

**Ministry Formation**  
**MF1AO3a/2AO3a/3AO3a**  
**Fall and Winter 2020-21**

**Preamble for the 2020-21 school Year**

As we enter into the school year of 2020-21 we are in the midst of a unique time in history as we negotiate our way through the COVID 19 pandemic. This is having effects on many aspects of life including the way this course will be staged in the 20-21 academic year. This syllabus reflects some accommodations for the Ministry Formation course this year. A key one is that we are offering two different tracks for the course. Please review the syllabus as you will find the requirements for each track outlined below. The first track follows the normal contours of the course with some minor modifications, the other track offers students an option that does not include a regular placement. While students are encouraged to participate in track one, students who are unable to secure a suitable placement will be given the option to engage in a mentored ministry project. This project would require a student to select an area of ministry or a particular ministry vocation and embark on a thorough study of their topic (details below). Students will choose one of these tracks by the start of the academic year (Sept. 14, 2020) and will be required to remain in that track until the end of the academic year (Apr. 7, 2021). If you have questions about these options or need help deciding which track is best for you please contact the Director of Ministry Formation, Dr. Lee Beach ([beachl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:beachl@mcmaster.ca)).

**Course Instructor(s):** Dr. Lee Beach ([beachl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:beachl@mcmaster.ca))  
External Mentors (TBA)

**Class Meetings:**

**Online Orientation Session for Track One Students:** Saturday September 12\* 9:30 – 10:45 Am ET (This class meeting will be held via an online platform, details will be sent well in advance. Please plan to attend this important orientation session).

**Online Orientation Session for Track Two Students:** Saturday September 12\* 11:00 am - 12:15 pm ET (This class meeting will be held via an online platform, details will be sent well in advance. Please plan to attend this important orientation session).

**First Time Supervisors Meeting:** Tuesday September 15, 11:00 – 12:00 pm (for first time supervisors). This meeting will be held via. an online platform. Details will be provided well in advance. \*Students are not required to attend.

**Placements begin the week of Sept. 14, 2020**

**Course Description**

This course is an experiential learning course that encompasses five key components. A ministry placement that requires 8 hours per week of engagement in an ongoing ministry context, the development of a ministry learning covenant that sets learning goals for the placement, connection to an experienced ministry practitioner as a placement supervisor, regular meetings with an external ministry mentor (appointed by MDC) and several forms of evaluation at the end of the placement. Three courses in Ministry formation are required for students in the MDiv program and one course is required for students in the MTS program.

## **Objectives:**

### **Knowing:**

Ministry Formation will help students to develop their own theology and the skill to reflect on ministry theologically drawing from personal experience as a resource for theological development. Further it should offer to students the opportunity to integrate theological thought with ministry practice. This includes a focus on the following:

- a. Significance of Theological Reflection on Experience
- b. Integration of Theological resources with ministry practice
- c. Articulation of Theological understanding

### **Being:**

Spiritual formation is the cornerstone of effective ministry. Formation for ministry must introduce basic spiritual practices for spiritual growth and long term inner health. These include:

- a. Understanding and cultivating self care in ministry
- b. Understanding and cultivating the practice of spiritual disciplines in ministry
- c. Understanding and cultivating a vision for ministry as discipleship

Ministry formation should help students get in touch with who they are as a ministering person, both strengths and growing edges. It should help them gain an honest understanding of the potential baggage that they bring to ministry. Further, it needs to provide them with the opportunity to explore and identify their sense of personal calling to ministry. Including:

- a. Understanding one's particular personality.
- b. Discerning your Calling to ministry
- c. Identifying your Gifts and Leadership Aptitudes

### **Doing:**

This course will help students to focus on the development of ministry skills with a view to skill discovery and enhancement. Including:

- a. Identification of key skills required for Christian ministry
- b. Reflection on vital ministry skills with feedback from others
- c. Development as self-directed, collaborative learner through engagement in a learning network of ministry mentors and experienced practitioners.

