

**TH 5XA5 - Missional Theology  
DPT (5-Level)**

McMaster Divinity College  
Spring 2020  
Online

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**I. Description:**

What does it mean to be a missional church in an increasingly post-Christian, secular, and religiously plural culture? This course explores that question with a comprehensive overview of missional theology and examples of its practice, particularly in North American culture. Biblical foundations and historical approaches to embodying the Gospel in cultural context are considered with primary focus on the contemporary “missional” movement (e.g., Newbigin, Bosch, Guder, Frost, Hirsch, Fitch).

**II. Course Objectives:**

My goal for the course is that you will develop vocational competency as a scholarly researcher in the area of missional theology and in your area of doctoral research. Toward that end this course will serve you in fulfilling your research program at McMaster Divinity College and more broadly your calling as a practical theologian. With that in mind, the knowing, being, and doing learning objectives delineate specific objectives to facilitate achieving the vocational goals of the course.

**A. Knowing:**

1. Learn and expand key areas of missional theology and ways they relate to your doctoral research.
2. Become familiar with the contributions of key figures in missional theology and their relevance for your research program.
3. Begin to acquire specialist command of a specific area of theology related to your area of research.
4. Deepen your understanding of the approaches/methods appropriate to your research program.

**B. Being:**

1. Become a critical and constructive leader in practical theology.
2. Appreciate the value of current theological movements for the church and your life.

3. Be a respectable, respectful, and significant practical theologian.
4. Appreciate that theology is a dynamic and contextual effort to discern appropriate ways to embody the redemption revealed in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

C. Doing:

1. Develop the ability to present informative presentations and facilitate student discussions through online and digital avenues.
2. Research and present original research on a substantial topic in missional theology and significant for your research topic.
3. Hone critical reading skills in primary literature.
4. Develop the ability to analyze scholarship and especially in light of your research project.

### III. Resources:

Below are resources for getting started in missional theology. These are not required reading but resources that can help your investigation in missional theology.

- Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012).
- Ryan K. Bolger, *The Gospel after Christendom: New Voices, New Cultures, New Expressions* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2012).
- Francis Chan, *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013) (<http://www.crazylovebook.com/>).
- Mary Sue Dehmlow Dreier, *Created by the Spirit: Planting Missional Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).
- Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003).
- David Fitch, *Faithful Presence: 7 Disciplines That Shape the Church for God's Mission & Prodigal Christianity* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2016) ([Reclaiming the Mission blog](#))
- Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2011).
- Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).

- Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emergent Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).
  - Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
- Darrell L. Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).
- Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmanson, *Missional Spirituality* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011).
  - Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).
  - Scott McKnight, *Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others, 10th Anniversary Edition* (Paraclete, 2014) ([Jesus Creed blog](#)).
  - Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).
  - Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).
  - Stefan Paas, *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).
  - David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010) (website: <http://radical.net/>
  - C. Christopher Smith and John Pattison, *Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus* (Downers Grove: 2014). Also see <http://slowchurch.com/>
  - Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens*, The Church and Postmodern Culture series, ser. ed. James K. A. Smith (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).
  - Gary Tyra, *A Missional Orthodoxy: Theology and Ministry in a Post-Christian Context* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Academic, 2013).
  - Dwight J. Zscheile, *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).
  - Tyndale Seminary has a list of readings in Missional Church in their Missional Church Reading Room ([link](#)).

- Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- *International Journal of Practical Theology*
- *Journal of Pastoral Theology*
- *Journal of Practical Theology*
- *Journal of Missional Practice* ([link](#)).
- *Millennial Magazine* ([link](#)).
- Verge Network ([link](#)).

