

Leadership Themes in the New Testament

NT 3XL3

McMaster Divinity College
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Fall 2013 (Term 1)
Monday 10:30am–12:20pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

When Jesus sent out his disciples to minister, he warned them that they would need to be both sensible and peaceable. They would, he warned, be sheep among wolves (Matt 10:16). Two thousand years later, it is clear that many Christian leaders have been cunning but not irrefragable, behaving more like wolves among sheep than the other way around. Alternatively, many leaders have been torn apart in the course of their ministry because they have not responded sensibly to the social and cultural forces that complicate Christian leadership. In this course, we will examine what the New Testament tells us about leadership, taking into account both explicit teachings on leadership as well as a number of exemplary leaders (both positive and negative). We will seek to understand: what leadership looked like in the church of the first century; what social and cultural forces complicate Christian leadership; and what it means to lead sensibly and peaceably.

Specializations:

Biblical Studies
Church and Culture
Christian Worldview
Pastoral Studies

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, students will be encouraged to:

Knowing

- Understand the social contexts within which early Christian leaders operated
- Know some biographical information about the leaders on display in the New Testament
- Critically evaluate the leadership ideals and examples presented in the New Testament
- Develop informed positions with regard to crucial leadership issues (e.g. ecclesial offices, women in leadership, qualifications for leadership, etc.)

Being

- Appreciate the importance of participating in critical and respectful discussions concerning biblical texts
- Become sensitive to the historical and cultural environment in which the early church first proclaimed the gospel

- Move beyond idealized portrayals in order to perceive early Christian leaders as flawed historical people
- Become self-critical with respect to matters of personal power and/or weakness

Doing

- Critically evaluate the leadership of a well-known church leader in light of the teaching of the New Testament
- Critically evaluate their own leadership in light of the New Testament
- Carefully exegete New Testament passages related to church leadership

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

*Students are required to complete all of the following assignments. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy (unless other arrangements are made in advance). No assignments will be accepted after **December 11**. A late penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments.*

1. Class Participation. Students are expected to attend class and to participate in class discussions.
2. Assigned Readings (10%). Students will read assigned material in preparation for each class session and then inform the professor prior to class (via an email or a written note) whether they: read the material carefully and thoughtfully (A); read the material quickly (B); skimmed the material (C); or did not read the material at all (F).
3. Case Study (25%). In this assignment, students will research a well-known (deceased) church figure and then assess that person's leadership with reference to the New Testament. An effort must be made to uncover both positive and negative qualities or actions; secondary sources must be used and properly documented; and specific New Testament passages must be brought into play. The results of this exercise will be written up in an evaluative paper that answers the question: Can the leader in question be said to have enacted his/her leadership in accordance with the leadership ideals of the New Testament? Papers must be 2,500 words in length and must follow the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*. They are due on **October 14**. Relevant figures for investigation include: Martin Luther, John Calvin, Martin Luther King Jr., Oral Roberts, Mother Theresa, Jerry Falwell, etc. (but other leaders may be examined with advance approval from the professor).
4. Case Study Presentation and Debate (15%). In this class exercise, the above case studies will be treated as cases in the full legal sense of the term. Each student will function as a lawyer and will either defend or prosecute their chosen leader, giving a 10 minute argument in support of the conclusion they have reached as a result of their research.

Following this, the student will play the role of a court witness, with class members (and the professor) having 10 minutes to ask questions regarding the leader in question. Finally, the class as a whole will vote on whether or not the leader in question can be said to have embodied the leadership ideals of the New Testament. Court will be in session on **October 21**.

5. Exegetical Paper (35%). In this assignment, students will exegete a New Testament passage and then discuss how it contributes to a biblically-informed philosophy of leadership. Example topics include: *Qualifications for Leadership* (1 Tim 3:1–13 & Tit 1:5–9); *Women in Leadership* (1 Tim 2:11–12); *Disqualifications from Leadership* (2 Pet 2:1–22); *The Fivefold Ministry* (Eph 4:11); etc. Students are welcome to select an alternative topic and/or passage in consultation with the professor. The results of this exercise will be written up in a paper that is at least 3,000 words in length and that follows the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*. Topics should be approved by the professor in advance. Papers are due on **December 2**.
6. Self-Critical Essay (15%). At the end of the semester, each student will reflect on their personal philosophy of leadership, paying special attention to issues raised by the course. What leadership ideals have been communicated by the student’s culture(s)? In what ways does the New Testament affirm or challenge those ideals? What specific aspect(s) of the student’s own leadership ideals or practices have been affirmed or challenged? After reflecting *carefully and thoughtfully* on these questions, the student will compose a 1,500 word essay that develops a biblically-informed philosophy of leadership. Although the use of the first person is an integral part of these assignments, the thoughts included in them should be well-organized and clearly presented in essay form. Secondary literature need not be cited, but biblical texts should be referenced. The self-reflection essay is due on **December 9**.

GRADING SUMMARY

Participation	---
Reading	10%
Case Study	25%
Case Study Presentation & Debate	15%
Exegetical Paper	35%
Self-Critical Essay	15%
Total	100%

TEXTBOOKS

Students are required to possess the following:

An English translation of the New Testament.

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 M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates	Class Topics	Assigned Reading (to be completed before the class session listed)	Assignments Due
Sep 9	Welcome & Introduction to the Course Discussion: What Is a Leader?		
Key People and Moments in New Testament Leadership			
Sep 16	Jesus and Pilate: A Study in Contrasts	TBD	
Sep 23	Many More than Twelve: Growth and Adaptation in the Early Jesus Movement	TBD	
Sep 30	James and Paul: Another Study in Contrasts	TBD	
Oct 7	The Triumph of Conflict Resolution: The Council of Jerusalem	TBD	
Oct 14	The Bitterness of Conflict: Antioch, Galatia and Corinth	TBD	Case Study Due
Oct 21	Case Study Presentations		
The "Official" Structure of Leadership in the New Testament			
Oct 28	Ecclesial Offices: Were There Any in the First Century?	TBD	
Nov 4	Who's Man Enough to Lead? Leadership Qualifications in the Greco-Roman World and the NT	TBD	
Nov 11	Servants of Satan and Springs Without Water: Leadership Disqualifications in the NT	TBD	
Leadership Principles from the New Testament			
Nov 18	Imitation: The Way of the Cross	TBD	

Nov 25	Preservation and Innovation: Staying on the Narrow Path (Without Standing Still)	TBD	
Dec 2	Renunciation: Deconstructing the Postmodern Leadership Crisis	TBD	Exegetical Paper Due
Dec 9	Exam Week (No Class)		Self-Reflection Due

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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STATEMENT ON 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 Statement on Academic Honesty at www.mcmasterdivinity.info/programs/rules-regulations.

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.

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.

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.