



# McMaster Divinity College

## **MS 5YB5 Critical Understandings in Ministry Leadership** **Hybrid DPT Course** **Fall 2019**

Dr. Lee Beach [beachl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:beachl@mcmaster.ca)  
Office # 237  
905 525 9140 (23502)

Class Begins Online Sept. 9, we meet on campus Tues/Wed Oct. 15-16<sup>th</sup>. The class will also meet twice via. The online meeting system Webex. The dates for these meetings will be Monday Sept. 9 at 3:30 ET and Monday Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> (time TBD).

### **Biography**

Dr. Lee Beach is the Associate Professor of Christian Ministry, the Garbutt F. Smith Chair in Ministry Formation and the Director of Ministry Formation at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. He teaches courses on the church in culture, pastoral ministry and Christian spirituality. Prior to coming to MDC Lee pastored for over 20 years with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada serving churches in Peterborough, Cobourg and Scarborough, Ontario. He is currently involved in a new church initiative in Ancaster, Ontario where he lives with his family. He is the author of the book, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (IVP) and co-author (With Dr. Franklin Pyles) of the book *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World: Experiencing the Four-Fold Gospel Today* (Wipf and Stock).

### **Course Description**

Defining effective leadership in ministry is ever evolving as contexts and expectations constantly change. However, are there critical/foundational perspectives that define Christian ministry? Further, how do we identify and define what the critical understandings of ministry leadership are in our own ministry context? Also, how do foundational perspectives and contextual issues inform one another? This course will address the need to understand the foundational and contextual issues that inform effective ministry leadership. By understanding historical models as well as reflecting on our own contextual challenges the course will explore

ways in which we can develop an understanding of what it means to lead effectively in the particular ministry context that we find ourselves in.

As a hybrid course we will be using a course shell provided by McMaster Universities, Avenue to Learn as well as other online technology. Information about accessing and using these sites will be provided prior to the beginning of the course and as needed. If you have questions about the technological aspects of the course, or have any problems with the technology please contact the instructor. I will do my best to help and if I am not able to answer your questions I will work with our IT support team to get an answer for you as soon as possible.

## **Learning Goals:**

### **Knowing:**

1. Upon completion of this course students will be able to articulate a basic overview of the practice - led research method.
- 2.. Upon completion of this course students will be able to explain the inevitable contextual nature of ministry, both locally and globally, and how the work of ministry is to respond to and work within a particular context.
3. Upon completion of this course students will develop a deeper understanding of specific challenges in contemporary ministry and how reflective leadership is crucial to addressing these challenges.

### **Being**

1. Upon completion of this course students will have the opportunity to evaluate their own cultural situatedness and describe how their own understanding of the world is influenced by it.
2. Upon completion of this course students will gain insight into how their work in ministry is a response to the questions and needs of their time and context and how living into this reality is part of the ministerial calling.

### **Doing**

1. Upon completion of this course students will develop their ability to present their ideas to a group of peers and assess critical feedback they receive from that group.
2. Upon completion of this course students will be able to identify specific cultural and contextual issues that affect their practice of ministry and develop effective responses to them.

## **Working together as a learning community**

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 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 presence is necessary for our community (that is our class) to function at an optimal level, therefore it is expected that each student will be “present” in the online aspect of the course and in attendance for the face to face aspect of the course Oct. 15-16. Specific expectations for online interaction can be found in the “course schedule” section of this syllabus (below). Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order using either the submission mechanism on the course site or as an attachment to an email to the professor. Assignments should be sent in 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 2% for each day (including weekends) that they are late.

## **Instructor’s role and availability**

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.

I will do my best to answer any email enquiries within 24 hours during week days (Mon.-Fri). I do not generally answer emails Saturdays or Sunday during the day. If an email is sent later in the afternoon on a Friday it will probably not be answered until Sunday evening or Monday morning. I will do my very best to grade assignments within three weeks of submission.

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 in person or via Skype please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

## **Required Reading**

Bowen, John P. (editor). *The Missionary Letters of Vincent Donovan, 1957-1973*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011.

Clark, Brian and MacDonald, Stuart. *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens, 2017.

Thiessen, Joel. *The Meaning of Sunday: The Practice of Belief in a Secular Age*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queens, 2015.

Marti, Gerardo and Ganiel, Gladys. *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

\*Research Resources for Practice Led-Research can be found on our course site.

## **Suggested Text**

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie (editor). *The Wiley Companion to Practical Theology*. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.

## **Assignments**

### **1. Practice-Led Research Description Paper**

Foundational to the Doctor of Practical Theology Degree is the discipline of practice led research (PLR). As a core course in the DPT this class will help students develop an initial understanding of this unique approach to research. Students will write an introductory understanding of practice led research that covers the philosophy behind and the unique features of this approach to research. The paper should offer a definition of PLR, demonstrate an acquaintance with some of the literature on the subject by noting how various sources contribute to the field, and provide an overview of some of the key features that are part of a practice led research project. \*An introductory reading/research list will be provided to help students with this assignment.

