McMaster Divinity College

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.

PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH METHODS

Course Code: MS 5P1130
Term: **FALL 2026**
Mode: Online Synchronous
Class Meetings: Wednesdays 2:00–3:50 p.m. online, attendance required
Dates: September 16 – December 16, 2026

Instructor: **Wendy J. Porter, PhD**
Professor of Music and Worship
Warnock Jones Chair in Church and Ministry
porterw@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

One of the distinctive features of the Doctor of Practical Theology degree is that students engage in doing research on their own "practice," what we call Practice-Led Research (PLR). This requires students to be able to define their practice, and then to engage in credible ways of exploring it. This course is designed to introduce core theories and concepts of practice-led research, to expose students to a range of methodological choices, and to assist them in developing foundational research, writing, and verbal communication skills. Part of this course is focused on doing preliminary thinking, research, and writing about a possible dissertation topic, including theological, theoretical, and methodological choices that are appropriate for their topic, and learning how to articulate these through oral presentations and written documents.

MY PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

I approach teaching and learning as a mutual collaborative effort with a flat structure. I follow a model that involves dialogue (e.g. Socratic) and that incorporates both heart and mind. I have been influenced by educator Parker Palmer (inner landscape of the teacher), theologian Henri Nouwen (notions of hospitality), philosopher Gilbert Ryle (teacher as gate-opener), and philosopher-theologian Hans-Georg Gadamer (the essence of the question). These and others have shaped my vision of hospitality as central to teaching and learning, whether in a classroom made of bricks and mortar, or in a wooded area by a stream, or in cubicles on a screen in Zoom. Each has immense potential as a place for learning. I often refer to "risk-taking" in assignments, because students (and teachers) who take thoughtful risks learn so much more than those who do not—but it is still a risk, for both. I believe that adult learners only learn when they choose to do so, regardless of the wit or brilliance or eloquence of the teacher, so the learner must choose. But learning takes place in several directions: students learn from the "teacher," the "teacher" learns

from students, students learn from each other, if given the opportunity, and each of us learn from those who have preceded us and recorded their thoughts and ideas. So I view this as collaborative work, not top-down, not a sage on a stage, not a teacher at the front of the room and students vying for the back row. In fact, my classes have no back rows. My ideal format for a classroom is in a circle, so we can see each other, hear each other, and interact around a central idea. The opportunity to have a role in someone's theological learning experience is a privilege, a gift, and a responsibility. I take this seriously and do my best to treat each student as someone full of potential and with something important to contribute. I will count on you to treat me and each other in the same way.

Ours is a learning community, where we each grow through encouragement, constructive input, and active engagement with each other, Scripture, and ideas. If successful, we will participate in developing and strengthening each other through our mutual experience. We are all being formed, and my goal is to empower you as fellow learners. I will offer information, reflection, experience, ideas, and questions to consider. I welcome the responsibility and opportunity to thoughtfully evaluate and respond to your thinking and development, in the class and through submitted work. I hope that you will flourish. As a responsible member of this class community, I count on you to commit yourself to the class throughout the term, to contribute thoughtfully to class interactions, and to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity. It is essential to our collaboration that you participate fully in each and every class and that you come well prepared.

Assignments are to be handed in on time and in good order. If for a substantive reason you will not be able to submit a paper or assignment at the scheduled time, you should contact me immediately and well in advance of any due date, or you will only be eligible for a percentage of the full mark, which, unfortunately, must decrease daily. It is in your best interest to do your very best to get each assignment ready and submitted on time.

I welcome interactions with each of you. If you have concerns or if I can assist you in any way, please make an appointment during my office hours, contact me about another time if my office hours do not work for you, or correspond with me through email: porterw@mcmaster.ca

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through engaged participation in classes, reading, other interactions, and assignments, you should achieve the following learning outcomes:

KNOWING

- Become familiar with macro- and micro-practices (your own and those of others).
- Identify how methodologies act as lenses to focus on perspectives in research.
- Recognize how theology and theory shape or inhibit your research.
- Learn the basics of crafting a (that is, your) doctoral dissertation proposal.