## **TRACK ONE: MINISTRY PLACEMENT**

### **Requirements**

1. Students, in consultation with the course instructor (Dr. Lee Beach) will be required to secure a placement that allows them to invest a minimum of 5 hours per week in ministry activities, preparation and supervision. This can be a new placement, or it may be the students place of employment or current volunteer ministry.

2. This placement is designed to be a supervised placement; therefore a qualified supervisor must be identified who will agree to meet with the student at least 6 times throughout each semester (12 times total) for support and mutual reflection on ministry experience.

\*\* The Ministry Formation office has an extensive list of approved field placement sites, including churches of various denominations, para-church organizations, healthcare facilities, campus ministries, correctional institutions, and community service agencies. All of these placement sites have indicated their willingness to welcome and supervise student interns. Student-initiated placement proposals, however, are also considered. Placement selection is a collaborative process involving the student, the proposed supervisor, the placement site, and the Director of Ministry Formation. Every effort is made to match students with a placement setting that is consonant with their vocational goals, denominational affiliations, geographic preferences, and ministry interests. **(See Appendix below for further information on finding a placement, the role of the supervisor, etc.)**

3. Students will also be connected with an external mentor appointed by the school. Mentors and students meet 5 times over the course of the academic year. Meetings with the mentor will include specific topics and themes. Students will present personal and ministry reflections at each meeting and mentors will offer feedback and ask questions regarding the presentation and any other issues that they and/or the student want to discuss (some details of these meetings are offered below, more will be provided through the course orientation on Sept. 12). Meetings will be approximately 45 minutes and will be arranged at a time that is suitable for both the student and the mentor. It is assumed that these meetings will be conducted in a virtual format, although face to face meetings are certainly fine if both parties are agreeable. A combination of both is also an option.
4. Students will form a Ministry Learning covenant (including three specific learning goals) at the beginning of the placement.
5. As the placement reaches its conclusion four evaluation forms will be required. A supervisor evaluation, a student self evaluation, a student evaluation of their placement and mentoring experience and a mentor evaluation of the student. Specific forms for each will be provided part way through the winter semester.

## **Assignments**

The following assignments will be course requirements that the student will complete and be graded on. Specific information on how to develop and fulfill these assignments will be provided in the online introductory session (Sept. 12th) and written guidelines will also be provided prior to that time.

1. **Ministry Learning Covenant**  
Students will construct a “Ministry Learning Covenant” at the beginning of the school year. This covenant invites students to set three specific learning goals and action steps for each goal. As well as provide details of their placement. A template for this covenant will be distributed to students prior to the Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> online gathering in order to give further guidance to the development of this covenant.

**The Ministry Learning Covenant is due Oct. 4, 2020 and should be sent to the Director of Ministry Formation (DMF) as an email attachment. It is worth 20% of the final grade.**

2. Ministry Reflection Reports

Students will write two ministry reflection reports. In the Fall semester first year students will write a personal spiritual autobiography reflecting on their own spiritual journey and formation, while second and third year students will write a reflection based on a case study from their placement experience. In the Winter semester all students will write a reflection based on a case study from their own ministry experience. Templates for how to construct these reports will be provided prior to the orientation gathering on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. These reports will be presented to your external mentor and will form the basis for two of the student – mentor meetings.

**Due dates for these reports are TBD (one in the mid to late fall semester, one in the mid to late winter semester) in conversation with the external mentor. These reports are each worth 25% of the final grade. They should be submitted as email attachments to both the external mentor and the DMF on the date they are due.**

3. Mid-Year Reflection Report

Students will write and submit a mid-year reflection report that offers a reflection on how they believe their placement is progressing at the half way point. The reflection should include a recap of activities that the student has participated in and some reflection on key points of learning. Most importantly the report should reflect on the progress being made toward the student’s learning goals and any adjustments that need to be made. Honest reflection on positive strides made and places for further attention should be discussed. Templates for how to construct these reports will be provided prior to the orientation gathering on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. These reports will be presented to your external mentor and will form the basis for one of the student – mentor meetings.

