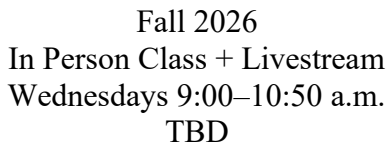




*The mission of McMaster Divinity College is to develop effective evangelical Christian leaders  
for the Church, academy, and society  
through graduate-level education, spiritual development, and vocational formation*

Dr. Cynthia Long Westfall  
[westfal@mcmaster.ca](mailto:westfal@mcmaster.ca)



This course is a place where you can seek to develop biblical responses in your reading of Scripture, your theology, ministry and your personal transformation. address broken relationships in areas such as social isolation, mental illness/depression, exclusion, victimization, and racism. The welcome of the other is foundational in the identity and function of the people of God, and intimately connected with God's presence, promise and blessing. How do we define welcome? Who do we identify as the other (and who are "we"?). What practices can we cultivate to welcome the other? The framework of this course will draw on concepts connected with the *invitation of radical hospitality* combined with *the movement towards incarnational actions* of becoming the other, crossing boundaries, sojourning and tearing down walls. By sharing our life, experiences and research interests, we will together identify the other, expand and build on the definition and practices of welcome, and populate the category of the other along with input from a select variety of people in the field and on the front lines. Through videos, weekly exercises and online discussion, we will concentrate on pooling our resources and building the biblical and theological bases for the praxis of radical hospitality together with incarnational identity and action rooted in the nature of God.

This is an asynchronous course in which we deliver content in weekly videos distributed on Avenue to Learn (A2L), interact in the A2L Discussions and utilize other online technologies.

## Specializations

***Pastoral Studies (PS)***

Students taking this as a Pastoral Studies (PS) course are encouraged to explore how a biblical welcome of the other can be understood, practiced and transmitted in your target area(s) such as leadership strategies, ethical decisions, and pastoral care as well as worship, teaching and preaching.

### ***Church and Culture (CC)***

Students taking this as a Church and Culture (CC) course are encouraged to explore the interface of the Church and the contemporary world in the theology and practice of welcoming the other in your targeted context(s) such as missions, development, evangelism, the emerging church, cultural context, preaching, or worship.

### ***Pastoral Studies (PS)***

Students taking this as a Pastoral Studies (PS) course are encouraged to explore how a biblical welcome of the other can be understood, practiced and transmitted in your target area(s) such as leadership strategies, ethical decisions, and pastoral care as well as worship, teaching and preaching.

### ***Biblical Studies (BS)***

Students taking this as a Biblical Studies (BS) course will be encouraged to explore and research biblical content and develop a biblical theology that is exegetically responsible and interacts critically with scholarship that is fundamental in the practice of hospitality and incarnational movement in the welcome of the other, with applications that embrace the complexity of contemporary culture(s).

## **Course Objectives**

### ***Knowing***

- Provide explanations of the biblical basis for welcoming the other for the individual, the church, society and global contexts
- Summarize how welcoming the other extends to larger contexts and new possibilities.

### ***Being***

- Awareness of your place, connections, and circle of influence
- Experience empathy for the other based on who you are & your past experience
- Be committed to hospitality and an incarnational ministry consistent with your calling
- Possess habits of devotion & self-care that support the demanding nature of the discipline

### ***Doing***

- Research and develop a biblical topic/theme, passage or project that is relevant to your specialization and relates to the Church and/or current personal and communal practice.
- Develop a life map on welcoming the other
- Engage in welcoming the other in a local context and theologically reflect on that experience.

### **Reading**

Pohl, Christine. *Making Room: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024. 237 pp.

Volf, Miraslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Updated ed; Nashville: Abingdon, 2019. 336 pp.

Weekly current and relevant papers/articles TBA that will be distributed to the class through A2L.

