.

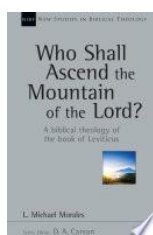
Related Course Components: *Gospel Conversation, Gospel Tract*

Advanced Elective Students: Students taking this course for Advanced Elective credit (e.g., DPT) will be provided with a syllabus supplement outlining additional requirements that they must meet to receive credit towards their degree program. Advanced Elective students can expect their course requirements to include doctoral levels of reading and research-supported writing, as well as a presentation of their research in a format appropriate to the course. For any questions about what to expect for Advanced Elective requirements in this particular course, please contact the course instructor. Note: The syllabus supplement will be made available no sooner than ten days after enrollment in the course. Advanced Elective students are encouraged to register for this course as early as possible to ensure they know their course requirements well in advance of the course start date.

Course Textbooks



Hamilton, James M. *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022.



Morales, L. Michael. *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 37. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015.

Course Activity Components

All students in the course must complete the following required course components as described by the due dates indicated unless otherwise arranged with the professor or accommodated through a Student Accessibility Services accommodation plan.

Name	Weight	Due Date	Length
Class Preparation and Participation	10%	Sunday, June 22, 2025	No Set Length
Gospel Conversation	15%	Saturday, May 31, 2025	4–5 Pages
Gospel Tract	15%	Friday, June 27, 2025	Single Page
Reading Analysis (6-7 Pages)	25%	Friday, July 4, 2025	6–7 Pages
Major Paper (15 Pages)	35%	Saturday, August 30, 2025	15–17 Pages

Class Preparation and Participation – 10%

In order to cultivate a cooperative learning community, students will prepare for class days during module week by 1) reading assigned biblical passages and/or short assigned readings from secondary literature and 2) by identifying questions and observations that can be used to interact during classroom activities (e.g., lectures, group discussions). The readings assigned for each class session will be posted on A2L at least one week before the date of class.

Length: No set length.

Due Date: Before each class session. Written submission due Sunday, June 22, 2025.

Instructions: 1) Carefully read the assigned readings for each day *before* class.
 2) Identify one critical question and one observation about the assigned reading *before* class.
 3) During each class session, identify an *additional two* critical observations and an *additional two* questions that arise from further engagement through the classroom activities that day.
 4) Using the assignment grid template provided on A2L, compile your questions and observations for submission by the assigned due date.

Note: “Stealing” the observations and questions raised by fellow students during classroom times is encouraged! However, try to think of why another person’s contribution stood out to you as important. Make it your own, even if your thoughts were stimulated by others. *Do not overtax yourself with the writing aspect of this assignment.* Single sentences for questions and observations are sufficient—as long as the professor can understand what you’re saying and how it engages with specific passages and class times. The goal is to document that you prepared for class times as expected.

Completion

Criteria: 1) Uses the assignment template provided by the professor.

- 2) Includes three questions and three observations for each day.
 - 3) Indicates the date on which the student completed each assigned reading.
- Note:** No MDC style guide requirement for this assignment.

Gospel Conversation – 15%

In this activity, students will 1) engage a layperson (friend or family member) in a conversation about the gospel and 2) write a short reflective essay to document the experience.

Length: 4–5 pages.

Due Date: Saturday, May 31, 2025.

Instructions:

- 1) Meet with a friend or family member for an hour or more with the express purpose of discussing the nature and essence of the gospel.
- 2) Find out what your conversation partner thinks the gospel entails. How do they describe it? What are its key components or features? How does it work?
- 3) Explore and discern what sources of theology your conversation partner is drawing on to frame their thinking about what the gospel entails and how it works.
- 4) Explain your own understanding of the gospel to your conversation partner and take note of their reaction/response. Where does your understanding overlap with theirs? Where does it differ? What was difficult to get across to them? What made sense to them easily?
- 5) *Using the assignment template with questions provided on A2L*, document your conversation.