#### IV. Course Performance Criteria:

Assignment	Percent	Due Date
A. PLR Topic & Missional Context	20%	
a. Post paper (Padlet)		May 13
b. Post interaction (Padlet)		May 16
B. Seminar on Missional Theology	30%	
a. Post seminar (Padlet)		May 27
b. Post interaction (Padlet)		May 30
c. Final seminar (A2L assignment folder)		June 3
C. Integrative Paper or Presentation (Zoom or Padlet)	10%	June 10
D. Integrative Paper Collaboration (Padlet)	10%	June 13
E. Integrative Paper (A2L assignment folder)	30%	June 17
Total: 100%		

#### V. Course Outline:

Week	Date	Topic	Due Dates
1	Apr 20	<b>Introduction to the Course (Avenue Video)</b> <b>Personal Introductions (Zoom, TBD)</b> <b>History of Missional Theology and Church</b>	

2	Apr 27	<b>Missional Theology and Practice Led Research</b> <b>Zoom discussion of PLR topic and missional context paper (TBD)</b>													
3	May 4	<b>A Missional Theology of Culture</b> <b>Zoom discussion of Seminar on Missional Theology (TBD)</b>													
4	May 11	<b>Cultural Context &amp; Missional Theology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post PLR &amp; missional context paper May 13</li> <li>• Post interaction May 16</li> </ul>												
5	May 18	<b>The Challenge of Missional Theology &amp; Evangelical Identity</b> <b>Zoom workshop discussion of integrative paper topics &amp; approaches (TBD)</b>													
6	May 25	<b>One-on-one discussion with Studebaker on integrative Paper/project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post missional seminar May 27</li> <li>• Post interaction May 30</li> </ul>												
7	Jun 1	<b>Missional Theology and the Future of the Church</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final missional seminar due June 3</li> </ul>												
8	June 8	<b>Integrative Paper/Presentation &amp; Collaboration:</b> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Paper Presentations</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Paper Presentations	1.		2.		3.		4.		5.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper presentations (Zoom or Padlet TBD) June 10</li> <li>• Post collaboration June 13</li> </ul>
	Paper Presentations														
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9	June 15	<b>Conclusion and Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrative papers due June 17</li> </ul>												

## VI. Assignment Descriptions:

### General Guidelines:

- Please submit course work in the appropriate folder on Avenue to Learn (A2L) or post on Padlet.
- All papers and assignments should conform follow the MDC Style Guide.

### A. PLR Topic and Missional Context Paper:

#### 1. Purpose:

This assignment gives you the opportunity to investigate a contextual area of contemporary culture and the way/s it relates to your topic of practice led research. Understanding and adapting to cultural context is central to missional church/theology. Thus, bringing your practice led topic into conversation with an area of contemporary culture is important for developing skills in missional theology. We will have a Zoom meeting in which you will share your topic and discuss it with your class colleagues.

#### 2. Guidelines for paper:

- a. Research for this assignment contributes to the supplemental reading for DPT students.
- b. Documentation of reading:  
Please use footnotes and provide a bibliography of resources used in the preparation of the paper.
- c. The paper should include three sections that detail. . .
  - 1) Area of contemporary cultural analysis,
  - 2) Practice led research topic,
  - 3) Conversation between the area of contemporary culture and your PLR topic.
- d. Length: 10 pages. Double spaced, Times New Roman Font, formatted according to MDC Style Guide.

#### 3. Collaborate:

The collaborative nature of this assignment has two parts:

- a. Post your paper on the PLR Topic and Missional Context Paper Padlet—see the course outline on A2L. Due May 13.
- b. Post a one paragraph interaction with your class colleagues. You can post directly onto Padlet (audio, audio-visual or text). Due May 16.

B. Seminar on Missional Theology:

1. Purpose:  
This assignment provides experience *preparing a seminar* for a church OR ministry leadership group. The preparation of the seminar also helps fulfill one of the requirements of the DPT Mastery Checklist.
2. Description:  
You will prepare a seminar on a topic related to missional theology. The seminar should be geared to address either a church lay leadership or professional ministry leadership group. The content and its development should reflect the target audience. You can also use this assignment to investigate an area that will promote your research program. Consequently, the seminar can address the practice led topic that is the focus of your DPT studies. Thus, this assignment can provide the opportunity to investigate an area of missional theology and apply it to your area of practice led research.
3. Guidelines:
  - a. Research:
    - 1) Research for the seminar will account for part of the supplemental reading for DPT students.
    - 2) Documentation of reading:  
Please provide an annotated bibliography of the reading consulted in the preparation of the seminar (the annotations for the texts should be about one paragraph that identifies the key thesis and contributions of the text to your seminar.
  - b. Seminar content:
    - 1) The seminar material should present and discuss the primary content points of the topic (or sub-topic).
    - 2) Handouts/outlines and PowerPoint/Prezi are helpful, but not required.
    - 3) Length:  
Develop the seminar content for a thirty- to forty-minute presentation.
4. Collaborate:

