

MCMMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE  
WINTER SEMESTER 2017

PhD – CHTH G125 – C08  
MA – CH/MS/NT/OT/TH 6ZM6

**THEOLOGICAL CONTOURS OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY**

*Interdisciplinary Seminar*

Dr. Michael Knowles  
Divinity College 214

Mondays, 3:30–5:20 p.m.

905.525.9140 x27088

Location: TBA

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### Course Description

This course offers a specifically Christological account of the church's ministry, explaining it less as *imitation* of Christ than as *participation* in Christ's ongoing ministry in and on behalf of the world. Lectures, classroom exercises, and assignments will explore such foundational theological concerns as the nature of pastoral identity, the purpose of the church, and the goals of Christian ministry. While the course focuses on ministerial theology and praxis in a congregational setting, consideration will also be given to forms of ministry in other contexts.

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### Course Objectives

#### KNOWING

- ▶ To review and assess foundational theological concepts and categories of Christian ministry, focussing especially on the identity and purpose of the church.
- ▶ To explore the Christological contours of discipleship in relation to the ministry of leadership in church and academy, with particular attention to the dynamics of a theology informed by the cross.

#### BEING

- ▶ To examine key features of spiritual autobiography with a view to clarifying the relationship between personal spirituality, discipleship, and ministerial vocation.
- ▶ To develop a fuller sense of identity "in Christ" as it applies to ministries of scholarship and teaching.
- ▶ To be formed together as a learning community.

DOING

- ▶ To gain practice in theological discernment as it applies to the pastoral dimensions of academic ministry.
- ▶ To identify and clarify personal goals for vocation and ministry within church, academy, and society.

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## Lecture Outline

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January 9	Course Orientation	Summary Statement due
January 16	Academic Ministry and the Purpose of the Church (I)	
January 23	Academic Ministry and the Purpose of the Church (II)	
January 30	Christian Identity and the Nature of Ministry Brené Brown: "The Power of Vulnerability"	
February 6	The Rôle of the Pastor (I)	Book Review due
February 13	The Rôle of the Pastor (II)	
February 20	<i>Reading Week</i>	
February 27	Ministry as Crucifixion and Resurrection (I): "Apart from Me You Can Do Nothing" Background Reading: Purves, <i>The Crucifixion of Ministry</i>	Student Presentations
March 6	Ministry as Crucifixion and Resurrection (II): "The Crucifixion of Ministry"	Student Presentations Essays from February 27 due
March 13	Ministry as Crucifixion and Resurrection (III): "Ministry in the Shape of the Cross" Background Reading: Purves, <i>The Resurrection of Ministry</i>	Student Presentations Essays from March 6 due
March 20	Ministry as Crucifixion and Resurrection (IV): "The Resurrection of Ministry"	Student Presentations Essays from March 13 due

March 27	Ministry, Instrumentality, and Testimony	Student Presentations Essays from March 20 due
April 3	Professor as Pastor and Classroom as Congregation	Student Presentations Essays from March 27 due
April 10		Essays from April 3 due
April 12	Final date for submission of late assignments	

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### Course Requirements:

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#### A. Textbooks (on reserve at Mills Library)

- Purves, Andrew. *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001. MILLS BV 4006 .P87 2001
- Purves, Andrew. *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004. MILLS BV 4011.3 .P874 2004

Required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore (MDC Room 145). Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. Other book services may also carry the texts. For advance purchase, you may contact:

READ On Bookstore	E-mail: <a href="mailto:books@readon.ca">books@readon.ca</a>
304 The East Mall, Suite 100	<a href="http://www.readon.ca">http://www.readon.ca</a>
Etobicoke, ON	Tel: (416) 620-2934
M9B 6E2	FAX: (416) 622-2308

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#### B. Additional Resources (on reserve at Mills Library)

- Foster, Richard. *Streams of Living Water: The Great Traditions of the Christian Faith*. New York: Harper SanFrancisco, 1998. MILLS BV 4501.2 .F6546 1998
- Oden, Thomas C. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. New York: HarperOne, 1983. MILLS BV 4011 .O33 1983

Purves, Andrew. *The Crucifixion of Ministry: Surrendering Our Ambitions to the Service of Christ*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2007. MILLS BV 4400 .P87 2007  
Purves, Andrew. *The Resurrection of Ministry: Serving in the Hope of the Risen Lord*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010. MILLS BV 660.3 .P87 2010

