



# McMaster Divinity College

## **Critical Understandings in Ministry Leadership**

**MS 5YB5/6YB6**

**Fall 2020**

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Office # 237

Class Begins Online Sept. 14 with a webex gathering at 8:30 pm ET (details will be sent out well ahead of time), we meet on campus Nov. 3-4<sup>th</sup> (Nov. 3, 1:30-5:30, Nov. 4, 9:00-5:30). The class will also meet in small groups twice throughout the semester (See below for specific information).

### **Instructor 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 understanding of key church leadership competencies for contemporary ministry.
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 have gained 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 Nov. 3 - 4. 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 as an attachment to an email sent 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 formal class time. If you would like to meet together via zoom or webex 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.

Reimer, Sam and Wilkinson, Michael. *A Culture of Faith: Evangelical Congregations in Canada*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens, 2015.

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

## **Assignments**

### **1. 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. As a research paper the paper should reflect interaction with at least 8 academically credible sources. The student will also present the paper to a small group of classmates in an online setting. This presentation will offer a summary of the contents of the paper to the group and allow for interaction between group members (i.e. time for Q+A). The goal of this assignment is to help students understand how these important figures in Christian history were people whose ministries and theological interests were all directed by their experience within a particular social and ecclesial context. Students must clear their proposed historic figure with the instructor no later than Sept. 28, 2020. Please email the instructor by Sept. 28 with the person you propose to study to get clearance for your project.

**The paper should be approximately 4000 words (double spaced) in length and is due Oct. 19th, 2020, it will constitute 30% of the course grade.**

The paper presentations and the small groups will take place online sometime between Oct. 20 – 30<sup>th</sup>. Groups will be formed and a meeting date that is suitable for all members will be determined by Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> (or a date close to it). Doctoral students will meet in a group of their own. Each presentation should be 30 minutes in length, including time for interaction and questions. The presentation should give an overview of the historical figure, and the main contours of the paper (i.e. what were the issues in their context and how did that shape them, how did they respond, etc.). The presentation will be evaluated on clarity, creativity and the presenter's demonstration of a familiarity with their subject.

**Small group presentations will take place between Oct. 20-30, 2020 (exact date for your group TBA). The presentation is worth 10% of the 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 Nov. 3 or 4<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 does this artefact demonstrate the place of Christianity and/or the church in current culture. It could be an artefact that positively or negatively demonstrates how the church is trying to engage contemporary culture, or it could be an example of how the wider culture perceives the church, or how the place of Christianity is changing within culture, etc. 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 a question for the class that will help to provide a springboard for class discussion.

**Class presentations will take place on Nov. 3 or 4<sup>th</sup> (a schedule of exact times will be provided one week prior to these dates). They should be aprox. 20 minutes in length (including time for discussion) and will constitute 10% of the course grade.**

## **3. Understanding the Challenge of Contemporary Ministry Leadership: Paper and Paper presentation**

For this paper the student will choose a specific challenge or question that you have regarding contemporary Christian ministry. 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 three distinct stages; first, 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. Second, an engagement with the question/problem from both a theological and practical perspective 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 analysis of the problem/question under consideration in the paper. Third, the paper should move to response, providing insight into how the problem/question can be adequately addressed within a contemporary ministry context. As a research paper it is expected that at least 15 academically credible sources be consulted. The paper will also form the basis for a class presentation as it will be posted in an online forum and the doctoral students in 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 second week of the semester. Depending on the size of the doctoral cohort in the course these presentations may be to the whole doctoral cohort or it may be to a smaller group of doctoral students. Papers are due on the date that you are scheduled to post your paper to the discussion forum (as noted above this date will be determined in the second week of the course). These forums will begin the week of Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>.**

**In the discussion forum each student is expected to offer comments and/or questions to the paper being presented that week. These posts are due no later than 5:00 pm on the Friday of each week.**

**The paper should be approximately 6000 words in length and will constitute 40% of the course grade.**

#### **4. Participation**

As an online/hybrid course an ongoing commitment to participation in the online discussion forums 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, except on the final week when only a response to the question is required (see instructions in the course schedule below). 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 10% of the course grade.**

## Course Outline and Expectations

**Course Introduction: WebEx doctoral students class meeting (online), Monday Sept. 14<sup>h</sup> 8:30 pm ET (approx. One hour) *\*details will be provided but please plan to attend this gathering via. the online platform if at all possible.***

- Course overview, introductions, time for student questions regarding the course.
- 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), and to ask any questions you may have about the course.