BEING

- Reflect on the nature of one's being in the context of (or in spite of) one's practice.
- Explore how research on practice opens avenues of personal being.
- Develop a holistic perspective on spiritual life as researcher and writer.

DOING

- Identify a micro-practice for possible dissertation research.

- Develop skills for writing within the parameters of the MDC Style Guide.
- Explore a methodology, theology, and theory suitable for your DPT dissertation.
- Gain experience in how to design an exploratory dissertation proposal.

COURSE RESOURCES

Required Books

Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972 [1940]. Available as library e-book.

Bennett, Zoë, Elaine Graham, Stephen Pattison, and Heather Walton. *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*. London: Routledge, 2018. Available in PDF through library.

Ferguson, Neil K. *Practice-Led Theology: A Model for Faith-Based Research*. McMaster Studies in Practical Theology. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2024.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970 [1962]. This is the landmark book on the notion of "paradigm shifts," which is deeply relevant to thinking about research on practice, and how methodology, theology, and theory influence what we can or cannot see in our research.

Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. London: SCM, 2016 [2006].

Required Papers and Chapters (others may be added, as needed)

Bennett, Zoë. "Theology and the Researching Professional: The Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology." *Theology* 112.869 (2009) 333–43.

Bennett, Zoë, and Elaine Graham. "The Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology: Developing the Researching Professional in Practical Theology in Higher Education." *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 5.1 (2008) 33–51.

Costley, Carol, and Nicola Pizzolato. "Transdisciplinary Qualities in Practice Doctorates." *Studies in Continuing Education* 40.1 (2018) 30–45. Published by Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2017.1394287

McNamara, Andrew. "Six Rules for Practice-Led Research." Special Issue: Beyond Practice-Led Research. *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses* 16, Special Issue 14 (2012) 1–15. https://eprints.qut.edu.au/54808/15/McNamara.PLR.pdf

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. "Getting It Write: On the Craft of Academic Writing." *Pastoral Psychology* 65 (2016) 803–20.

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J., ed. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014. [Specific chapters.] Full book available through library PDF download.

Porter, Stanley E., and Steven M. Studebaker. "Method in Systematic Theology." In *Evangelical Theological Methodology: Five Views*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Steven M. Studebaker, 7–27. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018.

Ward, Pete, and Knut Tveitereid, eds. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Theology and Qualitative Research*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2022. [Specific chapters will be assigned, TBA.] Full book available through library PDF download.

Ward, Pete. "Theology and Qualitative Research: An Uneasy Relationship." In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Theology and Qualitative Research*, edited by Pete Ward and

Knut Tveitereid, 7–15. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2022.

Books for Reference (See extensive Selected Bibliography later in this syllabus)

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016 [1995].

Cameron, Helen, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney, and Clare Watkins. *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*. London: SCM, 2010. Available as library e-book.

Nelson, Robin. *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Available as library e-book.

Schön, Donald. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London: Routledge, 2016 [1983]. Full book available through library PDF download.

Smith, Hazel, and Roger T. Dean, eds. *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Available as library e-book and partial download.

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.

COURSE GRADING SCALE AND ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTS

Practical Theology and the Nature of Practice-Led Research (paper)	25%
MDC Style-Guide Proficiency Quest (beginning weekly, then as needed)	10%
My Practice and the DPT Model of Research (presentation)	20%
Exploratory Dissertation Proposal Early Version (15%) Peer Reviews (10%) Final Revised Version (20%)	45%
TOTAL	100%

Basic rubrics for grading assignments will be posted on A2L, as needed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Practical Theology and the Nature of Practice-Led Research. 25%.

Paper: 3000 words.

Drawing on various scholars, offer a working definition of *practical theology* (recognize that different scholars define it differently). Then, drawing on the same or other scholars, describe the nature of *practice-led research*. Include in this your own working definition and offer exemplars of what a practice is. What does it mean to *research a practice*? Show understanding of macro and micro dimensions of a practice, especially as it relates to doing practice-led research. Offer key distinctives of practice-led research, but also some cautions or pitfalls. Show familiarity with some of our required books and articles, as well as others that are relevant.

