

**Theology of Ministry Leadership**  
**PhD – CHTH G125-C04**  
**MA – CH/MS/NT/OT/TH**  
**6ZN6**  
**Interdisciplinary**

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Monday 4:00-5:50 pm  
Location: TBA

### **Course Description**

Leadership in Christian Ministry is a multi-faceted calling. It demands an integration of traditional theological disciplines (Theology, Church History, Biblical studies, Practical Theology) with an understanding of the cultural context of one's ministry setting as well as a myriad of other practices of ministry. For Christian scholars it is essential to understand their role in contributing to the development of a theology of Christian ministry that informs and contributes to the practice of Christian ministry. This course will invite students to see how their discipline integrates with theology as a whole and ministry in particular as an expression of Christian theology. Further, it will invite reflection on the idea that ministry itself is a source for "doing" theology.

### **Course Objectives:**

#### **Knowing**

1. Students will be able to articulate the way theology informs Christian ministry.
2. Students will be able to describe how their specific discipline integrates with other theological disciplines to inform Christian ministry.

#### **Being**

1. Students will develop their identity as a scholar in the church and how they are training to make their own specific contribution to Christian theology and ministry.

#### **Doing**

1. Students will be able to assess various methods of theological reflection and will begin to solidify their own approach to theological reflection for ministry leadership.

### **Class Values**

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

As professor it is my responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I 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 responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class in our discussions 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, ideally on or before the due date specified in this syllabus. All assignments handed in after the due date will be subject to a penalty of 3% for each day (including weekends) late. Assignments can be submitted in hard copy on standardized paper or sent in via. Email (please use word formatting).

I am not only available but also welcome and enjoy connections with each of you outside class time. If you would like to meet together please feel free to make an appointment with me.

## **Required Course Texts**

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005.

Stone, Howard W, Duke, James O. *How to Think Theologically* (Second Edition). Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

## **Course Assignments**

### **1. Engagement with a Historic Christian Theologian: Paper, Presentation, Response and Facilitation**

In this multi-faceted assignment students will write a paper based on the life and work of a historic theologian. They will also present a summary of that paper to the class. Further students will present a written response to one of their classmates' papers on a historic Christian theologian and present that response to the class. Finally, students will facilitate a class discussion on one of their classmates' presentations.

On the first day of class a lottery/draft will take place that will help determine which theologian each student will write and present on, which theologian each student will be a responder to and which theologian each student will be the facilitator for. The procedure for the lottery/draft will be clearly explained on the first day of class. The following is the list of potential theologians.

Clark Pinnock

John Wesley

Stanley Grenz

John Calvin

Gustavo Gutierrez

Thomas Aquinas

Karl Rahner

Augustine of Hippo

Karl Barth

John Chrysostom

Paul Tillich

Friedrich Schleiermacher

### Paper Component

Students will write a **4,000 word** (double spaced) essay on the theologian of their choice (based on the lottery/draft). The paper should cover the following components:

- Provide an overview of the person's life and work
- Identify the key contributions that this person made to Christian Theology
- Offer an assessment of some of their key ideas. What do you appreciate about their work? What criticisms do you have of their work?
- Identify their theological "method." (i.e. what seem to be the primary components of their theology in terms of how they "do" theology?)
- How does their work contribute to the work of ministry leadership? If it does not seem to make any substantial contribution why is that?
- Provide a bibliography of what you think are their most important writings (not included in the 4000 word count).

The paper should interact with primary sources (i.e. the writings of the theologian themselves) as well as secondary sources (i.e. biographers, those who have interacted with their writings, etc.). You are required to send a draft copy of your paper to the person responding to your paper as well as the person who will be facilitating the discussion of your paper at least three days prior to the day it will be presented to the class (that means on the Friday before our Monday class, no later than 12:00 noon).

**This paper is worth 30% of the course grade and is due (at class time) on the date that you present your paper to the class (to be determined on the first day of class).**

### Class Presentation Component

The class presentation should be 15-20 minutes (this is subject to change as the exact time will be determined based on the number of class presentations that will occur, depending on the size of the class). The presentation should be a condensed version of your paper, covering the same primary contours and themes as the written assignment. The presentation should be treated as a class lecture and thus should be engaging and creative. Presentation grades will be determined by a combination of the quality of the content, the engaging nature of the presentation and the quality of the responses that the presenter offers during the class discussion following their presentation. The date of each presentation will be determined on the first day of class in connection with the selection of the theologian that you choose to write on.