Completion

Criteria:

- 1) Uses the assignment template provided by the professor.
- 2) Provides a response for all questions in the assignment template.
- 3) Adheres to the MDC Style Guide

Gospel Tract – 15%

In this activity, students will create their own “gospel tract.” Notwithstanding the potentially problematic nature of gospel tracts in the practice of evangelism, this genre of communication provides a great opportunity to test and present one’s own understanding of the gospel.

Length: Single page (can be double-sided).

Due Date: Friday, June 27, 2025.

Instructions: 1) Reflect on how you understand the gospel now that the bulk of the course is finished and think about how you would want to communicate that to someone who may not have heard about it before in your own contemporary context.
 2) Review the sample “gospel tracts” provided by the professor and any others you may be familiar with.
 3) Determine who your target audience is.
 4) Determine the format you will use for your tract (e.g., tri-fold, bi-fold, mini-booklet, comic-strip).
 5) Outline not less than 3 and not more than 5 main components of your own presentation/explanation of the gospel.
 6) Determine how best to address these components in your chosen format.
 7) Produce the “gospel tract” according to your understanding and communicative goals and make it fit on one double-sided page.

Note: The primary resources for this assignment should be 1) your growing intellectual and spiritual development in the course and 2) the insights you gained about gospel understanding and communication gaps during the “Gospel Conversation” activity. The professor is not looking for you to reproduce the “correct” understanding of the gospel, but your own understanding at the end of the course. The assignment is designed to demonstrate thoughtful engagement with and practical application of your own personal intellectual and spiritual development.

Completion

Criteria: 1) Displays a format that is identifiable as a “tract” or similar public communication material (i.e., do not produce an essay).
 2) Fits on one double-sided page.
 3) Contains a clear presentation of 3-5 components that make-up the student’s overall understanding of the gospel.
 4) Includes at least two visual (non-textual) elements.

Reading Analysis – 25%

In this activity, students will critically interact with and evaluate the assigned textbooks for the course by 1) reading the books in their entirety and 2) providing long-form prose answers to a series of analysis questions.

Length: 6–7 pages.

Due Date: Friday, July 4, 2025.

Instructions: 1) Read assigned textbooks in their entirety.
 2) *Using the assignment template with questions provided on A2L*, provide long-form prose answers to the 5 analysis questions provided by the professor.

Completion

- Criteria:**
- 1) Uses the assignment template provided by the professor.
 - 2) Provides a long-form prose response for each question in the assignment template.
 - 3) Follows the MDC Style Guide.

Major Paper – 35%

In this activity, students will write a biblical theological research paper that 1) focuses on a single passage of the New Testament, 2) explores the Old Testament theological landscape that informs the passage's gospel significance, and 3) reflects on the relevance of the message of the passage for an understanding and application of the gospel in the contemporary church.

Length: 15–17 pages.

Due Date: Saturday, August 30, 2025.

- Instructions:**
- 1) Select a short passage from the list provided by the professor based on which passage you think has the most relevance to your specialization.
 - 2) Read a few relevant introductory articles on the New Testament book in which your passage is found from sources such as the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* or commentary introductions to find insight into the wider theology of the New Testament book and how its message relates to the broader witness of Scripture.
 - 3) Research your individual passage using key recent commentaries on that passage, providing a basic interpretation of the passage, its structure and its theme set within its original context and book.
 - 5) Identify one thematic element in your New Testament passage that has a bearing on how the contemporary church understands and lives out the gospel.
 - 4) Identify one key area of Old Testament theology that has a bearing on the thematic element identified above. Biblical encyclopedia/dictionary articles on major Old Testament themes and other components will give a good sense of the kinds of areas that can be explored (e.g. human/Israelite identity, covenant relationship, sin and atonement, exile and restoration, redemption/salvation, Yahweh's character, etc.).
- Important:* do not merely identify passages in the Old Testament to which your New Testament passage directly refers.
- 5) Trace the identified area of Old Testament theology and its development throughout the Old Testament, (some help may be gained from NDBT Part Three), first on your own by identifying basic vocabulary, images, and topics related to the topic, and how they are developed in individual passages throughout the Old Testament, and then secondly researching key scholars who have worked on this theme in books and articles.