### **Recommended**

- Fraser, Eloise Renich. *Confessions of a Beginning Theologian*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1998.
- Oden, Amy. *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Early Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010. 318 pp.
- Sinclair, J. Greg. *Welcoming the Other: An Ethnographic Study of Hospitality*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2025. 196 pp.
- Warren, Michelle Ferrigno, LaTasha Morrison, and Dominique DuBois Gilliard. *Join the Resistance: Step into the Good Work of Kingdom Justice*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2022.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Power of Proximity: Moving Beyond Awareness to Action*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017. 182 pp.

### **Textbook Purchase**

See “Bookstore” below.

### **Class Participation (10%)**

Student attendance and participation in interactive lectures and class and group discussions and activities is expected. There will be no class on Nov 18 due to annual conferences. Attendance consists of the submission of a 5-minute video and watching your classmates’ videos.

Students who Livestream are encouraged to make a Zoom appointment with the professor in the first weeks of class.

### **Reading Report (10%)**

Complete the required reading for the course and submit a reading report of the total percentage of reading completed by **Dec 18 at 11:59 p.m.** (that would be one number such as 100%--no lists).

### **Written assignments**

#### ***A Life Map Centered on Welcoming the Other* (25%)**

Objectives: meet the being objectives and explain the biblical basis for welcoming the other.

**It will be due Nov 2 at 11:59 p.m.**

Utilizing the tools given in the course, design a map (model) with the following sections:

- Establish your own identity by which you define the other
- Identify your experience of welcoming the other through your life story
- Identify your areas of responsibility, circle of influence and passion
- Summarize your unique calling to welcoming the other
- Clarify the biblical and theological basis for welcoming the other in your area(s) of interest
  - This section requires an extensive overview of Scripture with research and documentation
- Problem-solve any challenges and barriers
- Praxis: Plan to implement necessary changes.
- In summary, write your personal mission statement. Detailed instructions for the Life Map will be posted in an online presentation on April 29.

The Life Map should be a minimum of 12 pages long and follow the MDC Style Guide

<https://avenue.ellmcmaester.ca/d21/le/content/710143/Home?itemIdentifier=D2L.LE.Content.ContentObject.ModuleCO-5215382>

### ***Theological Reflection on Welcoming the Other (20%)***

Objective: Engagement in welcoming the other in a local context and theological reflection on that experience.

The student will engage in an encounter/ interaction in which you have an experience in welcoming the other (suggestions distributed on Avenue). The student will write a 5-page theological reflection on the experience based on the MRS model for spiritual reflection, utilizing the subheadings (“Guidelines for Writing a Theological Report” under Content: Syllabi and Introductory Materials). **It is due Dec 4 at 11:59 p.m.** Submit to Avenue to Learn in a PDF format

### ***Choice of Exegetical Paper, Research Paper or Portfolio Project (35%)***

Objective: The paper or project should extend welcoming the other to larger contexts and new possibilities in your ministry.

Each student will either (a) write a research paper, (b) write an exegetical paper or (c) create a portfolio project on welcoming the other, suitable to the student’s specialization and present it in class. **It is due at 9 a.m.** Submit to Avenue to Learn in a PDF format (projects may be submitted in hard copy by arrangement). For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses: <http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>

**A paper/project proposal** will be described by the student in detail in a paragraph submitted to A2L **due on Friday, Nov 9 at 11:59 p.m.** Each student will receive feedback on their choice and description.

Exegetical papers will be approximately 15 pages, written according to the Steps to Exegesis (see Steps to Exegesis, instructive PowerPoints and a rubric posted on Avenue).

Research papers will be approximately 3000 words (about 15 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. There should be a minimum of 15 academic sources used in the footnotes and bibliography. A rubric for research papers will be posted online together with a YouTube video on how to write research papers.

Portfolio projects should largely be determined by your specialization. Creativity is encouraged. You may choose to design an artifact: an art project, poetry or song, but in that case, you must also submit a written detailed description of exactly how your artifact utilizes, interprets and applies Scripture and the principles of biblical interpretation of the course.