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C. Assignments % of Final Grade

1. Comprehensive preparation for, attendance at, and full participation in all class sessions.
2. Course assignments should provide evidence of a cumulative 4,000+ pages of relevant background reading.
3. Introductory Presentation: The Impact of Our Research 5%

For the initial class session, submit a 250-word statement that explains the impact and significance of your MA or PhD research in the life of the church and society as a whole. Be sure to explain *why* and *how* your research will have the proposed effect. In class, offer a 3-minute oral presentation that explains the pastoral implications of your research (apart, that is, from its intended significance for an academic or specialist audience).

4. Review Essay 25%

Review and compare the perspectives and contributions to a theology of pastoral ministry offered by Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* and *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation*. These works are to be

- a. reviewed as to content and argumentation, in keeping with the “Basic Guidelines for Composing a Book Review” (below);
- b. compared in this respect to each other; and
- c. evaluated for their contribution to a broader theology of pastoral ministry.

At the discretion of the student, the review may interact with other pastoral theologians and/or theological positions.

Length: 2,500 – 3,000 words

Due: February 2

## 5. Culminating Exercise: Theory and Application of Pastoral Theology

The purpose of this exercise is twofold:

- 1) to identify the pastoral dimensions of ministry to church, academy, and society, and
  - 2) for students to situate their own research and vocational/ministerial interests in relation to broader conceptual and practical considerations raised by theologians both ancient and modern.
- a. Content (choose *one* of the following topics):

i. Case Study

In conversation with relevant material from Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, and other theological resources (whether ancient or modern), present a case study in the application of pastoral theology to a specific ministry situation, giving attention both to conceptual and to methodological considerations. Describe and analyse the ministry situation from a theological perspective; identify the respective rôles and responsibilities of the minister, God, and/or the congregation; discuss appropriate pedagogical and practical goals; specify suitable courses of ministerial and/or congregational action. Discuss your findings in relation to your own ministry, as well as their specific relevance to the needs of the church, the academic community, and society at large.

As identified by Oden, possible categories for consideration include (but are not limited to):

- a. Ordination (26–34)
- b. Spiritual Gifts (64–81)
- c. Liturgical Leadership (85–104)
- d. Baptism and Lord's Supper (105–26)
- e. Preaching (127–40)
- f. Teaching (141–52)
- g. Institutional Administration (153–65)

- h. Pastoral Visitation (169–85)
- i. Spiritual Direction (“Care of Souls,” 186–205)
- j. Ministry to the Sick (249–66)
- k. Care of the Poor (267–92)
- l. Care of the Dying (293–310)

For ministry situations not addressed by Oden (e.g. evangelism, church planting, cross-cultural mission, etc.), students are advised to consult with the instructor in order to clarify the scope of the topic and identify appropriate resource materials.

ii. Christology and Cruciformity

Evaluate the contribution of Andrew Purves to pastoral theology (supplemented, as appropriate, by the work of Michael Gorman and others) by comparison and contrast to the work of one of the following:

- a. A major theologian in the classical tradition (Augustine, Athanasius, Calvin, Gregory the Great, Luther, Wesley, Edwards, etc.);
- b. A major pastoral theologian from the modern era (Donald Capps, Elaine Graham, Seward Hiltner, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Oden, Letty Russell, etc.);
- c. Another theologian or theoretician relevant to your chosen field of research (to be selected in consultation with the course instructor).

Indicate conceptual and theological distinctives and/or continuities, and discuss their implications for ministerial practice in relation to the needs of the contemporary church, academy, and society.

- b. Format 35% + 35%

This exercise is to be presented in two formats, each of which will be graded on the basis of theological insight and creativity of presentation (in addition to the general criteria that apply to all assignments, indicated below):

- i. Class session of 25 minutes' duration (20 + 5 minutes for presentation and interaction), the purpose of which is to convey the significance of your findings for ministry within church, academy, and society, in a creative, intellectually coherent, and engaging manner. A sign-up sheet will be circulated on the first day of class; presentation dates are February 27; March 6, 13, 20, and 27, and April 3. If required to accommodate the number of presentations, the class may be split into two sections after Reading Week. In this case, both sections will convene on Mondays from 3:30 to 4:20; section A will continue to meet from 4:30 to 5:20, while section B will meet from 7:00 to 7:50. Please note that your presentation date cannot be amended once it has been agreed with other members of the class.
- ii. Summative essay in standard academic format representing an amended version of the class presentation.