6) Write your paper showcasing your exegesis of the individual passage, the connection of its theme to the Old Testament, and its application to the lived experience of the contemporary church as well as its relevance to your specialization.

Completion

Criteria:

- 1) Addresses an approved passage as described.
- 2) Uses this outline:
 - I. Introduction
 - II. Overview of Passage and Key Gospel Theme Chosen (3 pages)
 - III. Old Testament Theology Relevant to the Passage (1 to 2 pages)
 - IV. Development of the Old Testament Theological Witness (6 to 7 pages)
 - V. Impact on Exegesis and Relevance for Today (4 pages)
 - VI. Conclusion
- 3) Follows the MDC style guide.

Class Topics Outline

Day 1: What is the Gospel Really?

1. Survey of Key New Testament Passages
2. The Relationship of the Old Testament to the Gospel
3. The Relevance of Old Testament Theology
4. The Task of Old Testament Theology

Day 2: The Gospel-Framing Theology of the Pentateuch

1. Humanity Old and New (Genesis)
2. Redeeming the Son of God (Exodus & Leviticus)
3. New People, New Land, New Law (Numbers & Deuteronomy)
4. A Precarious Promise

Day 3: The Gospel-Framing Theology of the Prophets & Writings

1. Of Priests, Prophets, and Kings (The Former Prophets)
2. Of Horror and Hope (The Latter Prophets)
3. Of Wisdom & Worship (the Writings)
4. The Old Testament's Open Door to the Gospel

Day 4: Old Testament Theology & the Gospel

1. “As the Scripture said”: the Spirit Baptizer
2. “Son of God in Glory”: the Cosmic King
3. “A Great High Priest”: the Atoning Sacrifice
4. “The Church of the Firstborn”: the Kingdom of Heaven & Earth

Policy Statements for MDC Syllabi

MDC Course Policies

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one’s own (regardless of the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student’s dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you “tidy up” your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one’s own as if it is one’s own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary

accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Bookstore

All required and recommended books for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

Presence and Meaningful Participation

Presence and participation in this course are expected. Faculty know from many years of experience that a student's level of presence and participation in the course will impact how well she or he will score in the course. Although there are exceptions to this rule of thumb, low levels of presence and participation tend to translate to low grades; mediocre presence and participation tend to translate to mediocre grades; and high levels of presence and participation tend to translate to higher grades.

A word needs to be said about what constitutes "presence" (attendance) and "participation" in an asynchronous course. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities to meet the expected level of attendance and meaningful participation. Be aware that merely logging into the online class is not, by itself, sufficient as a demonstration of attendance and participation by the student. "Academically related activities" certainly includes participation in and completion of the course requirements that are described below. Additionally, just as students are expected to engage with the course content/materials throughout the week outside of the learning management system (A2L), so also students are expected to engage one another in formative dialogue "outside of class." This is an important part of belonging to and maintaining a community of learning and is a staple ingredient in what constitutes "presence."

Online Etiquette

It is critical in any MDC class that students show respect for classmates and the instructor. This is even truer in the online environment because many of the non-verbal cues that we use to interpret what a person is communicating to us are not present online (except, perhaps in video posts). Therefore, it is especially critical that we be mindful of how our words will be interpreted by those who are reading them. As the instructor of the course, it is my responsibility to monitor communications to ensure that all students feel comfortable expressing their views in a respectful manner. Most if not all courses at MDC are devoted to the interpretation of Scripture. Invariably there will be disagreements; these disagreements must be discussed and negotiated in a respectful manner. This applies to individual and group communications involving the instructor and the others enrolled in the course. The instructor will expect that you will give some thought to your postings. Excessive postings are also frowned upon because these amount to dominating the discussion. Please limit your postings to less than 200 words. Instructors reserve the right to ask students to take a step back to allow others discussion time if she or he feels that an individual is dominating the discussion. In your responses, please try to be clear which point your response refers to. Students who violate these guidelines may be dismissed from class.

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and MDC. It is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class. Students will be kept apprised of any changes.