Marking will be based on:

- How the message and content utilize and applies Scripture and the principles of biblical welcome studied in the course as the primary goal.
- The appropriateness of the project for the identified target group,
- The quality and proficient use of the medium
- The estimated effort expended on the project (it should be nearly equal to the effort of a 15 pg. exegetical paper).

If the student fails to submit an assignment on the due date, a late penalty of 2% a day will be applied to the paper’s final grade until 7 days, when it will be 5% a day up until 30%. **No papers will be accepted after Dec 18.**

## Course Assessment Summary

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| ➤ Online Participation   | 10% |
| ➤ Reading                | 10% |
| ➤ Theological reflection | 20% |
| ➤ Life Map               | 25% |
| ➤ Paper or Project       | 35% |

## Classroom Behavior

### *In-Class Attendance*

- Students who are registered to be in-person do not have the option to livestream. The only exceptions will be in cases of illness or emergency with the professor's permission.
- Students should be on time to class or on site. If there are any issues, e-mail an explanation to the professor (copy GA Namhyo Kim: [kimn34@mcmaster.ca](mailto:kimn34@mcmaster.ca) in advance.
- Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance. Partial attendance will be counted as an absence.

### *Participation*

- Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
- Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except what is appropriate in the course outline.
- Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class or while they are livestreaming.
- Students are not to access e-mail, take or make phone calls, send or receive text messages, surf the net, etc., while class is in session.
- Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks.

### *Academic Integrity & AI Usage*

- All work submitted must be your own. Use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) is prohibited for all assignments, discussions, and assessments unless explicitly authorized by the instructor.
- Violations of this policy will be treated as academic misconduct under institutional guidelines.

### *Privacy*

- Class sessions may be recorded for educational purposes and shared only with enrolled students. Recordings must not be distributed outside the course.
- Respect the privacy of peers: do not share images, voices, or contributions outside the class environment.

### *Communication*

- Check your email and the LMS regularly for updates, schedule changes, and supplementary materials.
- Monitor any additional communication channels used for the course

### *Live Streaming*

#### Attendance & Participation

- This course meets live online at the scheduled times. Attendance and active participation are required.
- Join the session on time; late arrivals disrupt the class and may affect your participation grade.
- Sessions may be recorded for review, but recordings do not replace live attendance.

### Technology Requirements

- Ensure you have a reliable internet connection, a device with audio and video capability, and the course platform installed (e.g., Zoom, Teams).
- Test your connection before class.
- Keep your microphone muted unless speaking to reduce background noise.
- Use headphones when possible for better audio quality.

### Webcam & Environment

- Unless otherwise instructed, enable your webcam for the duration of the class session.
- Dress in casual but appropriate attire.
- Minimize distractions in your background. Virtual backgrounds are acceptable if professional.

### Netiquette

- Be respectful and courteous in all interactions.
- Use the “Raise Hand” feature before speaking; avoid interrupting others.
- Keep chat messages on-topic; avoid ALL CAPS, sarcasm, or humor that could be misinterpreted.
- Stay focused—do not multitask during class.

### ***Absence Policy***

#### General

More than 2 absences may result in a penalty. More than 4 absences will result in a failure of the course.

- 2 absences allow leeway in challenges due to issues such as illness, weather, and power outages. Students are expected to get the information they missed from A2L and peers.
- After 2 absences there will be a 5% penalty for the next absence. However, in special cases such as illness the penalty may be waived.
- 4 absences constitute more than 30% of the course and will result in the failure of the course regardless of the nature of the challenges.

#### Absence Due to Illness

If you must miss class due to an illness, you must contact me as soon as possible to let me know. Likewise, if I should become ill, I will communicate with you via A2L about how we will make up class sessions. Even if much of the course content will be made available via A2L, it would still be a good idea to have a friend take notes for you, if possible.