Follow the MDC Style Guide in all matters of construction and presentation, including footnotes and bibliography. Papers that do not follow the Style Guide will be returned until the issues have been addressed and resubmitted for grading. No grade will be offered until serious efforts have been shown to conform to the Style Guide, and daily deductions may apply as to all late assignments.

Due: Wednesday, October 7, by 11:59 p.m. Submit through A2L.

2. MDC Style Guide Proficiency Quest. 10%

Weekly Assignment at the beginning of the course and continuing as needed.

Through weekly small assignments or projects, students will gain experience and familiarity with the MDC Style Guide. Some work may be collaborative. Those with more experience or who are more naturally attuned to this may be asked to assist others in the class who are less familiar or comfortable with it. Assessment for this assignment consists of showing weekly evidence of having accomplished the assigned tasks. Students may be asked, for example, to submit a marked-up PDF or a photograph of their annotations on a printed page of their Style Guide or submit a page or two on which they have converted random bibliography into MDC format. Some weeks this assignment may take place on Padlet.

Download a copy of the most recent MDC Style Guide for this course and have it available and open. Plan to mark up your copy extensively throughout the term, which means that you should always be referring to the same version that includes your notes, whether in a printed version or PDF. One or more of the Style Guide assignments may require showing evidence of your annotated copy of the Guide.

3. My Practice and the DPT Model of Research. 20%

Presentation. Final details for mode of delivery will be decided early in the term, depending on class size.

Discuss the nature of your macro-practice and a micro-practice within it that you think is suitable for dissertation research. Working with the DPT model, do the following:

- Identify and assess a methodology that might be relevant for your research.
- Locate yourself theologically (e.g. refer to Porter and Studebaker “Intro” article).
- Name at least one theological “partner” for your research.
- Explore one or two theories and the people who developed them that could be important in your research.
- Name any concerns or open-ended questions that may be an issue.
- Prepare both a 10-minute presentation and a written document of about 1500 words.

Presentations *may* take place in small groups, and you may be required to post your spoken presentation in advance. Details will be finalized early in the term, depending on class size.

Students should be prepared to respond to all other student presentations, even if the topic is not familiar to you. Ask clarifying questions or questions that elicit thoughtful observations that would help a fellow student to refine their thinking. The presenter should respond to each question or observation.
DUE: Wednesday, October 21 by class meeting time.

4. Exploratory Dissertation Proposal. 45%.
Written document in two versions, early and revised, including peer reviews of each other's work (as assigned). Word Count: 5000–6000 words (this applies to both versions, and includes all words in the document: title page, footnotes, and bibliography).

This assignment involves researching and writing an early version and a final revised version of what your dissertation proposal might look like. This is not your actual dissertation proposal (which takes place only under the guidance of your own supervisor) but will give you much-needed experience with the various components of a dissertation proposal and how to construct one cohesively. This assignment includes two submissions: one is an early version, which will be distributed to members of a small group who will read and respond to it as peer reviewers. After your own further reflection and revision, you will submit the revised version for final grading. The process of peer reviews is done on Padlet. All aspects of this assignment (early version, your own peer reviews of others in your group, and your revised version) are required for the 45% grade in the course.

You will need to choose a suitable research methodology that will help you to accomplish your goals in doing research on your practice. This is what helps you gather your data for your dissertation but is also what helps you to evaluate the validity of your data, so this is critical work. A simple analogy: if you wanted to make cookies that looked like stars but only had a cookie cutter that formed triangles, your cookies would not look like stars. So it is with a research methodology. You must choose a methodology that will help you to achieve an outcome along the lines of what you are hoping to show.

You will also need to identify a theoretical perspective and a theological framework, and each should be identifiable through the work of a specific theologian/scholar. Show how these various components work with the DPT standard model or the instructor's revised model of DPT research.