The collaborative nature of this assignment has two parts:

- a. Post a video presentation of your seminar on the Seminar Padlet in A2L. Post due May 27.
  - 1) The presentation should introduce the . . .
    - Target audience,

- Topic,
  - Why you chose it, and . . .
  - Outline the topic's development in the seminar. You do not need to present the entire seminar. The video presentation is an overview of the seminar.
- 2) Length of presentation is approx. 10 minutes.
- b. Post a one paragraph interaction with your class colleagues. You can post directly on Padlet (audio, audio-visual or text). Due May 30.
5. Final Missional Seminar due June 3. This delayed due date gives you the opportunity to revise your seminar in light of your class colleagues' feedback on your video presentation of your missional seminar.
- a. The final written seminar should be a detailed outline that you could/would use for an actual seminar presentation.
- b. If you prepare a PowerPoint (Keynote, or other audio-visuals), submit it with your detailed outline in the A2L assignment folder.

C. Integrative Paper and Presentation:

1. Purpose:  
This assignment gives you experience writing and presenting article, essay, and chapter length papers.
2. Description:  
You will *write* and *present* a thesis paper on a topic related to Missional Theology and your area of DPT practice led research. I encourage you to investigate the issue from the perspective of your discipline and area(s) of research interest. You are encouraged to use the class as an opportunity to work on papers to:
- 1) Present at academic and/or professional society meetings and/or submit to journals for publication,
  - 2) Develop material for presentation to and/or application in your professional world,
  - 3) Pursue dissertation research.
3. Guidelines for the Paper:



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

a. Content and argument:

1) Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports).

- Example of a thesis statement: The missional church movement, especially its emphasis on incarnational ministry, provides valuable insight for Christian leadership in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.

Note: The DPT PLR topic in this thesis statement is “Christian leadership in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.”

2) Describe your topic.

3) Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.

4) Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms and interact with them vis-à-vis your view, where and when appropriate.

b. Form and Style:

1) Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., avoid excessive first-person discourse, colloquialisms (academic differs from conversational voice), and passive voice (use active).

2) Use and document a *minimum* of fifteen scholarly resources. Given the limitations on accessing libraries, you may need to rely more on journal articles than other normal circumstances.

3) Accurately document sources according to the MDC Style Guide.

4) Paper length: 20–25 pages. Not to exceed 7,000 words.

5) Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).

6) Use footnotes.

c. Due Date: June 17.

4. Presentation:

Depending on course numbers, you will present your paper to the class in a Zoom live meeting or post a video of your presentation on the Paper Padlet. Determination of mode of presentation will be based on schedules and internet connectivity of students in the

class. I prefer live presentation but will make a decision based on what works best for everyone in the class.

- The presentation of your paper (live or video) should be approx. 15 minutes.
- If we are not able to do the papers in a live format (e.g., using Zoom), then you can either post a video presentation of your paper OR a written draft of the paper to the paper Padlet.
- Due June 10 (Live or Padlet TBD).

#### D. Paper Collaboration:

1. Purpose:  
Provides experience in responding to and contributing to your class colleagues' projects. It provides the opportunity to develop professional skills in academic interaction that takes places at professional and academic conferences.
2. Description:  
Each student prepares a critical evaluation of the papers presented by their class colleagues.
  - a. The critique:
    - 1) Remember to be charitable; not only Christian, but since academia is a small guild, it is self-preservation.
    - 2) 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?
      - Does it bring the fields of the PLR topic and the missional theology into conversation?
  - b. Post your critical evaluation for each student in the Paper Padlet—see A2L outline, Paper Padlet. Evaluations can be written, audio, or audio-visual.
    - Post collaboration by June 13.

## VII. Policies:

### A. Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail [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.

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

**E. Late-Assignment and Exam Policy:**

1. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus.
2. Students take exams on the date and at the time scheduled in the syllabus.
3. Late assignments are reduced five percentage points for each day late (e.g., if the grade is 90 and it is one day late [after the beginning of class equals one day late], the grade will be reduced to 85).
4. 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.

5. 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.

**Please Note: 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.**