**The due date for this report will be near the end of the first semester (exact date TBD in conversation with external mentor). The report is worth 20% of the final grade. It should be submitted as an email attachment to both the external mentor and the DMF on the date they are due.**

4. End of Year Evaluations

Students are required to provide four evaluations based on their learning goals and overall experience in the course. A supervisor evaluation, a student self-evaluation, a student evaluation of their placement and mentoring experience and an external mentor evaluation of the student. Specific forms for each will be provided part way through the winter semester. It is the student’s responsibility to gather these forms and submit them to the DMF.

**End of the year evaluations are Due Apr. 5, 2021 They should be sent to the DMF as email attachments. All four evaluations must be submitted in order to receive the full grade; incomplete submissions receive a 7 or lower grade.**

\*\* Grades are assigned by the Director of Ministry Formation. The ministry reflection reports and mid-year reflection report will be presented to the external mentor at one of your meetings. The mentor will offer a suggested grade to the DMF for his consideration.

## **TRACK TWO: MENTORED MINISTRY PROJECT**

Students who are unable to secure a suitable placement will be given the option to engage in a mentored ministry project. This project would require a student to select an area of ministry or a particular ministry vocation and embark on a thorough study of their topic.

### **Requirements**

1. Students will identify an area of Christian ministry practice or a particular ministry vocation that they want to study in order to understand it more fully. This must be done in consultation with the Director of Ministry Formation (Dr. Lee Beach). A formal proposal and request for approval for the study must be submitted to Dr. Beach by Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. (see “assignments” below for further detail)
2. Students must identify a supervisor/mentor for the project. This person must be a practitioner in the field of the study and will be willing to consult with and meet with the student in an ongoing way throughout the duration of the study. The supervisor’s role includes;
  - i. Meeting with the student twice per. Semester (4 times total) to discuss their project and its progress.
  - ii. Working with the student on the development of their annotated bibliography and reading the students papers and offering feedback prior to their presenting them to an MDC faculty member.
  - iii. Being available for consultation as needed.

**\*\* The Director of Ministry Formation can help identify a supervisor if needed. Feel free to be in contact with him as necessary.**

3. Students will interview at least two practitioners (not including their supervisor) in their field of study. Guidelines for these meetings and a general interview guide will be provided prior to the day of the course orientation meeting (Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>).
4. Students will develop an annotated bibliography of at least 20 sources related to the field of study.
5. Students will develop a paper that offers a general but thorough overview of the particular area of ministry or vocation chosen.
6. Students will develop a paper that engages with a key issue in the field of study that demonstrates theological reflection on the issue.
7. Students will present both papers (separately) to the Director of Ministry Formation or a designated MDC faculty member. One in the fall semester, one in the winter semester.
8. Students will do at least one site visit to shadow a practitioner in their field of

study and provide a brief reflection report on their experience. (This is assuming it is possible to do this given possible COVID 19 restrictions).

9. Students will submit a final year end evaluation to the Director of Ministry Formation.

## Assignments

1. Proposal and Request for Approval

The proposal should be a short paragraph sent to the Director of Ministry Formation (DMF) via. email that identifies the field of study, the reason for choosing this particular area and the proposed supervisor for the project that briefly outlines their qualifications to serve as supervisor.

**Due Sept. 21, 2020. This assignment is a Pass/Fail Grade. If the proposal is not received the project will not be allowed to move forward resulting in the student having to withdraw from the course.**

2. Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography of 20 sources will be developed. Students should identify books, articles and other resources (i.e. websites (no more than 3), periodicals (no more than 3) or professional journals (no more than 3)) that provide insight into their designated field of study. It is not expected that the student will have thoroughly read every book or article, etc. that is included in the bibliography but each entry should include a 50 word (approximately) annotation that offers a description of why this resource is helpful to understanding or supporting their field of study.