Follow the most recent DPT Dissertation Project Proposal Application, downloaded from the MDC website, as your guide for this assignment. Search for Current Students / Resources and Forms / Forms by Program / DPT. Both versions must comply with the MDC Style Guide.
DUE: Early Version of Proposal, by Wednesday, November 11 by 11:59 p.m. Submit through A2L and post on assigned Padlet.
DUE: Post Brief Video Overview/Summary of your proposal on assigned Padlet by the following day, **November 12**. Timing: 2-3 minutes.
DUE: Primary Peer Reviews by November 18. Post on Padlets as assigned. Primary reviews include both a short video response and any follow up material in a written document – both posted on Padlet.
DUE: Secondary Peer Reviews by November 25. Post on Padlets as assigned. Secondary reviews may be written reports, but including a short video response is highly recommended.
DUE: Final Revised Version of Proposal, Wednesday, by December 2 by 11:59 p.m. Submit through A2L. Highlight all major changes that you have made in the document, that is, where you have changed material from the early draft. However, if you have changed almost everything

in the final version, then mention this in a note and DO NOT highlight the entire document. Do not highlight typos that have been changed, but do summarize or mention the kinds of typos or style-guide issues that you have addressed. This can be in an attached note or email.

5. Final Reflection on Learning – Informal Presentations. Your participation is required on the final class day for completion of the course. Come prepared to share briefly and informally something that you learned in the course and how it has impacted you, whether personally, professionally, or both.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Note that this schedule is subject to change, as necessary. All class days are Wednesdays.

Week	Date	Theme	Readings / Assignments
1	Sept 16	Introduction to the Course: "Where Are We, Who Are We, and What Are We Doing?" (course design, syllabus, assignments) - Brief Intro to Practical Theology (see Bennett book chapters). - How to Read a Book (see Adler book). - Writing without AI.	DUE: Post Personal Intros on Padlet Read (prior to course): Adler, *How to Read a Book* Read: Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, Intro and chs 1–4. Finish the book ASAP. Style Guide Quest #1 - TBA
2	Sept 23	"The Nature of Practical Theology" - The "So What?" Question. - Practice-Led Research (PLR). - Macro- and Micro-Practices - Being vs. Doing	Read: Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, vii–94 Read: Ferguson, *Practice-Led Theology*, 1–157 Style Guide Quest #2 - TBA
3	Sept 30	"Methodology as a Lens: How Methodology Determines What You Can See" • Paradigms and Methodologies. • What is "Doing Research"? • What is Your *Macro* Practice? • Which *Micro* Practice to investigate?	Read: Porter and Studebaker, "Method in Systematic Theology" (locate yourself) Read: Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (discussion groups) Padlet: Style Guide Quest #3 - TBA
4	Oct 7	"Methodology Matters: Choosing an Approach" + "How Practice, Research, and Theology Become Practical Theology" - Intro to: Research Ethics TCPS 2: CORE-2022 (all students do the online Course on Research Ethics offered through MMU)	Read: Finish Bennett, *Invitation to Research* (discussion groups) Read: Ward, "Theology and Qualitative Research" Style Guide Quest #4 – journal articles, books, and chapters in books. **DUE**: Practical Theology and the Nature of Practice-Led Research Paper.
NO CLASS	Oct 14 READING WEEK	[Thanksgiving Monday and MDC Reading Week]	NO CLASS
5	Oct 21	Presentations 1: "My Practice and the DPT Model of Research"	**DUE**: My Practice and the DPT Model of Research Read: Miller-McLemore, *Wiley Blackwell Companion*, 89–265 (discussion groups) Style Guide Quest #5 – punctuation
6	Oct 28	Presentations 2 (if needed): "My Practice and the DPT Model of Research"	Style Guide Quest #6 – bibliography

7	Nov 4	"Crafting the Dissertation Proposal"	Style Guide Quest #7 – footnotes
8	Nov 11	"Finding Your Voice as a Researcher/Writer"	Style Guide Quest #8 – pages, headings **DUE**: Early Version of Exploratory Dissertation Proposal
9	Nov 18	Peer Reviews (done on Padlet, TBA)	**DUE**: Primary Peer Reviews Style Guide Quest #9 – as needed.
10	Nov 25	Peer Reviews (done on Padlet, TBA)	**DUE**: Secondary Peer Reviews Style Guide Quest #10 – as needed.
11	Dec 2	"Behind the Scenes as a Doctoral Researcher: Being, Writing, and Spiritual Life"	**DUE**: Final Version of Exploratory Dissertation Proposal
12	Dec 9	"Publishing Your Dissertation—Yes, You Should Think About It Now"	**DUE**: Who is your audience? Post your answer and possible publishers who would reach this audience.
13	Dec 16	Final Reflection on Learning Follow-Up on Finished Proposals In-Class Reflections	**DUE**: In-Class Reflections, Course Evaluations

