

Evangelism and Church Planting
MS 3XE3
Winter Semester 2020
(CC/CW/PS)

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Class Begins: Jan. 7, 2020
Time: Tuesday, 11:00 am – 12:50 pm
Room #: TBA

Course Description: The Church in North America lives in the midst of a diverse and rapidly changing context. Perhaps since the first century, there has never been a time when new, innovative and adaptive approaches to ministry have been called for. This course will invite participants to think about the challenge of engaging the Canadian context with the gospel message with a particular emphasis on starting new, missional communities that are a response to the current and evolving cultural context that we find ourselves in today. The course will tangibly invite students to participate in a simulated church planting community, consider how to reach out to a specific cultural context and employ evangelistic methods that are appropriate to that context. Ultimately the course will help students think about where they can best use their specific gifts and callings in the mission of the church today.

Course Objectives:

Knowing:

1. As a result of the course students will be able to articulate a theology of and rationale for church planting in North America.
2. As a result of this course students will understand and be able to analyze various evangelistic strategies appropriate to the current Canadian context.

Being:

3. As result of this course students will gain a better sense of where they fit in the work of church planting and starting new ministry initiatives in Canada today.

Doing:

4. As a result of this course students will develop skills for working with others in ministry.
5. As a result of this course students will identify specific ways to initiate and sustain missional communities.

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 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. All late assignments will be docked at the rate of 3% for each day (including weekends) late. Assignments should be submitted electronically via. Email (preferably in a word document).

I am available and would welcome making connections with each of you outside class time. I would love to meet with you at some point if you think that I can be helpful to you in any way. Please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

Required Texts:

- *Starting Missional Churches: Life with God in the Neighborhood*. Edited by Mark Lau Branson and Nicholas Warnes. Downers Grove, IN: InterVarsity, 2014.
- *Gutsy: (Mis)Adventures in Canadian Church Planting*. Jared Siebert. Mississauga, ON: New Leaf, 2016.
- *Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil: Theology and Practice*. Christopher B. James. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Suggested Text:

- *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience*. Stefan Pass. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016.

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.

Course Overview

This course has two distinct but related components; church planting and evangelism. The overall flow of the course seeks to bring these two together in a way that not only deals with each individually but also seeks to help students reflect deeply on the work of evangelism as it relates to the work of engaging in new ministry initiatives. Thus, in order to help accomplish this each student will be a part of a small team that has the task of starting a new ministry initiative in a particular cultural context. This will only be a simulated experience (not an actual church plant) but the goal of this aspect of the course is to help students consider key aspects of developing new ministry initiatives and acknowledge that when we enter into the work of new initiatives it forces us to work with others, often not people we have chosen ourselves. It will also give

opportunity to gain initial skills in key aspects of church planting (or developing new ministry initiatives). For the team assignments groups will have to work together to discuss their approach to each assignment and how to determine work responsibilities (more will be said about this in class).

The course will also provide opportunity for students to reflect on how evangelism is done through the witness of a missional community. Through the process of team work, class lecture and discussion, course reading and individual research students will develop a theology and philosophy of evangelism through the church as a body called to incarnate the life and ministry of Jesus.

Course Topics

Why Church planting and the need for new ministry initiatives?
A Philosophy and Theology of Church planting
Church planting and evangelism
How to start well
Sustaining and cultivating health
Evangelism in the 21st century

Course Requirements

i. Personal Reflection on Evangelism

This paper will ask you to reflect on your own personal experience with evangelism. How has your Christian nurture shaped your understanding of what evangelism is? How have you seen your church/ the churches you have been a part of attempt to engage in evangelism in their community (and world)? What has your own experience in evangelism been? Where do you currently stand in terms of how you understand and practice evangelism?

This paper is a personal reflection. It does not require research or formal footnotes (unless you directly quote from or cite a source). It simply asks you to reflect on the concept of evangelism from a personal perspective in an authentic and honest way.

