

## **3/6 Political Theology**

### **CC/CT/CW/PS**

**McMaster Divinity College**  
**Fall 2018**  
**Mon. 9:00-10:50**  
**Office: 216**

**Steven M. Studebaker, Ph.D.**  
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**Hours: M 11:00am-1:00pm; T Noon-1:00pm**

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#### **I. Description:**

This course explores the various forms of political theology and theological approaches that implicate Christians and the church in politics. Part of this course would chart the history of Christian political theology—e.g., liberation theology. It would devote significant time to contemporary approaches and issues—e.g., eco-theology and ways of understanding the political identity of the church and Christians—e.g., should Christians be exiles on the margin of empire?

**A. Specializations:**

Church and Culture  
Christian Thought & History  
Christian Worldview  
Pastoral Studies

**B. Doctor of Practical Theology:**

Doctor of Practical Theology students who wish to apply for this course as an Research Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Research Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Research Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Research Elective in connection with this course. Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.

**C. MA and PhD:**

See Appendix 1 for Research Degree Requirements

#### **II. Course Objectives:**

**A. Knowing:**

1. Know a variety of biblical, historical, and contemporary ways Christians have understood the relationship between Christianity and the state.
2. Know the distinct historical-cultural contexts of Christian political theology and the variety of Christian responses to those cultural conditions.

3. Consider contemporary political issues from a Christian perspective.

B. Being:

1. Appreciate that theology is a dynamic and contextual effort to discern appropriate ways to embody the redemption revealed in Jesus Christ.
2. Embrace a deeper sense of your Christian identity vis-à-vis contemporary political theologies.
3. Become more aware of the biblical, theological, and cultural influences on your Christian political views.

C. Doing:

1. Analyze contemporary political issues from a Christian perspective.
2. Be able to develop responses to political that draw on biblical, historical, and theological resources in political theology.
3. Develop skills addressing contemporary political issues from a Christian perspective.

### **III. Required Texts:**

1. Craig Hovey and Elizabeth Phillips, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Political Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
2. William T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).
3. Additional readings may be assigned (e.g., articles, chapter selections within books)

### **IV. Course Performance Criteria:**

❖ Research degree students, see Appendix 1 for research program requirements ❖

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Due</u>
A. Current Issue Discussion:	10%	Day of presentation
B. Profile in Political Theology:	25%	10/31
C. Political Theology Paper/Projects:	60%	One week after presentation
1) Presentation	20%	
2) Paper	35%	

3)	Capstone Collaboration	5%	Day of your colleagues' presentations, posted to their Padlet
D.	Reading:	5%	12/5
E.	Participation:	X	Total: 100%

## V. Assignment Descriptions (research degree students consult appendix 1):

### General Guidelines:

- Submit your assignments in the relevant folder on Avenue to Learn.
- Papers and assignments may be submitted early for feedback from the professor and resubmitted on the due date for grading.
- All assignments marked according to the Grading Criteria Form attached to the syllabus
- All papers and assignments should conform to the College's Style Guide

### 1. Current Issue Discussion:

#### a. Purpose:

This assignment provides the opportunity to engage a contemporary political issue from a Christian perspective. These brief case studies will take place at the beginning of class sessions and will keep the course content connected with contemporary political issues.

#### b. Description:

1) Select a contemporary issue, figure, movement, controversy, etc. and analyze it from the perspective of a Christian political theology.

2) Present the issue to the class and lead a discussion on the topic.

a) Length: 15 minutes.

b) Describe the selected topic: you can use PowerPoint, audio-visual,

c) Analyze the issue from the perspective of a Christian political theology.

d) Identify implications for Christian political theology.

- e) Submit a description of the topic and your analysis of it, as well as the resources used to develop the discussion topic. Length: one to two pages.

2. Profile in Political Theology:

a. Purpose:

This assignment provides the opportunity to explore the political theology of a figure, event, text, or movement in the history (past or present) of Christian theology. Christianity has a rich history of the engagement with the political order. This assignment provides the opportunity to investigate one in an in-depth manner.

b. Description:

- 1) Select a historical or contemporary figure, movement, text, or event and that shows how Christians have engaged the political order.
- 2) Length of the essay is 7–8 pages.

