

**Foundations for Effective Ministry I: Worldview, Mission and Leadership
(MS 1A03a)
Fall 2016**

Instructor:
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Term: Fall 2016
Room: TBA

Time: Tuesdays 1:30 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.
First Class: Sept.13

Course Description

This course is designed to help students explore what it means to engage the world in distinctly Christian way and orient their lives, talents, callings and abilities around God's perspective on the world and how we are invited to participate in his transformational purposes for it. The course will help students consider how a theological vision for life in this world and a personal encounter with God influences every aspect of life regardless of what their own specific calling may be. Students will consider the key elements of a Christian worldview, a foundational philosophy of Christian leadership and an introduction to the mission of the church.

Course Objectives

Knowing

1. To help students understand the concept of worldview and how it is formed.
2. To help students understand foundational scriptural and theological principles and/or categories for the mission of the Church in contemporary Canadian culture, and in light of the concerns of post- Christendom.
3. To understand key features of contemporary Canadian culture as they relate to issues of spiritual need, and the proclamation of the Christian message.
4. To help students understand current issues in contemporary mission in Canadian culture today.

Being

1. To encourage reflection and integration in terms of personal, congregational, and political aspects of Christian identity
2. To help students develop confidence in their own ability to proclaim the Christian gospel and lead a congregation in evangelistic enterprise.
3. To develop a clear connection between understanding current culture and its interface with the Gospel message.

Doing

1. To help students develop and/or hone their own worldview.
2. To help students develop their own philosophy of mission and evangelism for their lives and the church.
3. To equip students with relevant strategies for missional leadership and practice.

Class Ethos

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 progress, open to be deconstructed and formed through our mutual learning experience.

It is the professor's responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I (Lee Beach) 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 (and my GA's) responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class 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. All late assignments may be docked at the rate of 2% for each day (including weekends) late. Assignments should be submitted electronically in a word document.

I am available and would welcome making connections with each of you outside class time. Please feel free to make an appointment with me if there is any way that I can assist your learning experience in this course.

Course Topics for Fall Term

Introduction to Worldview
Biblical and Historical Worldviews
Developing a Christian Worldview
What is Mission?
A Biblical Theology and History of Christian Mission
The Church and mission
Issues in mission for the 21st century

Required Texts

Goheen, Michael and Bartholomew, Craig. *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Goheen, Michael W. *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Beach, Lee. *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2015.

***Books will be available at the campus bookstore on the first day of class (or prior) and can also be ordered from READ ON books: phone—416-622-2934; fax: 416-622-2308; Email: books@readon.ca (READ ON will provide great service, usually for the most reasonable price available)*

Course Requirements:

Fall Semester

1. Book Response

Write a response to the book *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. This paper should explore the issue of Christian Worldview by thoroughly engaging Goheen and Bartholomew's work and answering questions like what is worldview? What impact does worldview have on people's daily lives? How does the book help you in the development of your own worldview? What do you appreciate about this book? What weaknesses do you find in this book? What questions do you have and/or what disagreements do you have with this book? The paper should offer a brief description of the book's overall thesis and main arguments, however it should focus primarily on personal interaction with the book and not a retelling of the content of the book.

This paper should be 8-10 pages (double spaced) in length and will constitute 30% of the First semester's grade. Due Date: Oct. 18, 2016.

2. Interview project

-Identify two (or more) people who do *NOT* presently attend a Christian church. These should be people who are able to provide thoughtful responses to the questions that they will be asked. It is important that you do not recruit from segments of the population who may be vulnerable and not able to properly understand what is being asked of them and how their participation may adversely affect them (this includes people with mental health issues or challenges). Explain that you would like to ask them some questions for a course assignment, but make sure that they understand *this is simply to gather their opinion, it is not an evangelistic endeavor*. When recruiting potential interview subjects be clear that their refusal to participate will not have any adverse affect on your relationship with them and that you will not have a problem finding other participants who can help you complete the assignment. Allow your subjects to choose the place and time for the interview. It is essential that the place of the meeting is one that they are comfortable with and is conducive to both the nature of the interview and the subjects ability to feel that their responses are kept private. Using the "Letter of