Selected Bibliography. This bibliography includes the required books listed above along with a range of books or articles that discuss methods, approaches, and critical knowledge for practice-led research, as well as broader works on practical and/or pastoral theology.

Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972 [1940]. Available as library e-book.

Anderson, Ray S. *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001.

Attride-Stirling, Jennifer. "Thematic Networks: An Analytical Tool for Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Research* 1.3 (2001) 385–405.

Ballard, Paul, and John Pritchard. *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society*. 2nd ed. London: SPCK, 2006 [1996].

Bass, Dorothy C., and Craig Dykstra, eds. *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.

Bennett, Zoë, and Elaine Graham. "The Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology: Developing the Researching Professional in Practical Theology in Higher Education." *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 5.1 (2008) 33–51.

Bennett, Zoë, Elaine Graham, Stephen Pattison, and Heather Walton. *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*. London: Routledge, 2018. Available in PDF through library.

Bennett, Zoë. "Theology and the Researching Professional: The Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology." *Theology* 112.869 (2009) 333–43.

Biggs, Michael A. R., and Daniela Buchler. "Rigor and Practice-Based Research." *Design Issues* 23.3 (2007) 62–69.

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016 [1995].

Branson, Mark Lau, and Juan F. Martínez. *Churches, Cultures, and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.

Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2006) 77–101.

Browning, Don S. *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991.
Browning, Don S., ed. *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
Cahalan, Kathleen A., and Gordon S. Mikoski, eds. *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.
Cahalan, Kathleen, A., Edward Foley, and Gordon S. Mikoski, eds. *Integrating Work in Theological Education*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017.
Cameron, Helen, and Catherine Duce. *Researching Practice in Ministry and Mission: A Companion*. London: SCM, 2013.
Cameron, Helen, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney, and Clare Watkins. *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*. London: SCM, 2010.
Cameron, Helen, Philip J. Richter, Douglas Davies, and Frances Ward, eds. *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*. London: SCM, 2005.
Cameron, Helen. *Resourcing Mission: Practical Theology for Changing Churches*. London: SCM, 2010.
Candy, Linda. "Practice Based Research: A Guide." *Creativity and Cognition Studios (CCS) Report* 1 (2006). 19 pages, no page numbers. Published by University of Technology, Sydney. http://www.creativityandcognition.com/resources/PBR%20Guide-1.1-2006.pdf
Capps, Donald. "Methods, Models, and Scholarly Types: Reflections on Thesis and Dissertation Writing in Pastoral Theology." *Pastoral Psychology* 63 (2014) 551–60.
Carlin, Andrew P., and Younhee H. Kim. "Teaching Qualitative Research: Versions of Grounded Theory." *The Grounded Theory Review* 18.1 (2019) 29–43.
Costley, Carol, and Nicola Pizzolato. "Transdisciplinary Qualities in Practice Doctorates." *Studies in Continuing Education* 40.1 (2018) 30–45. Published by Routledge.
Creswell, John W. *30 Essential Skills for the Qualitative Researcher*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2016.
Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1993. [Later ed, 2003.]
Davies, Charlotte Aull. *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2008 [1998].
Dreyer, Jaco S. "Practical Theology and the Call for the Decolonisation of Higher Education in South Africa: Reflections and Proposals." *HTS Theological Studies* 73.4 (2017) 1–7.
Engler, Steven, and Michael Stausberg, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2022 [2011].
Ferguson, Neil K. *Practice-Led Theology: A Model for Faith-Based Research*. McMaster Studies in Practical Theology. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2024.
Forrester, Duncan B. *Truthful Action: Explorations in Practical Theology*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000.
Forrester, Duncan B., ed. *Theology and Practice*. London: Epworth, 1990.
Gerkin, Charles V. *The Living Human Document: Re-Visioning Pastoral Counseling in a Hermeneutical Mode*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1984.
Gerkin, Charles V. *Widening the Horizons: Pastoral Responses to a Fragmented Society*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1986.
Graham, Elaine, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward. *Theological Reflection: Methods*. London: SCM, 2005.