3. Political Theology Project/Paper:

a. General guidelines:

This assignment constitutes the “major paper” and presentation of the course. The purpose of the paper/project is vocational development. It should advance your vocational trajectory. Selecting whether to prepare a project or a paper is an important step in the process. If you anticipate further graduate work or writing a thesis as part of your MTS or MDiv, then an academic research-thesis paper is an excellent option. A research-thesis paper provides skill development in conducting the concentrated study on a particular research topic necessary for advanced academic work. If your vocational track is ministry or an alternative professional field, then a project may be an effective option. Completing a project provides skill development in contextualizing and applying the fruit of theological research and reflection.

If you have an idea for a paper or creative project that does not neatly fit into the parameters of your specialization’s assignment description, please come and discuss your idea with me. I am open to papers/projects that cohere with the essence of the course and are suited to your research field and interests.

♦ Please consult the assignment description for your degree specialization ♦

b. Specialization focus: CC/CT/CW/PS

1) Church and Culture

This specialization focuses on the intersection of the church and its cultural setting. Developing the ability to interpret culture *and* to specify an appropriate

Christian response and interaction with it is the purpose of this assignment. Discerning appropriate ways to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ in terms of our specific cultural location is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship and ministry and this assignment seeks to facilitate this process. The paper/project analyzes a contemporary political issue or movement from a Christian perspective. Careful and accurate description of the political issue, as well as thoughtful assessment and response from a Christian perspective is essential. An alternative approach is to consider the influence of cultural context on a particular type of Christian political theology—e.g., what were the social problems and political movements that shaped Rauschenbusch’s Social Gospel or Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision for civil rights?

Possible topics: How can churches mobilize to help immigrants? How can religious institutions navigate the tension of certain civil rights issues and maintaining fidelity to biblical morality? What is the political role of the church in an increasingly post-Christian, multicultural, and religiously plural society?

2) Christian Thought and History

Considering the contribution of past figures and movements in the history of Christianity for the church today is essential to this specialization. This paper/project draws on a select figure or movement within the history of Christianity and shows its importance for contemporary Christian political thought and action. This constructive paper/project includes two major elements: 1) Accurate and fair description of the resource person/movement and 2) thoughtful contextualization to the church today.

Possible topics: Is religion intrinsically disruptive to and contrary to the political, civil, and social values of western state liberalism? How does Augustine’s idea of the ‘City of God’ and the ‘City of Man’ or Luther’s theology of the two kingdoms apply to Christians in post-Christian and multicultural Canada?

3) Christian Worldview

This specialization relates to the intellectual environment—historical, contemporary, and global—of contemporary Christianity. Engage a topic related to political theology that addresses an element of Christian worldview. The paper/project should be constructive and not only descriptive. The heart of this assignment is your creative contribution to what a Christian worldview offers to an issue in contemporary political theology.

Possible topics: What does a theology of the divine image contribute to the discussion of neo-liberal capitalism (e.g., are Hauerwas and others correct that liberalism is intrinsically antithetical to Christianity?) or euthanasia? What are the key biblical and theological principles for a Christian political theology and what do they suggest about the Christian’s/the church’s relation to the state and politics?

4) Pastoral Studies

This specialization focuses on vocational ministry. Prepare a sermon/message/curriculum appropriate for a given ministry audience related to political theology. You can draw on biblical, historical, and/or systematic approaches to political theology. The content of the sermon draws from theological resources, but expresses the yield of that theology in language and terms that are appropriate for a ministry audience. Alternatively, if you have an idea for contextualizing political theology for ministry other than in a sermon, please talk with me so we can design a project that enables you to maximize your work in the class for your ministry context and meets the goals of the specialization in Pastoral Studies.