#### Inclement Weather

If on a class meeting day MDC closes due to inclement weather, I reserve the right to move the lessons and, where possible, class activities for the week to A2L (asynchronous format). This will help to ensure that we stay on target in the course.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines may lose participation points impacting their grade and/or be dismissed from the class.

***Late Assignments*** lose 2% each day for 7 days, and then 5% a day up to 30%. However, no assignments will be accepted after **11:59 p.m., December 18.**

### **Bookstore**

All required textbooks 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](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

## **MDC 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) 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 Generative AI:** You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc. Generative AI is not to be used to do this work for you. Using AI to produce content for you and then submitting that content as if you produced 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. Additionally, although there may be value in using an AI tool to correct mistakes in English grammar, usage, and mechanics, Generative AI is not to be used for translating from your native language to English. All degree programs at MDC are taught in English language. Students are expected to be sufficiently proficient in English to engage fully in academic discourse in these programs.

### ***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: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

***Style***

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses

\*Failure to observe appropriate format and style will result in grade reductions.

**Appointments & office hours**

Monday 12–2

Tuesday 1–2

Wednesday 11–1

Appointments in person or on zoom can be arranged.

***GuardMe***

Students at McMaster Divinity College have access to the GuardMe Student Support Program (GMSSP), which offers free, confidential mental health and wellness support 24/7. Through the program, students can connect with counsellors, access helpful tools and resources, and receive support anytime, from anywhere. Support is available by phone (1-844-451-9700) or visit [gmssp.org](https://gmssp.org) to download the Student Support App.

**Disclaimer**

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and 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.

## Welcoming the Other Course Schedule, 2026

| DATE      | Course Outline                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Reading                            |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sept 16   | Intro to course/syllabus<br>Categories of Identity and the “other”                                                                                                                                                                       | Volf Introduction, Ch 1 & 2        |
| Sept 23   | Establishing our own Identities<br>Composing a Life Map                                                                                                                                                                                  | Volf Ch 3                          |
| Sept 30   | Biblical Basis for Welcome in the OT                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Volf Ch 4                          |
| Oct 7     | Biblical Basis for Welcome in the NT                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Volf Ch 5                          |
| Oct 12–16 | <b>MDC Reading Week</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |
| Oct 21    | Biblical Theology of Welcome:<br>Empathy, Hospitality, Incarnational Presence &<br>Contextual Theology                                                                                                                                   | Volf Ch 6                          |
| Oct 28    | Categories of Other<br>Identities and Intersectionality<br><b>Life Map Due 11:59 p.m., Friday, Nov 2</b>                                                                                                                                 | Volf Ch 7<br>Epilogue, Appendix    |
| Nov 4     | Categories of Other<br>Alienation through Life Experiences<br><b>Paper/Project Proposal, Nov 9</b>                                                                                                                                       | Pohl, Ch 1-2                       |
| Nov 11    | The Needy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Pohl, Ch 2-4                       |
| Nov 18    | ETS Conference in Denver<br>Post a 5 minute video to A2L, discussing insights<br>from your Life Map, your plans for your project<br>and your plans for field service (theological<br>reflection).<br>Nov 19-20 Watch each others’ videos |                                    |
| Nov 25    | The Marginalized                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Pohl, Ch 5-6                       |
| Dec 2     | The Oppressed<br><b>Theological Reflection, 11:59 p.m., Friday, Dec 4</b>                                                                                                                                                                | Pohl, Ch 7-8                       |
| Dec 9     | Those “We” Have Wronged/Offended                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Pohl, Ch 9, Appendix,<br>Afterword |
| Dec 16    | <b>Presentations of Projects</b><br><b>Project, 9 a.m., Wednesday, Dec 16</b><br><b>Reading report, 11:59 p.m., Dec 18</b>                                                                                                               |                                    |

*Select Bibliography  
To Be Continued*

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