Length: 5,000 – 7,500 words

Due Date: one week after class presentation

### *Grading Summary*

1. Opening statement/presentation (250 words)	5%
2. Review Essay (2,500 – 3,000 words)	25%
3. Class Presentation (25 minutes)	35%
4. Culminating Exercise (5,000 – 7,500 words)	35%

### 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; if departures from the required style are

extensive, the assignment in question will be considered late and returned for revision prior to grading. To assist with prose composition, students are encouraged to make use of [grammarly.com](http://grammarly.com), which is funded by the university, along with the Writing Support Services provided by the McMaster Student Success Centre (<http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html>). See also “CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS,” below.

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#### E. Academic Dishonesty

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>

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#### F. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College is committed to employing inclusive language for human beings in worship services, written materials, and all publications. With regard to biblical texts, the integrity of original expressions (including references to God) should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV provide appropriate examples of the use of inclusive language for human subjects. With the exception of direct quotations from historical documents, inclusive language is to be used in all assignments submitted for academic credit.

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#### G. Cell Phone/Computer Policy

Students are to refrain from conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. If you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of



an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom. The same policy applies to sound generated by computers and/or other electronic systems.

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#### H. Deadlines and Late Submission Penalty

Assignments must be submitted to the Avenue to Learn website by 3:30 p.m. on the due date, after which they will be considered late and penalized 1% per calendar day, without limit. The final date for submission of all course assignments is April 12. Assignments received after this date will not be accepted for grading or credit.

Once classes have concluded, graded assignments will be available for retrieval from the Student Records Office (Room 210) for 30 days after the end of the semester (calculated as the day on which grades are due), following which they will be discarded.

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#### Disclaimer:

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make revisions up to and including the first day of class.

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CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading of written materials will be based on the following general criteria

Grade Range	Content	Argument	Presentation
90–100 A+	Mastery of subject matter; creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationships; exceeds required elements	Clear, logical structure; with comprehensive introduction, persuasive argumentation, and innovative conclusions	Detailed adherence to relevant style for formatting of text, notes, and bibliography; no errors of grammar or syntax; elegant presentation
85–89 A			
80–84 A–			
77–79 B+	Above-average grasp of principles and concepts and their inter-relationship; completion of all required elements	Coherent structure and consistent argumentation; well-stated introduction and conclusion	General adherence to relevant style and format; few errors of grammar or syntax
73–76 B			
70–72 B–			
67–69 C+	Adequate understanding of theoretical foundations; minimal completion of required elements	Rudimentary structure; minimal introductory and concluding statements	Significant errors of grammar, syntax, or style
63–66 C			
60–62 C–			
57–59 D+	Low level of comprehension; required elements incomplete or missing	Lack of coherence or structure in argumentation; no introduction or conclusion	Abundant grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors
53–56 D			
50–52 D–			
0–49% F	Inability to grasp basic concepts; required elements missing	Incomprehensible or illogical structure and argumentation	Failure to follow stylistic guidelines; incomprehensible syntax

## Basic Guidelines for Composing a Book Review

1. Publication Data
  - a. Provide essential bibliographical data, in the proper format.
2. Description
  - a. Who is the author, and what is his/her expertise or qualification for writing?
  - b. What main points does the author make? Is there a key passage or statement?
  - c. How does each part relate to what precedes and follows?
  - d. For what audience is this argument/discussion intended?
3. Evaluation
  - a. Is the author's thesis cogent and convincing?
  - b. Are there unstated assumptions or gaps in logic? Does the author offer novel insights and perspectives? An innovative synthesis of current knowledge?
  - c. Who are the author's main discussion partners? Who does the author cite for support, or argue against, and why?
4. Application
  - a. How do the author's insights apply to your own field of endeavour or research?
  - b. What are the implications of this study for the life and ministry of the church?
  - c. To whom would you recommend this book (or not)?

SUMMARIZE

ASSESS

ENGAGE

"what?"

"so what?"

"now what?"