Possible topics: What does Canada's Supreme Court ruling on euthanasia mean for chaplains and pastors providing end-of-life counsel and care? How does an urban church advocate for community residents in the face of the destabilizing forces of gentrification? How would a sermon series advocate celebration of abundant life without co-opting the cultural myth of consumerism?

c. Class presentation:

You will present and facilitate a discussion of your paper/project (I encourage multi-media, audio, audio-visual methods when appropriate). Length of presentation and discussion will be determined based on final class roster. Normally presentations are 15–20 minutes followed by 5–10 minutes of class discussion (for a total time of 20–30 minutes)

d. Written submissions

1) Paper:

a) Content and argument:

- Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports). Example of a thesis statement: Stanley Hauerwas' ecclesiocentric vision of Christian identity does/not provide an effective paradigm for Christian activity in a modern nation state.
- Describe your topic under consideration.
- Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.
- Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms of the position and interact with them vis-à-vis your view (where appropriate and in so far as space allows).

b) Presentation:

- Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., avoid colloquialisms (academic is different than conversational voice), passive voice (use active). Research-thesis papers must have a thesis statement (stated in the introduction), and introduction, content, and conclusion sections of the paper.
- Use and document a *minimum* of ten scholarly resources.
- Accurately document sources according to the College’s Style Guide. [Link](#) to Style Guide.
- Paper length: 10–12 pages.
- Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).

2) Projects/Sermons:

- a) Annotated bibliography of research sources: An annotation is a paragraph or two that describes the content of the book, essay, or article and how it relates to your research project.
- b) Sermon: Submit a manuscript of your sermon/message that includes footnotes, which detail where and how you applied and adapted your theological research in the area of pneumatology.
- c) Double-spaced pages, 12 point Times New Roman font.
- d) Use and document at least 10 scholarly resources (e.g., scholarly monographs, journal articles, and essays).
- e) Document sources with footnotes and follow the MacDiv Style Guide.

e. Capstone Collaboration:

- 1) *Write* a one to two paragraph interaction for each of your colleagues’ project/paper presentations. These interactions are based on the in-class project presentations.
- 2) *Interact*: Your interaction should be dialogical rather than descriptive.
- 3) *Identify* strengths and areas for development.
- 4) *Recommend* sources and ways to enhance strengths and improve areas that need development.

- 5) Due the day of your colleagues' presentations. Post your collaboration report on your colleagues' Padlet—see Avenue to Learn, Capstone Collaboration, Padlet link.

4. Reading:

- The professor may at times assign supplementary readings.
- Submit a reading report that states the percentage of reading completed for each assigned reading.

**VI. Lecture Outline (*tentative*):**

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment & Presentation Schedule
1	9/10	Introduction to the Course Syllabus Review  <b>I. A Political Bible!?</b> A. The Politics of Creation & Redemption	
2	9/17	B. The Politics of the Divine Image  C. The Politics of the New Jerusalem	
3	9/24	<b>II. Historical Paradigms of Political Theology</b> A. Eusebius & Christian Empire  B. Two Cities/Kingdoms/Spheres 1. Augustine	Current Issue Discussion: _____
4	10/1	2. Luther 3. Calvin  C. Christian Realism: Reinhold Niebuhr	Current Issue Discussion: _____
5	10/10–14	<b>Reading Week</b>	
6	10/15	<b>III. Contemporary Paradigms of Political</b>	Current Issue Discussion: _____

		<b>Theology</b> A. Anabaptism, Yoder, and Hauerwas							
<b>7</b>	<b>10/22</b>	B. Radical Orthodoxy and Cavanaugh	Current Issue Discussion: _____						
<b>8</b>	<b>10/29</b>	C. Christian Progressives and Conservatives	Current Issue Discussion: _____						
<b>9</b>	<b>11/5</b>	D. Liberation theologies (e.g., Black, Feminist, Womanist, Mujerista theologies)	Current Issue Discussion: _____						
<b>10</b>	<b>11/12</b>	<b>IV. Issues in Political Theology</b> A. The Politics of Life & Death  • Studebaker @ ETS?							
<b>11</b>	<b>11/19</b>	B. The Politics of Immigration	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Paper:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Paper:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1.	Paper:		2.	Paper:	
1.	Paper:								
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<b>12</b>	<b>11/26</b>	D. The Politics of Neoliberal Capitalism & Democracy	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Paper:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Paper:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	3.	Paper:		4.	Paper:	
3.	Paper:								
4.	Paper:								
<b>13</b>	<b>12/3</b>	E. The Politics of Tolerance	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Paper:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.</td> <td>Paper:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	5.	Paper:		6.	Paper:	
5.	Paper:								
6.	Paper:								
<b>14</b>	<b>12/10</b>	<b>Conclusion and Course Evaluation</b>							

## VII. Policies:

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](mailto: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  
<https://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 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).
- 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 <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>  
Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.
- E. 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.