**The paper will be due Oct. 15, 2019. This paper should be approximately 2000 words and will constitute 20% of the overall course grade.**

### **2. Class Presentation: Contextual Analysis**

Students will choose a cultural artefact that provides insight into the place of Christianity and/or the church in contemporary North American culture and present it to the class for discussion during our face to face class meeting on Oct. 15 or 16<sup>th</sup>. Examples of an artefact could be a current news story, an article, a scene from a movie or t.v. show, lyrics from a song, or even a personal encounter of some sort. The presentation should offer an analysis of how the artefact represents the place of Christian faith in contemporary culture, that is how it represents the place of the church or Christianity in current culture. The presentation should clearly articulate how the artefact is particular to the contemporary setting (not something that is applicable universally or that would have been equally as applicable in a different time period). The presentation should

include at least two questions for the class that will help to provide a springboard for class discussion.

**Class presentations will take place on Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>. They should be approx. 20 minutes in length and will constitute 10% of the course grade.**

### **3. Learning from the Practices of a Historic Christian Leader: Paper and Presentation**

All theology is contextual and all effective ministry must be a response to the context in which it happens. This is true today and has been true in the church since its inception. This assignment will ask each student to choose a historic Christian leader from the past and write a paper that reflects on how that leader was shaped by and was responsive to their ministry context. The paper should offer a brief overview of the leader's work, describe the external factors that drove their work, how their work was influenced by their context, how their work was a response to the needs of the church and society in their time and what lessons contemporary leaders can learn from them. The student will also "present" the paper in a one on one meeting with the instructor (via. Skype, or another online meeting system). This "presentation" will largely be an interaction with the instructor where the main findings of your paper will be discussed. The goal of this assignment is to help you understand how these important figures in Christian history were all "practice - led" researchers. That is, they were people whose larger theological interests and contributions were all directed by their engagement in ministry and their experience within a particular social and ecclesial context.

**The paper should be approximately 4000 words, it is due Nov. 1, 2019 and will constitute 25% of the course grade. The one on one discussion with the instructor can occur anytime after the paper has been submitted. Your grade will not be finalized until the meeting has taken place. Please contact the instructor to arrange a time that is convenient for both of us.**

### **4. Understanding the Challenge of Contemporary Ministry Leadership**

For this paper the student will choose a specific challenge or question that you have regarding contemporary Christian ministry that is connected to your own practice of ministry. Ideally the question will have a connection to your overall dissertation research project. The paper will address this topic by exploring the questions that it raises and challenges it presents both theologically and practically. The paper should move in four distinct stages; first, it should explain the practice - led methodology that you will use in the paper. Second, the paper should provide an in-depth exploration of the problem/question as it pertains to the practice of ministry in the particular context that it is situated in. Third an engagement with the question/problem from both theoretical and practical perspectives should be provided, this includes offering analysis that emanates from both secondary analysis (i.e. literature based research) as well as

primary analysis (i.e. reflection on your own experience). These two research components should be brought into conversation with each other so that they provide a seamless, rigorous response to the problem/question under consideration in the paper. Fourth, the paper should move to response, providing insight into how the problem/question can be adequately addressed within a contemporary ministry context. The paper will also form the basis for a class presentation as it will be posted in an online forum and the class will interact with the paper by posting responses, constructive critiques and questions. You will be expected to interact with the comments for one week after the paper is posted.

**A presentation schedule (including due dates for each paper) will be determined during the first week of the semester. Depending on the size of the class, one or two papers a week will be posted for discussion beginning the week of Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>.**

**The paper should be approximately 6000 words in length and will constitute 30% of the course grade.**

## **5. Participation**

As a doctoral level course it is expected that students will make engagement with peers a high priority in their learning. As an online/hybrid class this kind of commitment to participation is absolutely essential to the ethos and overall quality of the course. Thus, students will be graded on their participation based on the quality and frequency of their online participation. For each online discussion students are expected to offer one response to the discussion prompt provided by the instructor and at least two responses to classmates posts. Grades will be determined using the following rubric.

### A-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (9-10 Points)

- The participant integrated evidence from the reading, lecture, or past experience in supporting their argument.
- The participant consistently posted insightful comments and questions that prompted on topic discussion.
- The participant consistently helped clarify or synthesize other class members' ideas. If disagreeing with other class members' ideas, the participant stated his or her disagreement or objections clearly, yet politely.

### B-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (8 Points)

- The participant was notably lacking in one or two of the items listed for A-level participation.
- The participant consistently had to be prompted or coaxed to participate.

- The participant usually, but not always, expressed herself or himself clearly.

#### C-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (7 Points)

- The participant was consistently lacking in two or more of the items listed for A-level participation.
- The participant was extremely reluctant to participate, even when prompted.
- The participant rarely expressed himself or herself clearly.