Graham, Elaine. "On Becoming a Practical Theologian: Past, Present, and Future Tenses." *HTS Theological Studies* 73.4 (2017) 1–9.

Graham, Elaine. "The State of the Art: Practical Theology Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: New Directions in Practical Theology." *Theology* 73.4 (2017) 177–280.

Graham, Elaine. *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002. P

Gray, Carole. "From the Ground Up: Encountering Theory in the Process of Practice-Led Doctoral Research." *In Theory?* Encounters with Theory in Practice-based PhD Research in Art and Design, AHRC Postgraduate Conference, De Montfort and Loughborough Universities, UK, 26 June 2007. 18 pages, no page numbers. http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/Fromthegroundup.pdf

Gray, Carole. "Inquiry through Practice: Developing Appropriate Research Strategies." In *No Guru, No Method?*, edited by Pia Strandman, no page numbers. Industrial Arts Helsinki UIAH. Helsinki, Finland: Research Institute, University of Art and Design Helsinki, 1998. http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/ngnm.pdf

Green, Anna, and Kathleen Troup. *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth Century History and Theory*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1999.

Green, Lelia R. "Creative Writing as Practice-Led Research." *Australian Journal of Communication* 33.2–3 (2006) 174–88.

Grethlein, Christian. *An Introduction to Practical Theology: History, Theory, and the Communication of the Gospel in the Present*. Trans. Uwe Rasch. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016.

Heitink, Gerben. *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

Hendriks, Hana J. "Practical Theology 'Re-Entering Vernacular Culture'? New Frontiers and Challenges to Doing Theology as Life Goes On." *HTS Theological Studies* 73.4 (2017) 1–10.

Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey. *Qualitative Research Methods*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2011.

Herr, Kathryn, and Gary L. Anderson. *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.

Hiltner, Seward. *Preface to Pastoral Theology*. New York: Abingdon, 1958.

Kemmis, Stephen. "Action Research as a Practice-Based Practice." *Educational Action Research* 17.3 (2009) 463–74.

Kincheloe, Joe L. "A Critical Complex Epistemology of Practice." *Counterpoints* 352 (2011) 219–30. (Published by Peter Lang.)

Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970 [1962]. This is the landmark book on the notion of "paradigm shifts." It is relevant to thinking about how research on practice has developed as a kind of paradigm shift, as well as how methodology, theology, and theory can influence what we can or cannot see in our research, that is, it influences our paradigms of seeing.

Lavallee, Marc Henri. "Practical Theology from the Perspective of Catholic Spirituality: A Hermeneutic of Discernment." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 20 (2016) 203–21.

Leavy, Patricia. *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*. New York: Guildford, 2009.
McClenden, James W., Jr. *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002.
McGuire, Seán M. W. *Biblical Hermeneutics in the Metamodern Mood: Understanding Differences in Interpretation and Theological Integration in Practice*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2024.
McKitterick, Alistair J. 'The Theological Imperative Model for Practical Theology." *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 16.4 (2016) 5–20.
McNamara, Andrew. "Six Rules for Practice-Led Research." Special Issue: Beyond Practice-Led Research. *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses* 16, Special Issue 14 (2012) 1–15.
Mercer, Joyce Ann, and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, eds. *Conundrums in Practical Theology*. Leiden, NL: Brill, 2–16.
Mercer, Joyce Ann. *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2005.
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Colin Smith. London: Routledge, 2005.
Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. "'A Tale of Two Cities': The Evolution of the International Academy of Practical Theology." *HTS Theological Studies* 73.4 (2017) 1–11.
Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. "Five Misunderstandings about Practical Theology." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16.1 (2012) 5–26.
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Journals to peruse for relevant articles:
International Journal of Practical Theology, published by DeGruyter (available through MMU)
McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry, published by McMaster Divinity College (online)
Practical Theology, published by Taylor & Francis (available through MMU)

