

The World and Writing of John Wesley

PhD – CHTH G105-C12

MA – CH/TH 6XJ6

McMaster Divinity College

Winter Semester 2017

Monday

10:30am - 12:20

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath, gheath@mcmaster.ca

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/>

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. (see professor about an online version)
- 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.

GRADING:

- Journal Reflection: 30%
- Sermon Summary: 20%
- Research Paper: 45%
- Participation: 5%

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).

- Respectful dialogue and disagreement is expected.
- 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.
- 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.

COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS

- **Journal Reflection**

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**

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 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**

This twenty-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 argued 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.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Jan 9	Introduction to the Class Reading: <i>Doing Church History</i>
Jan 16	John Wesley's Life
Jan 23	John Wesley's Associates (and Enemies)
Jan 30	Methodism After Wesley

Feb 6	Theology and Writings
Feb 13	Sermon Summary
Feb 20	<i>Reading Week</i>
Feb 27	Sermon Summary
Mar 6	Sermon Summary
Mar 13	TBD
Mar 20	TBD
Mar 27	Research Paper Presentations
Apr 3	Research Paper Presentations
Apr 10	Research Paper Presentations