

BAPTIST HISTORY & THOUGHT

COURSE CODE: CH 3XB3/5XB5/6XB6

McMaster Divinity College

Fall Semester 2020

Hybrid Course

Online: Weekly

Face-to-Face: October 22-23

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath

gheath@mcmaster.ca

Specializations: Christian Culture, Christian History and Worldview, Pastoral Studies

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Baptists are one of the world's largest Protestant denominations, numbering close to 100,000,000 adherents. This course is an introduction to the history, doctrine, organization, and style of Baptist congregational life and mission. It begins with the birth of the movement in the early 1600s in England, and continues to the present-day development of a global multi-ethnic movement. Special attention will be given to the development of Canadian Baptist churches, and cultural engagement in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

This class is open to anyone, but is required by the CBOQ for ordination.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Knowing

- To survey the major ideas, personalities and developments in Baptist life.
- To provide an understanding of how Baptists have grown and developed in a variety of countries and continents.
- To place contemporary issues Baptists face within a broader historical context.
- To know how Baptists are similar to, and different from, other expressions of Christianity.

Being

- To gain practical insight into the work of being a leader within a local Baptist church.
- To understand the role of Baptist distinctives and practices in the development of effective ministry within the CBOQ.

Doing

- To develop skills in maintaining and nurturing a healthy, effective and personally satisfying vocation.

TEXTS:

- David Bebbington. *Baptists through the Centuries: A History of a Global People*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010.

- Harry Renfree. *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada*. Mississauga. Canadian Baptist Federation, 1988.
- Norman H. Maring, *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice*. (Revised Edition) Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1991.
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- *A Manual for Worship and Service*, Mississauga: All Canada Baptist Publications, 1998.

All required textbooks for this class and others at the Divinity College are available from READ-ON Books, and should be purchased at the beginning of the semester when READ-ON Books has its book table at the Divinity College (Room 218). Contact can be made by mail: 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2; phone: 416-620-2934; fax: 416-622-2308; email: books@readon.ca; website: www.readon.ca.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Online Engagement**

Students will complete weekly readings and post comments, as well as respond to posted comments by other students and professor. This is an important part of the class that allows for interaction and engagement by all.

- **Biographical Presentation**

Each student will post on avenuetolearn a five-minute video summary of a prominent Baptist's life and contribution. Students will comment on avenuetolearn on other presentations.

- **Resolving Board Issues**

Students are to prepare papers that resolve "board issues" discussed during the on-campus component to the class. Particular attention is to be paid to Baptist distinctives and context. Students will post their papers online and respond to comments from other students.

- **Research Paper**

This ten-page research paper provides an opportunity for students to pursue an area of research that intrigues them. The topic for the paper should relate to the student's specialization. Results of research will be shared with the class at the end of the semester.

- ***Christian History and Worldview***

The research for this specialization should focus on developing critical knowledge of Baptist history, or a deeper awareness of Baptist theology/worldview.

- ***Church and Culture***

Research for this specialization should relate to some aspect of Baptists and cultural engagement.

- ***Pastoral Studies***

Research for this specialization can go in a number of direction. It can focus on a theological construction of one's theological position in regards to an issue related to Baptist history and polity. It can deal with developing a strategy for dealing with issues related to Baptist history and polity. It can deal with Baptist resources for pastoral ministry. And so on.

PhD/MA students are expected to fulfill all assignments at an advanced degree level (additional 7500 words). They will also lead class discussion on subject determined by professor.

DPT students will follow their own PDT syllabus.

GRADING:

- Weekly Online Engagement: 40%
- Biography Class Presentation: 20%
- Resolving Board Issues: 20%
- Research Paper: 20%

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- 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, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.
- 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>
- 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.
- 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.

- Due Dates
Essays must be handed in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. All other essays will be considered to be late. Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 3% per day (not including weekends) if they attach to their essay a letter explaining the genuine emergency that delayed them. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will *not* receive comments and constructive criticism from the professor.
- Other
Please turn off your cell phone and/or pager before the class begins. Please do not attend class if you are ill and contagious (e.g. the flu). Respectful dialogue and disagreement is expected.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Some weeks will have a synchronous Webex face-to-face component. Time TBD.

Week Starting Sept 14: Introduction to Class & Reformation Era

Week Starting Sept 21: Baptist Origins

Week Starting Sept 28: How Baptist Churches Work

Week Starting Oct 5: Baptists in America & Canada

Week Starting Oct 12: Baptists around the Globe

Week Starting Oct 19: On Campus face-to-Face Component (Oct 22-23)

- *This two-day on-campus component is comprised of professor's lectures and group discussions.*
- *Depending on the COVID-19 situation, this part of the course will be either face-to-face or through synchronous Webex participation. The option chosen will be a "game time decision."*

Week Starting Oct 26: Baptist Beliefs

Week Starting Nov 2: Baptist Beliefs

Week Starting Nov 9: Baptist Organizations

Week Starting Nov 16: Biographical Presentations

Week Starting Nov 23: Biographical Presentations (or TBD)

Week Starting Nov 30: Research Paper Presentations

Week Starting Dec 7: Looking to the Future

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.