**This assignment is due Nov. 2, 2020. It should be submitted as an email attachment to the DMF. It will constitute 30% of the course grade.**

3. Overview Paper

Students will write a paper that provides an overview of their chosen field of study. The paper should offer a general theological understanding of the field (i.e. how is this ministry practice or vocation a legitimate expression of Christian ministry? What are the biblical and historical foundations? etc.) as well as some of the key practices and contemporary challenges that are part of it. The paper should reflect some degree of research (i.e. engagement with sources) as well as thoughts culled from interviews and conversations with practitioners. The paper will be verbally presented to the DMF or a designated MDC faculty member. The presentation will include the student offering an overview of their paper, including key findings and insights, as well as a time of discussion of the paper between the student and the faculty member. Presentations will last approximately 30 minutes.

**The paper should be 8 – 10 pages in length (double spaced). The due date will be sometime during the weeks of Nov. 30 – Dec. 11. The exact date is contingent upon setting a date for the presentation of the paper with the DMF or a designated MDC faculty member. Exact due dates will be finalized no later than Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>. The paper should be submitted as an email attachment to both the DMF and faculty member designated (if different from the DMF). More details will be provided as Nov. 30 approaches. This assignment is worth 30% of the final course grade.**

4. Theological Reflection Paper

Students will write a paper based upon one issue related to their field of study. Specifically students should choose an area of current challenge in their field of study. Is there a perennial problem that this field deals with? Is there a particular issue that is currently controversial? Is there a practice or theological idea that people within the field have disagreements about? The paper should identify a specific issue and offer a theological and practical reflection on the issue. The paper should outline the issue, offer various perspectives on it, provide some theological reflection on the issue and offer some possible ways forward in dealing with the issue (a more thorough template to aid your thinking on this assignment will be provided at the beginning of the second semester).

**The paper should be 8 – 10 pages in length (double spaced). The due date will be sometime during the weeks of Mar. 29 – Apr. 9, 2021. The exact date is contingent upon setting a date for the presentation of the paper with the DMF or a designated MDC faculty member. Exact due dates will be finalized no later than Mar. 22nd. The paper should be submitted as an email attachment to both the DMF and faculty member designated (if different from the DMF). More details will be provided as Mar. 29 approaches. This assignment is worth 30% of the final course grade.**

5. Shadow Reflection Report

This report is a 1000 word reflection on your experience of shadowing a practitioner in your field of study. The report should offer the activities that you watched your practitioner engage in and the impressions that you are taking away from your experience in terms of what it taught you about ministry and about your own possible engagement in this ministry.

**This assignment is contingent upon a time of shadowing being feasible based on the COVID 19 pandemic. If it is deemed safe and appropriate for a shadowing session to occur this assignment will be worth 10% of the course grade. If it is not possible to participate in this assignment for COVID reasons the course grade will be based on the marks accrued in the other assignments alone.**

6. Year End Evaluation

A year end evaluation form will be provided and sent out to you in mid-March. It will ask you to reflect on your experience in this course as well as provide some brief details on your supervisory meetings and interviews.

**This assignment is due Apr. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It should be sent to the DMF as an email attachment. Evaluation criteria will be provided with the form. It is worth 10% of the course grade.**

## **APPENDIX: FURTHER INFORMATION ON PLACEMENTS**

### **MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR**

Selecting and arranging a placement is a collaborative process. Students begin by arranging to meet individually with the Director of Ministry Formation to discuss their ministry interests, vocational goals, and learning objectives. This consultation meeting with the Director must take place before any arrangements are negotiated with a particular placement setting or supervisor.

A listing and description of current placement options is available for students' perusal in the Ministry Formation office. Student-initiated placement proposals are also considered. After meeting with the Director of Ministry Formation, the student arranges a site visit and an inquiry interview with a prospective supervisor to determine if there is a mutually agreeable fit. The student, the supervisor, and the Director of Ministry Formation must all be in agreement before the placement is finalized.