## **VIII. Late-Assignment and Exam Policy:**

- A. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus.
- B. Students take exams on the date and at the time scheduled in the syllabus.
- C. Late assignments are reduced five percentage points for each day late (e.g., if the grade is 90 and it is one day late, the grade will be reduced to 85).
- D. Assignments and exams will be accepted without penalty after the specified date in the syllabus **only** in the case of an excused absence. If a student misses an exam or assignment submission due to a reason that he/she believes is excusable, then he/she must notify the instructor and

schedule an exam date and/or late-assignment submission date within twenty-four hours of the beginning of the missed class session.

- E. Assignments and exams will not be accepted late on the basis of the student's involvement with school-approved activities. If you are not able to be in class for an exam or assignment submission, then you must pre-arrange with the instructor to take the exam and/or submit the assignment before the scheduled date in the syllabus.

## **Appendix 1: Research Degree Requirements**

### I. Overview of Assignments:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Due</u>
A. Political Theology Paper/Project: (a.k.a. presentation and paper)	50%	One week after presentation
1. Presentation	20%	
2. Paper	30%	
B. Lecture and Syllabus:	30%	Day of lecture
C. Annotated Bibliography: * See lecture assignment	5%	Day of lecture
D. Response and Facilitation	15%	Day of presentation
Total:	100%	

### II. Political Theology Paper/Project:

#### A. Description:

Research degree students will write an academic thesis paper or prepare a cultural engagement project. If you have an idea for a paper or creative project, please come and discuss your idea with me. I am open to papers/projects that cohere with the essence of the course and are suited to your research field and interests.

#### B. Purpose:

This assignment gives you experience writing article, essay, and chapter length theological papers and presenting research in an oral form similar to that performed at academic conferences.

#### C. Guidelines for the Paper:

The paper should include (description categories below correspond to those of the grading rubric) . . .

1. Content and argument:
    - a. Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports).
      - Example of a thesis statement: the Emergent church movement is an authentic Christian way of being the church in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.
    - b. Describe your topic.
    - c. Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.
    - d. Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms and interact with them vis-à-vis your view.
  2. Presentation:
    - a. Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., you should avoid excessive first person discourse, colloquialisms (academic is different than conversational voice), passive voice (use active).
    - b. Use and document a *minimum* of fifteen scholarly resources.
    - c. Accurately document sources according to the College’s Style Guide ([link](#)).
    - d. Paper length: 20–25 pages. Not to exceed 7,000 words.
    - e. Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).
    - f. Use footnotes.
- D. Guidelines for the Class Presentation:
1. Time:  
The paper presentation takes a thirty-minute segment of the class. Each presentation includes two parts:
    - a. The paper presentation (15–20 minutes)
    - b. The response and facilitation, which is led by another student (10 minutes, see below for more details on the response and facilitation).
  2. Presentation content:  
You should articulate the paper’s thesis, topic, and argument. You can use PowerPoint, etc. if you wish. The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience with presenting papers as might at an academic conference. You should prepare and present your paper

for that type of venue. I encourage you to consider presenting your paper for this class at a conference and/or the Theological Research Seminar of the Divinity College.

III. Response and Facilitation (due day of presentation):

A. Purpose:

Provides experience in responding to and moderating academic presentations and discussions, such as one might do at an academic society meeting.

B. Description:

Each student *prepares a critique and facilitates a discussion* of a thesis paper presentation.

1. The critique:

a. Remember to be charitable; not only Christian, but since academia is a small guild, it is self-preservation.

b Critical (includes highlighting and discussing problems *and* strengths):

The critique should explore the following sorts of issues:

- Does the paper have a thesis?
- Does the content develop and support the thesis?
- Does it use appropriate sources?
- Does it interact with the relevant secondary literature?