Explanation/Informed Consent,” (to be distributed in class) provide prospective interviewees with a copy of the following interview questions, explain the process and purpose of the research, respond to any additional questions or concerns about the assignment or the course in general, and ask that they read and sign the affirmation of consent. Once they have agreed to be interviewed, ask the following:

- What do the words “Christian” and “Christianity” mean to you?
- Most people these days don’t attend church. Why do you think this is?
- How do you think the church could be more relevant to society today?
- What do you understand to be the essence of the Christian message/religion?
- I would like to explain to you what I understand to be the essence of the Christian message. Then I would like you to tell me what you have understood me to say, what seems attractive (if anything) about it, and what (if anything) seems offensive or incomprehensible?

When conducting the interview it is important that you remember you are not trying to convince or convert your interview subject. Please be careful to watch your tone, demeanor and body language as you conduct the interview. Do not try and rebut their opinions or become overly animated in your own presentation. Be careful to not to invade your interviewee's personal space or behave in a way that could be construed as aggressive or overwhelming to your subject. Reiterate at some point during the interview that your interview subject does not have to answer any questions they are uncomfortable with and that they can withdraw from the process at any point. Please assure them that you will completely understand their decision to not answer or withdraw, and that it will have no bearing on your relationship with them.

When discussing religion some people may encounter negative memories or remember painful past experiences. Please be prepared to discuss potential support persons with them if this is the case for either of the people you interview. Please encourage them to talk with trusted friends or family about these memories. If the experience seems to necessitate it, be prepared to help them locate mental health resources that could be helpful to them. If help is needed with this please contact course instructor Dr. Lee Beach (ext. 23502, beachl@mcmaster.ca) who will provide resource information upon request.

The paper should report and reflect on their answers in a way that demonstrates thoughtful engagement with the course material so far, and the required text books for the fall semester, especially *A Light to the Nations* and *The Church in Exile*. Further research may also be helpful in interpreting the information that you glean from your interview subjects. The paper should provide reflection on their responses to the questions as it pertains to the place of the church, the gospel message in Canadian culture today, and the world view of the people you interviewed. Evaluate how the opinions your interviewee’s offered connect with trends in our culture and where the message of Christianity may be able to connect with them (your interview subjects).

NOTE: The use of human subjects for a research project entails specific ethical responsibilities for the researcher. In particular, you must scrupulously

- Maintain neutrality

- Avoid influencing the responses
- Guarantee the anonymity of the respondents, and
- Ensure confidentiality with regard to the data.

Students must abide by the terms set out in the “Letter of Explanation/Informed Consent.”

This project should be 10-12 pages (double spaced) in length. It is worth 40% of the first semester's grade. Due date: November 22, 2016.

3. Small Group presentation

Students will work together in groups of three or four to prepare a class presentation on one of the topics listed below. The presentation should clearly demonstrate research and reflection on the topic and include some kind of visual presentation, class discussion, and a handout that includes an outline of the presentation, some summary comments, and annotated bibliography of at least 10 sources that are relevant to the topic (annotations should not exceed three sentences). The presentation should not exceed 25 minutes in length. Each presentation will best evaluated on its content, comprehension of the topic, quality of reflection, creativity of the presentation, and the quality of the written material. Possible topics include:

- What hinders people from becoming Christians in Canada today?
- Post-Christendom Challenges and Opportunities
- What is the Gospel?
- The role of the local church in evangelism
- The Canadian church and international missions: What is our role?
- The role of prayer in mission and evangelism
- The role of the Holy Spirit in mission and evangelism
- Evangelism and social justice

Topics and Due dates for the assignment will be determined on the second day of class although all presentations will occur on either Nov. 29 or Dec. 6. The presentation will constitute 30% of the final course grade.

Additional notes:

A. 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.

B. 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>

C. 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.

D. 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.

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.