### **GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING A PLACEMENT**

- Students are encouraged to select placements that provide them with a *broad* exposure to the tasks, responsibilities, and challenges of Christian ministry within their chosen field.
- Students are expected to be self-directed adult learners who are proactive in pursuing the kinds of experiential learning opportunities that meet their individual learning needs and vocational goals.
- Students in the MDiv and DipMin programs are encouraged to have at least one placement in a church setting. Students heading towards ordained congregational ministry should have at least two out of the three placements in a church.
- To maximize new learning experiences, MDiv and Dip Min students should seek at least one placement in a church where they do not currently attend or hold membership. If, however, the student is in a paid ministry position, he or she may arrange to fulfill their ministry formation requirements in that setting provided that a placement supervisor is appointed and objectives for new learning and development are set and met.
- MDiv and Dip Min Students may remain in a placement for three consecutive years only if deemed appropriate to the attainment of new learning goals.

### **GUIDELINES FOR INITIAL INTERVIEWS BETWEEN STUDENTS & PROSPECTIVE SUPERVISORS**

The following are useful questions to consider when students and prospective supervisors are meeting for an initial inquiry interview:

- What personal learning goals does the student hope to meet in this placement?
- What ministry opportunities, learning experiences, and resources can the placement provide?
- What knowledge, experience, and skill does the student bring from previous experience and training?
- What does the supervisor consider to be his/her ministry strengths and supervision style?



- What is the student's preferred learning style and how does this fit with the supervisor's approach?
- What are the supervisor's expectations of the student's participation in the placement in terms of roles, responsibilities, level of independence, etc.?
- Is there a match between what the student expects and what the supervisor and placement can offer?

## **THE ROLE OF THE PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR**

Placement Supervisors are qualified, experienced ministry practitioners who serve as ministry mentors and engage the student in the process of theological reflection and ministry formation. They are responsible for coordinating, facilitating and assessing the student's learning in the placement. The placement supervisor may function at various times as a mentor, role model, coach, accountability partner, colleague, and consultant, but the primary focus is on education for ministry. In special circumstances, arrangements may be made for co-supervisors or for an off-site supervisor.

Specific responsibilities of the placement supervisor include:

- Submit a *Placement Information Form* to the College (supplied by the Director of Ministry Formation upon request).
- Interview prospective student(s) and collaborate with the Director of Ministry Formation in discerning a good match.
- Collaborate with the student in developing a learning plan outlined in the *Learning/Ministry Covenant*.
- Facilitate learning and ministry opportunities that will foster the student's growth.
- Encourage independent yet supervised experience.
- Meet with the student regularly, at least six times per semester (12 times in total) for supervision focused on theological reflection on the student's ministry experiences.
- Provide continuous feedback to the student throughout the placement in addition to a formal written evaluation at the end of the placement.
- Participate in orientation and training workshops offered by the College (online).
- Liaise with the College through the Director of Ministry Formation.

## **QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS A PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR**

Supervisors are considered as field instructors working in partnership with the faculty of McMaster Divinity College in educating students for ministry. They are selected and approved on the basis of the following criteria:

- Agreement with the mission and purpose of McMaster Divinity College.
- Theologically trained with a proven record of effective ministry.
- Engaged in a ministry setting that is supportive of educating students for ministry.
- Well-established in their current ministry context for a minimum of one year (some flexibility may be allowable).
- Committed to facilitating the student's identified learning and ministry goals.
- Desire to learn and engage in the process of theological reflection on ministry experiences.

- Willing to follow the Ministry Formation Program objectives, expectations and evaluation methods.
- Completed the Ministry Formation component of their own personal program at McMaster Divinity College, if the supervisor is a current student. (A current student cannot be supervised by another student if they do not meet this criterion).