My Policy Guidelines:
Communication and Office Hours
Please contact me by email: porterw@mcmaster.ca I will try to be back in touch with you during normal office hours. I may not be available on evenings or weekends. My office hours will be posted by the beginning of the term. I am available in some cases for in-person meetings in my office at MDC, and in other cases, only by Zoom. If you cannot fit within my office hours, we can discuss a possible time that works for both of us.

Use of A2L (Avenue to Learn)
It is your responsibility as a student to log into A2L regularly to check for announcements, course content, course activities, etc., or to find folders where you should upload assignments (where appropriate). If something is missing (e.g. an assignment folder), please let me know.

Use of AI
See the MDC Policy below on Generative AI (that is, you are not to use it). Attach a note to all assignments in this course (in A2L or by email) that clarifies your use of any form of AI.

Presence and Meaningful Participation
Your presence and participation in this course are expected, and the level of presence and

participation in the course will impact how well you do in the course. Doctoral-level students are expected be present and involved in each class day.

MDC Style Guide
All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Press Style Guide https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/
Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Deadlines and Late Submission Penalty
Assignments are due on the date and by the time indicated, after which they are considered late. Late assignments may be docked incrementally up to 2% per calendar day. Submit assignments electronically to Avenue to Learn, or, if advised by the professor, directly by email. If there are serious issues that could prevent your timely or successful completion of assignments, contact the professor immediately to discuss possible alternatives. Be proactive. Do not leave this to the last minute.

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 as necessary.

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MDC Policy Statements
Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresenting the authorship or ownership of written work through deception or other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include copying or using unauthorized aids during tests or examinations; plagiarism, that is, presenting another person's (or generative AI's) words, ideas, data, or creative work as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement and citation; or submitting work for credit in more than one course without instructor permission.
A special note about Generative AI: Students are expected to do their own thinking and write their own papers and assignments. Generative AI is not to be used to do this work. The use of AI to produce content that is then submitted as though it were the student's own work constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy. While AI tools may be used to correct errors in English grammar, usage, and mechanics, Generative AI must not be used to translate assignments from a student's native language into English. All degree programs at MDC are taught in the 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), McMaster Divinity College (MDC) is committed to supporting a learning environment that is inclusive and accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. Students who require academic accommodations to participate fully in this course must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (https://sas.mcmaster.ca/) of McMaster University. SAS will work directly with the MDC Registrar to ensure reasonably appropriate accommodations are in place. Students with accommodations must use the SAS portal to activate the accommodations relevant to each course
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at the start of each term in which they are enrolled. Please note that accommodations must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation. Accommodations are not retroactive and will not be applied to coursework or activities that have already concluded.
Contact Information:

- **Student Accessibility Services General Inquiries:** sas@mcmaster.ca
- **Roksana Sobota (SAS Representative for MDC)**: sobotar@mcmaster.ca
- **MDC Registrar:** mdcreg@mcmaster.ca

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 student will use inclusive language in all MDC assignments. When referencing biblical texts, students should preserve the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God while using gender-inclusive language when referring to human beings. Biblical quotations should be taken from a gender-inclusive translation such as: NRSVue (2022), NIV (2011), CEB (2011), NLT (1996), or CEV (1995).

Hurlburt Family 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, students 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.
your response refers to. Students who violate these guidelines may be dismissed from class.

Online Synchronous Course Policy

Technology Requirements

- A reliable internet connection (tested before class time),
- A device with audio and video capability
- The correct video conferencing platform installed (e.g., Zoom, Teams).

Webcam & Environment

- Students must keep their microphones muted except when speaking to minimize background noise.
- Students must keep their webcams on throughout the class session.
- Students must dress appropriately.
- Students must ensure their surroundings are free from unnecessary distractions. Professional virtual backgrounds are permitted.