

CHTH G105-C07
MS 6XC6
Mission and Contemporary Culture
MA/PhD Course
Fall 2013

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Wednesday 10:30-12:20
Location TBA

Course Description

Effective leadership in today's church and academy call for a theology that is informed by the missional identity of the church and can meet the demands of an increasingly globalized and post-Christian context in the West. This course will seek to help students develop a practical theology of mission by considering its biblical roots, the challenge of contextualization, and emerging approaches to mission in contemporary ministry. How the various theological disciplines can contribute to and interact with a theology of mission will be a central part of the courses overall dialogue.

Course Objectives:

Knowing

1. To help students understand the centrality of mission to the biblical narrative and therefore the work of Christian ministry and theological education.
2. To help students understand the challenges of post-Christendom and the changing face of world Christianity.
3. To help students develop a philosophy of contextualization that will aid their work in the church and the academy as church leaders in the 21st century.

Being

1. To help students internalize the challenges of Christian leadership and the need for them to help guide the church in its response to the changing face of culture in both the Western world and beyond.
2. To help students consider the integration of missional leadership with their specific calling to the church and the academy.

Doing

1. To help the student cultivate personal practices of missional engagement in both their professional and personal lives.
2. To help students develop strategies for using a missional paradigm in their ongoing ministries in both the church and the academy.

A core value of our class is that it is a “learning community,” designed to be a place where each member of the community can grow through positive affirmation and constructive input. We should all come to the community as people in process, open to be deconstructed and formed through our mutual learning experience.

As professor it is my responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I come to position myself as a fellow learner in the community and to offer information, reflection, experience and questions for us to reflect on together. Further, it is my responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class in our discussions and through written work so that your growth through this class can be maximized as a result of our collaboration.

As a responsible member of our learning community you will be expected to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This means that in our class interactions you will endeavor to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity. Your attendance is required as your presence is necessary for our community (that is our class) to function at an optimal level. Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order, ideally on or before the due date specified in this syllabus. All assignments handed in after the due date will be subject to a penalty of 3% for each day (including weekends) late. Assignments can be submitted in hard copy on standardized paper or sent in via. Email (please use word formatting).

I am not only available but also welcome and enjoy connections with each of you outside class time. If you would like to meet together, please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Week 1: Course Introduction. What is Post-Christendom?

Week 2: Post-Christendom, the Missional Movement in the Western Church and the changing face of world Christianity.

Week 3-4: The Challenge of Mission: Contextualization

Week 5-6/7 Student Book Presentations (see assignment #1 in syllabus)

Week 7/8-8/9: Mission and the role of Scholarship and the academy (What role does the scholar and the work of theological education play in the churches mission and how do the various scholarly disciplines inform mission?)

Week 8/9-end of semester: Student Paper Presentations (see assignment #2 in syllabus)

Required Course Text

Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 2006.

Additional Texts (not required)

Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, No.16, Mayknoll: Orbis, 1991.

Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. New York: Oxford, 2002.

Moreau, Scott A. *Contextualization in World Mission: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models*. Grand Rapids: Kregal, 2012.

All required textbooks for this class and others at McMaster Divinity College are available from R.E.A.D. On Books, and should be purchased as early as possible, and at least by the beginning of the term when R.E.A.D. On Books has its book table here at the College. They can be contacted at: 195 The West Mall, Suite 414, Etobicoke, ON M0C 5K1; phone 416-622-0655 x4; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca; or www.readon.ca.

Course Assignments

1. Book Review and Presentation

Students will be responsible to read one of the following texts and write a 4,000 word (aprox. 12-15 double spaced pages) interaction with the book and then present its contents and your reflection upon them to the class in a 30-45 minute class lecture.

Book Options:

- Adeney, Francis S. *Graceful Evangelism: Christian Witness in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.
- Heath, Elaine. *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Muck, Terry and Adeney Francis. *Christians Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
- Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Kregal: Grand Rapids, 2010.

- Malesic, Jonathan. *Secret Faith in the Public Square: An Argument for the Concealment of Christian Identity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009.
- Hastings, Ross. *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2012.

**Other books may be added to this list depending upon class size.

The intention is that each student in the class will write on and present a different book. Therefore on the first day of class a selection process will take place that will facilitate each student's book selection and assure that no two students read and present the same book to the class (this will be clearly explained in the first class). The two components of the assignment are as follows;

Written Component

As mentioned above the written response to the book should be approximately 4,000 words and include the books main thesis, primary arguments and contents. Of most importance in your response to the book is your own interaction with the text. What points do you find helpful and informative? What points do you think require critique or further thought? How does the content of this book compare with that of other books on the same topic (in other words the paper should include some interaction with other literature)? Finally, the paper should conclude with some ways that this book will influence your own life, ministry and teaching. If it won't some reflection on why it won't is expected.

This paper is worth 30% of the course grade and is due (at class time) on the date that you present your lecture on the book to the class.

Class Presentation Component

The class presentation should be 30-45 minutes (the exact time will be determined based on the number of class presentations that will occur, depending on the size of the class). The presentation should be a condensed version of your paper, covering the same primary contours and themes as the written assignment. The presentation should be treated as a class lecture and thus should be engaging and creative. Including the class in discussion by asking and/or inviting questions, utilizing participative methods, etc. is essential. Other creative elements are encouraged as they add to your presentation. Grades will be determined by a combination of the quality of the content and the engaging nature of the presentation. The date of each presentation will be determined on the first day of class in connection with the selection of the book.

The presentation is worth 15% of the course grade. The date of your presentation will be determined on the first day of class.

2. Final Paper and Presentation

Students will write a 6,000 word (aprox. 20-25 double spaced pages) paper that relates the topic of mission and contemporary culture to their potential dissertation/thesis topic and their primary area of Christian scholarship. Ideas for the paper are specific to each student and must be discussed and cleared with the instructor prior to the writing of the paper. Please arrange an appointment with the instructor to discuss your paper topic as early in the semester as possible, once you have determined a direction that you want to pursue. Students will present the paper's topic to the class in the form of a class lecture.

Written Component

The paper should be approximately 6,000 words and offer a robust overview of a topic related to the theme of mission and contemporary culture. The paper should reflect thorough research and reflection on the topic and the literature that is germane to it, including the course text, *The Mission of God*. Reflection on how you apply the findings of your paper to your own work in Christian ministry and/or scholarship is a necessary component of the paper.

This paper is worth 40% of the course grade and is due one week after the class presentation.

Class Presentation Component

The class presentation should be 30-45 minutes (the exact time will be determined based on the number of class presentations that will occur, depending on the size of the class). The presentation will cover the same topic as your final paper and reflect themes related to it. It may even be a condensed version of your final paper, reflecting the same contours as your written work. The presentation should be treated as a class lecture and thus should be engaging and creative. Including the class in discussion by asking and/or inviting questions, utilizing participative methods, etc. is essential. Other creative elements are encouraged as they add to your presentation. Grades will be determined by a combination of the quality of the content and the engaging nature of the presentation. The date of each presentation will be determined on the first day of class.

The presentation is worth 15% of the course grade. The date of your presentation will be determined on the first day of class.

Additional notes:

Academic Dishonesty – Academic dishonesty is a serious offence in the academic world that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster Divinity

College Statement on Academic Honesty located at:
<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

Inclusive Language ~ McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV is a good example of the use of inclusive language. It is expected that all students will use inclusive language in all MDC assignments.

Sexual Harassment ~ Sexual harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behavior, which discriminates on the basis of gender about a person's body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

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
<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/MDCStyleGuideMarch0413.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

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 until the first day of class.