

CH 3XL3/6XL6: THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS: THEN AND NOW

McMaster Divinity College

Fall Semester 2016

Saturday, 9:00am - 4:00pm

September 24; October 22; November 12; December 3

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath

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*Specializations: Christian Thought and History,
Christian Worldview, Pastoral Studies*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the lives of the saints (“then”) and their relevance to life and ministry today (“now”), primarily through a reading of their (or their follower’s) writings. It is concerned with the historical development of the saints, the role of hagiography in the life of the church, and the appropriation of the lives of the saints for life and ministry today.

Doctor of Practical Theology students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Advanced Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Advanced Elective in connection with this course. Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Knowing

- to provide an understanding of the historical development of saints, the theological diversity of saints, and the role of the saints in the life of the three main traditions of the church
- to understand the various forms of ministry practiced by saints over the centuries

Being

- to explore (and ultimately appreciate) the different expressions of spirituality and models of ministry as practiced by the many saints of the church
- to provide “friends and mentors” for life and ministry

Doing

- to develop a pattern for one’s own vocational direction
- to develop a spiritual disciplines based on the lives of the saints
- to develop in each student an ability to assess hagiography and situations from an historical perspective

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Lawrence S. Cunningham. *A Brief History of the Saints*. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.
- Mary-Ann Stouck, ed. *A Short Reader of Medieval Saints*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Kathryn Spink. *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography (Revised Edition)*. New York: HarperCollins, 2011.
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- Selected readings distributed in class.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Position Paper:** Write a position paper on the role of saints in the church.
- **Book Review:** Write a book review.
- **Devotional Journal:** Complete a summary of devotional thoughts and applications for life and ministry.
- **Primary Source Discussion:** Be prepared to participate in a discussion of documents.
- **Research Paper:** Write a research paper and present research findings to class.

Research degree students are expected to fulfill all assignments at an research degree level. They will also be required to prepare an annotated bibliography of ten books and ten articles in the area of their research paper, as well as write an additional 5000 words for the research paper.

GRADING:

Position Paper	10%
Book Review	15%
Devotional Journal	30%
Research Paper	35%
Primary Source Discussion	10%

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- **Textbook Purchase:** All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3 : phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.
- **Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is a serious offence 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 one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>
- **Gender Inclusive Language:** McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings 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 and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

- 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/mdcstyleguide.pdf>
Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.
- Essays must be handed in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. All other essays will be considered to be late. Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 5% per day (not including weekends) if they attach to their essay a letter explaining the genuine emergency that delayed them. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will not receive comments and constructive criticism from the professor, and may not be returned at the same time as the papers submitted on the due date. Submit an electronic copy on the due date or a hard copy before the due date if you are unable to be in class on the due date because of a foreknown absence.
- Please turn off your cell phone and/or pager before the class begins.
- Please do not attend class if you are ill and contagious (e.g. the flu).
- 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.

COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS

- **Position Paper**

Students are to prepare a three-page position paper on the role of saints in the church. Special attention should be paid to whether or not they need to be highlighted in the life of the church. If not, why? If so, why and how?

- **Book Review**

Students are to prepare a three-page book review of *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*. The review should answer questions such as: what is the author's thesis? How did the author argue the thesis (structure, sources, methodology, etc.)? What are the weaknesses and strengths of the book? What is the value of reading the book? The analysis should also consider the student's specialization. See *Doing Church History* for further instructions.

- **Devotional Journal**

This assignment is concerned with the application of "lessons learned" from the lives of the saints. It should be a weekly journal based on reflections related to readings and class experiences. It should note key thoughts, important quotes, insights into spiritual life and discipline, plans for spiritual development in the future, reflections on actual practices begun during the semester, saint and liturgy, and so on. Near the end of the semester all students will have an opportunity to share aspects of their journal with the entire class.

- **Research Paper (and Presentation)**

Each student will write a ten page research paper on a topic related to their specialization. The topic of this paper will be determined by the student's specialization, and developed in consultation with the professor.

- ***Pastoral Studies Specialization***
- Research for this specialization can go in one of two directions. First, it can focus on a theological construction of one's theological position in regards to an issue related to the saints. Second, it can deal with developing a strategy for dealing with issues related to saints in the local church.
- ***Christian Thought and History Specialization***
- The research for this specialization should focus on developing critical knowledge of a key movement or event in Christian history or a deeper awareness of an aspect of Christian theology related in the saints.
- ***Christian Worldview Specialization***
- Research for this specialization should focus on a construction of one's theological position in regards to an aspect of Christians and the saints, with a particular concern for the development of saints in a particular culture.

Results of research will be shared with the class at the end of the semester. There are a number of ways in which this research is to be completed:

- Traditional academic research paper (5 pages)
- Non-traditional formats (5-6 pages)
 - Popular article for a church or denominational publication (2-3 pages)
 - Popular article for a public audience, and to be posted on a blog or Facebook (2-3 pages)

CLASS SCHEDULE:

September 24

Introduction to Course
 Hagiography
 Class Discussion of Position Papers
 Theology of the Saints
 Position Paper Due

October 22

Relics & Religious Pilgrimages
 Icons, Liturgies & Holy Days
 Book Review Due

November 12

The Making of a Saint
 Varieties of Saints
 Research Paper Due

December 3

Varieties of Saints

Paper Presentations & Devotional Journal Discussions
Devotional Journal Due