This paper should be 4-5 pages in length and is worth 10% of the final course grade. It is due Jan. 21st, 2020.

ii. Church Planting Team Work

As noted in the prior section of the syllabus, the class will be divided into several “teams” who will work together on a simulated church plant/new ministry initiative. These teams will be determined on the first day of class and will meet throughout the semester, sometimes in class time and sometimes outside of class time (as necessary). Each team will be given a

specific “context” in which they will be tasked with starting a new ministry initiative with a view to reaching out evangelistically to that context. More details will be provided on the first day of class. Each team will be responsible for completing four assignments.

Assignment One: Demographic Survey and Cultural Analysis

What are the demographics of the people you are seeking to minister to? You will develop a demographic profile of the people who live in the place that you are trying to engage with as well as an analysis of them. The paper should provide relevant statistical material as well as data that helps describe their general makeup and tendencies. The paper will also offer a reflection on this data. What does this tell you about them? What challenges and opportunities are present for doing ministry among them? How should this affect the way you shape your approach to mission?

This paper is a group effort and should be approximately 10 pages in length. It will constitute 15% of the final course grade. It is due Feb. 4, 2020.

Assignment Two: Vision and Values

What is the vision and what are the values that will guide your ministry? As a team develop a clear mission statement and several guiding values for your simulated ministry (a lecture on developing both of these will be presented in class prior to the due date for this assignment). The mission statement should be no more than a paragraph (3-5 sentences) long. The values should include at least 5-10 guiding value statements with some explanation accompanying each one.

This paper is a group effort and should be approximately 5-8 pages in length and will constitute 15% of the course grade. It is due Feb. 25, 2020.

Assignment Three: Ministry Model/Plan

This paper should describe the approach you are going to take to your ministry and how you will do evangelism in your simulated context. It should clearly demonstrate how it is contextually sensitive to the place you are serving, how it embodies your vision and values and how it will be a relevant outreach to your context. Describe overall philosophical and theological ideas that drive your model/plan and tangible initiatives that you will take to reach out to your community.

This paper is a group effort and should be approximately 10-12 pages in length and will constitute 15% of the course grade. It is due Mar. 21, 2020.

Assignment Four: Team Presentation

Each team will present their new ministry initiative to the class. The presentation should include information from each of the three papers, i.e., a description of the context, vision and values and model/plan for ministry with the rationale. Time for Q+A from the class should also be included in the presentation. The length of the presentation will be approx. 25 minutes (partly depending on the size of the class and number of teams, it will be determined on the first or second week of class).

The presentations will take place on Mar, 24 and 31 (depending on class size) exact dates for each group will be determined on week one or two of the course. The presentations will constitute 15% of the course grade.

iii. Specialization Paper: Evangelism in Canada Today

The final paper is an exploration of evangelism in 21st century Canada with an emphasis on the students particular specialization. (If you have not yet declared a specialization you are free to choose any one of the topics). Papers should reflect a deep interaction with scripture, secondary literature and class materials (including text books).

Church in Culture

The paper should explore questions like; what is evangelism? Is evangelism still relevant in a post-Christian context? What are the particular cultural issues that make evangelism a challenge? What cultural issues present good opportunities for sharing the gospel today? What is the most appropriate way to approach evangelism in Canada today?

Christian Worldview

This paper should explore questions like; what is evangelism? Is evangelism still relevant in a post-Christian context? How does the development of a Christian worldview help the church to engage in evangelism today? What aspects of Christian world view may be most relevant to the work of proclaiming the gospel today? What is the most appropriate way to approach evangelism in Canada today?

Pastoral Studies

This paper should explore questions like; what is evangelism? Is evangelism still relevant in a post-Christian context? What is the church pastor's role in leading their congregation in mission and evangelism? What is the most appropriate way to approach evangelism in Canada today and how will you lead your church in implementing an evangelistic strategy?

This paper should be approximately 10-12 pages, and will constitute 30% of the course grade. It is due Apr. 7, 2020.

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. 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 ~

<http://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 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.

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.

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.