2. The discussion:

You should keep the presentation to time limit and effectively manage student discussion (do not let one person dominate the interaction; move on to a new issue if discussion begins to go off on tangents and run down rabbit trails). Be sure to elicit comments from all people present. You might want to have some prepared questions and discussion prompts to facilitate the initial discussion.

C. Guidelines:

1. Each student paper presentation will take approximately fifty minutes (one segment of a class session).

- Note: Paper presentations and responses depend on class size. Final times frames based on final class lists.

2. The presentation and discussion typically includes the following items:

a. Presenter presents the paper: approximately thirty minutes.

b. Response: approximately fifteen minutes.

You can go through point by point as a monologue or start by raising and offering your thoughts on the paper's primary contributions and arguments and invite discussion based on your remarks and interaction with the paper and then so forth through the rest of the points you have identified.

- c. Class discussion of the paper and response: approximately five to ten minutes.
- 3. A written submission/outline is not required, but is encouraged as it may be beneficial to other students in the course.

#### IV. Lecture & Syllabus:

##### A. Purpose:

This assignment provides experience *preparing* a syllabus and *delivering* a lecture for teaching in an undergraduate setting. The preparation of the syllabus also helps fulfill one of the requirements of the Mastery Checklist.

##### B. Description:

You will prepare a syllabus on a topic related to political theology (determined in consultation with the professor). You may use this assignment to investigate an area that will promote your research program (e.g., prepare for doctoral comprehensive exams and MA thesis/PhD dissertation topics). You should, however, gear the syllabus and the lecture toward an undergraduate audience.

##### C. Guidelines:

###### 1. Research:

- a. Research for the lecture will account for the supplemental reading for research degree students (approximately 5,000-6,000 pages)
- b. Documentation of reading:  
Please provide an annotated bibliography of the reading consulted in the preparation of the lecture (the annotations for the texts should be about one paragraph—identify the key thesis and contributions of the text).

###### 2. Lecture:

- a. The lecture should present and discuss the primary content points of the topic (or sub-topic)
- b. Lecture handouts/outlines and PowerPoint/Prezi are helpful, but not required.
- c. Length:

The lecture and discussion will take a fifty-minute period of the course. We will have two for each session of the student lecture segment of the course.

3. Syllabus:

Be sure to craft the syllabus with a target class in mind—e.g., undergraduate or graduate. The syllabus topic is not limited to “Political Theology,” though it should relate to political theology. For example, “Peace Studies” could be a course topic that would include a variety of topics, not all of which would be specifically “political theology.”

The syllabus should contain the essential features of a class syllabus:

- Course title
- Course description
- Texts (required and supplemental)
- Assignments
- Course outline

D. Evaluation:

Grading of the lecture and discussion session will be based on the following . . .

1. Please submit to the professor a copy (electronic or hard copy) of your lecture notes and annotated bibliography used to develop the lecture.
2. Does the lecture accurately present and discuss the topic?
3. Does the lecture engage in critical evaluation/discussion of the content?
4. Does the lecture highlight the transcendent value of the material—e.g., does it have value for contemporary Christian thought, life, and ministry?
5. Does the lecture facilitate student discussion?

III. Class Leadership:

A. Purpose:

A significant part of your future or current work will likely include teaching in an academic and/or church context. Taking a leadership role in the course will provide an opportunity to develop teaching skills for your current/future vocational work.

B. Description:

1. Group discussions:

- a. The course will have regular in-class group discussions of the assignments and

readings.

- b. Research students will have the opportunity to facilitate these group discussions. You do not need to play the role of expert, but facilitate the discussion by asking questions, offering short insightful thoughts on the subject, and drawing on course readings that will relate to the discussion and spark group discussion.
2. De-brief meetings:
    - a. Research students will meet three times (probably weeks four, nine, and twelve) during the semester with the professor to discuss teaching style, content, purpose of chosen content, rationale of approach, experience leading the group discussions, evaluation of lectures, etc.
    - b. I envision these meetings as times when we can prompt each other to consider and hone our teaching styles, approach to teaching the content for this course, and theological viewpoints
    - c. Length: approximately thirty minutes.