#### D-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (6 Points)

- The participant frequently attempted (success is irrelevant) to draw the discussion off-topic, even if the participant's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric

#### F-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (0-5 Points)

- The participant was rude or abusive to other course participants.
- The participant consistently failed or refused to participate at all, even when specifically prompted or questioned, even if the participant's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric.

**Class participation will constitute 15% of the course grade.**

## Course Outline and Expectations

**Course Introduction: WebEx class meeting (online), Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> 3:30 pm ET (week One)**

*\*details will be provided but please plan to attend this gathering via. Computer.*

- Course overview, introductions.

- Student Responsibilities: Please review the course syllabus before this meeting and come prepared to offer a brief (1-2 minute) introduction of yourself (occupation, professional background, personal/family situation, your hopes for the course).

### **Section One: Introducing Practice - Led Research (Week one – two)**

- Weeks of Sept. 9 -15 and 16-22. Online Presentations: Introduction video, On-line presentation; Introducing Practice-Led Research and its relationship to Practical Theology (2 parts), Online Presentation: Research approaches and options in PLR.

- Student Responsibilities: Please review the brief introduction video for this unit and the three short lectures that are provided. Also, begin engaging with the list of articles provided on the content menu of our class site on Avenue to Learn. During the second week (Sept.16-22)

participate in the on- line discussion forum. Please post your response to the discussion prompts provided by the instructor by Wednesday of this week (Sept.18th). Respond to at least two posts by your classmates no later than Sunday of this week (Sept. 22nd).

## **Section Two: Reading our Context, Global Perspectives and Contemporary Leadership in Ministry (Week 3-5)**

- Weeks of Sept 23-29 and Sept. 30 – Oct. 6. Online Presentation and Discussion Forum: The Shape of Ministry leadership: Context and Content: Post- Christendom and the Challenge of Contemporary Ministry.

- Introduction video with some educational resources, and 2 brief online lectures.

-Student Responsibilities: Watch the introduction video (link to be provided) and engage with the resources provided and review the two online lectures. Post your response to the discussion question provided by the instructor by Wednesday Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>. Respond to at least two posts by your classmates by Sunday Sept. 29. Also, keep reading the articles on Practice led research as well as the text book *The Missionary Letters of Vincent Donovan, 1957-1973*.

- Week of Oct. 7 - 13. Online Presentation and Discussion Forum: Ministry as Theological Leadership: Embodying the Gospel through Practice and Understanding the shape of Christianity in the 21st Century and its impact on Contemporary ministry.

-Introduction video with some educational resources and 3 brief lectures.

-Student Responsibilities: Watch the introduction video and engage with the resources provided. Review the online lectures. Post your response to the discussion question provided by Wednesday Oct. 9. Respond to at least two posts by your classmates by Sunday Oct.13<sup>th</sup>. Work on completing your PLR paper (Due Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>) and reading the course texts *The Meaning of Sunday* and *Leaving Christianity*.

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## **Section Three: In Class Session (Oct. 15-16)**

The in-class section of the course will include discussion of and additional material pertaining to the posted lectures as well as book discussions of *The Missionary Letters of Vincent Donovan, 1957-1973*, *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*, and *The Meaning of Sunday: The Practice of Belief in a Secular Age*.

Also, class presentations. (A schedule will be developed for these presentations one week before the start of our first in-class meeting).

Student Responsibilities: Come to class prepared to discuss your understanding of PLR, your thoughts and impressions of the three text books we have been reading thus far and the content of the online lectures. Prepare your class presentation for the assignment on “contextual analysis” and be prepared to present your work to the class according to the presentation schedule that will be developed in the preceding week.

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#### **Section Four: The Future of Evangelical Theology and Ministry (Weeks 7-9)**

- The week of Oct. 21 – 27 there will be no class content or assignments.
- The week of Oct. 28- Nov.3: On line Presentation: The Future of Evangelical Theology and Ministry.
- Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> Live On-line discussion forum on the book *The Deconstructed Church* (Monday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>, Format and exact time TBD).
- Student Responsibilities: Review the online material on the course website for this section of the course. Read the text book *The Deconstructed Church*. Engage in the live, online class discussion on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. Finish preparing your paper on “The Practices of a Historic Christian Leader” for submission on Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>. Book your Skype appointment to present your paper to the instructor.

#### **Section Five: Class Paper Presentations (Week 10 - 14)**

Beginning the week of Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> students will present their final paper to the class (or a group of the class, depending on class size). The presentation schedule will be determined the first week of class. One or two papers will be posted each week and the class will interact with them for the balance of the week.

-Student Responsibilities: Prepare your paper and post it on the date it is due according to the schedule. Timely posting is important so that your peers have time to read each paper and offer a response. Each week students are expected to read each paper and offer at least one response to each paper presented by the Sunday evening of that week. Responses should be thoughtful, engaged and specific in terms of their interaction with each paper. The responses will constitute a significant portion of the participation 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](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://mcmasterdivinity.ca/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, <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/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.