### Unit One: Understanding Your Cultural Context

Weeks of Sept. 14, 21, 28 and Oct. 5. We will consider the necessity of leadership to understand their context with a specific emphasis on the current Canadian and North American context. We will consider current cultural trends that are impacting Christian ministry through online Presentations: On-line lectures and other learning resources.

- Student Responsibilities: Please review the material posted each week for this unit. Also, begin engaging with the course text *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945* and *A Culture of Faith: Evangelical Congregations in Canada*. During the week of Sept.28 - Oct. 4 participate in the on- line discussion forum. Please post your response to the discussion prompts provided by the instructor by Wednesday Sept. 30 of this week. Respond to at least two posts by your classmates no later than Sunday of this week (Oct. 4). Send your “historic leader” paper proposal to the instructor by Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **Unit Two: Global Perspectives, the Changing Nature of World Christianity Ministry and the need for Inter-faith dialogue and leadership**

- The Week of Oct. 12: Some educational resources, and a number of brief online lectures on the topic of world Christianity and Inter-faith dialogue.

-Student Responsibilities: Engage with the resources provided and review the online lectures. Post your response to the discussion question provided by the instructor by Wednesday Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>. Respond to at least two posts by your classmates by Sunday Oct. 18<sup>h</sup>. Work on your Historic leader paper as it is due Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>. Start reading the textbook *The Missionary Letters of Vincent Donovan, 1957-1973*.

## **Unit Three: Learning from a Historic Christian Leader**

The weeks of Oct. 19 - 30. Online Presentation and Discussion Forum: Doctoral students will meet in a small group(s) to present their “historic leader” papers and participate in a group discussion with classmates. (Dates and times TBD).

-Student Responsibilities: Finalize and submit your historic leader paper by Oct. 19, and prepare for your group presentation, and continue reading the course text *The Missionary Letters of Vincent Donovan, 1957-1973*.

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## **Unit Four: In Class Session (Nov. 3 -4)**

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*, and *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*.

Also, student 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 share your thoughts and impressions of the two text books we have been reading thus far and the content of the online lectures. Also, to interact with further content that will be presented. 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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### **Unit Five: The Future of Evangelical Theology and Ministry**

The week of Nov. 9 - 15 there will be no class content.

The week of Nov. 16 – 22 On line Presentation: The Future of Evangelical Theology and Ministry. Final paper presentations begin. Initial paper presentations and discussion forums.

Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> Live On-line discussion forum on the book *The Deconstructed Church* (Format and exact time will depend on the size of the class, details TBD). Ongoing paper presentations and discussion.

- 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. 23<sup>rd</sup>. Post your final paper if it is due one of these weeks and participate in the online discussion of the posted papers.

### **Unit Six: Leadership Strategies and Approaches**

The Week of Nov. 23: Online presentations with some educational resources on the topic of Leadership in the 21st century.

Ongoing paper presentations

Week of Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> : Ongoing paper presentations

Week of Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>: Ongoing paper presentations

- Student Responsibilities: Engage with the resources provided and review the online lectures. Post your response to the discussion question provided by the instructor by Friday Dec.4. Students are only responsible to offer one post to the question by the due date. This week it is not necessary to interact with classmates posts. Post your final paper if it is due one of these weeks and participate in the online discussion of the posted papers.

**Additional notes:**

#### A. Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore you may contact READ On Bookstore, at [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: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/> 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.