**The presentation is worth 5% of the course grade. The date of your presentation will be determined on the first day of class.**

### Response Component

Each student will respond to one of their classmates papers with a **1500 word** (double spaced) essay that offers the following components:

- Aspects of affirmation. Where has the author of the paper accurately captured the thought and contribution of the theologian under consideration?
- Places for further consideration: Are there aspects of the theologians thought where the paper's author could have said more, or where you think they have misunderstood the theologians work?
- Other areas of note: What else can be said about this theologian that the paper does not cover but you think is worth drawing attention to?

The paper should reflect engagement with various sources relating to the theologian under examination (i.e. biographies, primary sources, websites, secondary sources). However, this paper is not expected to be as research intensive as the primary presenter's paper. You will have 10 minutes to present a synopsis of your paper to the class.

**This paper is worth 20% of the overall course grade and is due (at class time) on the day that it is presented to the class (to be determined on the first day of class).**

### Facilitation Component

Each student will facilitate one class discussion on a paper presentation. The facilitator will be responsible to lead and guide the class discussion on the paper under consideration. The facilitator is expected to have read the paper prior to class, done some preliminary research on the theologian under consideration and come to class with several questions prepared to help stimulate and guide class discussion as necessary. Grades will be based on the preparedness of the facilitator to speak to the topic being discussed, the quality of questions they ask and their overall ability to guide a productive class discussion.

**The class facilitation is worth 5% of the course grade. The date of each facilitation will be determined on the first day of class.**

## **2. Integration Paper and Presentation**

Students will write a **6,000 word** (double spaced) paper that articulate a model of theological reflection that can inform both scholarship and the practice of ministry. Papers should reflect the interdisciplinary nature of this course and should cover, but are not limited to the following contours:

- What is theology?
- Why is theology essential to ministry leadership?
- What are the primary resources that are necessary for doing Christian theology faithfully and how do they relate to each other?
- What does your particular theological discipline contribute to the development of a faithful Christian theology?
- What is your approach to doing theology and how can that inform leading the church in its mission/ministry?
- What is your future role in ministry leadership as a Christian scholar? How do you envision your contribution to the practice of ministry?

Students will present the paper's topic to the class in the form of a class lecture.

### Written Component

The paper should be approximately 6,000 words and offer a robust engagement with the concept of developing a method for doing theology for ministry leadership. The paper should reflect thorough research and reflection on the topic and the literature that is germane to it, including the course texts, *The Drama of Doctrine and How to Think Theologically*. Reflection on how you apply the findings of your paper to your own work in Christian ministry and/or scholarship (as noted above) is a necessary component of the paper.

**This paper is worth 35% of the course grade and is due on the day of the class presentation (to be determined on the first day of class).**

### Class Presentation Component

The class presentation should be 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for class interaction (the exact time will be determined based on the number of class presentations that will occur, depending on the size of the class). The presentation will cover the same topic as your final paper and reflect themes related to it. It may even be a condensed version of your final paper, reflecting the same contours as your written work. The presentation should be treated as a class lecture and thus should be engaging and creative. Grades will be determined by a combination of the quality of the content and the engaging nature of the presentation. The date of each presentation will be determined on the first day of class.

**The presentation is worth 5% of the course grade. The date of your presentation will be determined on the first day of class.**

### **Tentative Class Schedule**

**\*This Schedule may be adjusted according to the size of the class**

Week one- Course introduction, presentation schedules, introduction to a theology of ministry leadership.

Week two- Ministry Leadership and the theological disciplines. The role of praxis in doing theology.

Week Three- Discussion of the book. *How to Think Theologically*, and consideration of a new paradigm for theological reflection.

Week Four-Eight- Student presentations on historical theologian

Week Nine- Book Discussion *The Drama Of Doctrine*

Week Ten-Thirteen- paper presentations

### **Additional notes:**

**Academic Dishonesty** – Academic dishonesty is a serious offence in the academic world 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 the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty located at <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

**Inclusive Language** ~ McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

**Sexual Harassment** ~ Sexual harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behavior, which discriminates on the

basis of gender about a person's body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

**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 until the first day of class.