

**CH/TH 3XJ3/6XJ6**  
**WORLD AND WRITINGS OF JOHN WELSEY**

**McMaster Divinity College**

Fall Semester 2013  
Saturdays 9:00-4:00pm  
Sept 21; Oct 19; Nov 9; Dec 7

Instructor: Dr. Gordon L. Heath  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Considered by many to be the “father of evangelicalism,” John Wesley is a fascinating figure who was instrumental in the formation of modern-day evangelicalism. This course will examine his life, theology, impact, as well as study his social context and associates (and enemies!).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

***Knowing***

- to provide students with an understanding of John Wesley’s life and writings, as well as his contribution to the life of the church over the centuries

***Being***

- to explore - and ultimately appreciate - the diverse ways people and movements have shaped the history of Christianity
- to create an awareness of the breadth and diversity of the Church, and provide a sense of “place” within the many church traditions
- to be discern one’s calling for service in the church

***Doing***

- to develop in each student an ability to assess documents and situations from an historical perspective – and in particular, to be able to assess critically the various claims made about Wesley throughout the church’s history
- to learn from Wesley’s life and writings so as to be a more effective leader in the church, academy and the world

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- John Wesley. *The Journal of John Wesley*. (see professor or book store about edition)
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- Reading of primary sources from sites such as <http://wesley.nnu.edu/>

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 Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca).

## ASSIGNMENTS:

Along with completing the weekly readings, and participating in class discussions and debates, each student will be required to complete the following:

- Journal Reflection: Students will be required to write a ten-page review and critique of Wesley's Journal.
- Sermon Summary: Each student is required to present a summary of a sermon by Wesley.
- Research Paper: Each student is required to write a research paper on a relevant topic of interest.

*Advanced degree students are expected to fulfill all assignments at an advanced 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 fifteen pages for the research paper.*

## GRADING:

- Journal Reflection: 30%
- Sermon Summary: 25%
- Research Paper: 40%
- Participation: 5%

## GENERAL COMMENTS:

- 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>
- 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.
- 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 3% 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.
- The essay should be handed directly to the instructor. To avoid any potential problems, students are advised to keep their working notes and a copy of their paper until a final mark has been received.
- Unless noted otherwise, all written work must conform to the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*.
- 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).
- Respectful dialogue and disagreement is expected.

## COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS

- **Journal Reflection (Due: Oct 19, in class)**

Students are expected to write and submit a ten-page reflection paper on Wesley's *Journal*. This reflection should answer questions such as what does this journal tell me about Wesley, his theology, his ministry, and early evangelicalism? What is the value of reading this journal? What does this journal not tell us? See *Doing Church History* for further instructions.

- **Sermon Summary (Due: TBD)**

This assignment is concerned with trying to gain an understanding of a Wesley's thought by reading a sermon composed by Wesley. More details will be offered in class. Students will lead the class in a brief discussion of the source. No written work needs to be submitted to the professor, but please distribute to the class a handout that provides a basic outline of your presentation, including a bibliography of sources consulted. (The professor will make photocopies if you provide the handout well in advance of the class.) See *Doing Church History* for further instructions.

- **Research Paper (Due Dec 7, in class)**

This ten-page research paper provides an opportunity for students to pursue an area of research that intrigues them. It is expected that this paper will have a clearly stated and argue thesis on some matter related to the course. The results of this paper will be shared at the end of the course when students orally present their papers to the class. See *Doing Church History* for further instructions.

- Choose a topic that interests you (and one which you will be able to find enough research material on).
- Use endnotes (not footnotes).
- Please include at the very end of the paper (after the bibliography) a one page "personal reaction" to the person you are studying. It does NOT count towards the ten-page total page count. This reaction can be as personal as you like, and is intended to give you a chance to react to the person outside of your more formal research paper.
- Please follow the format noted below:

|               |            |            |             |              |            |                |
|---------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Title<br>Page | Page<br>#1 | Page<br>#2 | Page<br>#3  | Page<br>#4   | Page<br>#5 | Page<br>#6     |
| Page<br>#7    | Page<br>#8 | Page<br>#9 | Page<br>#10 | End<br>notes | Biblio     | Pers<br>Reflec |

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Sept 21 | AM: Introduction, John Wesley's Life<br>PM: John Wesley's Life  |
| Oct 19  | AM: John Wesley's Associates (and Enemies)<br>PM: Methodism after Wesley<br><i>Journal Reflection Due</i>           |
| Nov 9   | AM: Theology and Writings<br>PM: Theology and Writings  |
| Dec 7   | AM: Wesley's Legacy, Research Paper Presentations<br>PM: Research Paper Presentations<br><i>Research Papers Due</i> |

**Please Note: 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.**