

**THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS: THEN AND NOW
CH/TH 3XL3/5XL5/6XL6**

**McMaster Divinity College
Winter Semester 2021**

Weekly Online

In-Class “Face-to-Face” Session:

March 5: 1:30pm-5:30pm

March 6: 9:00am-5:30pm

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath

gheath@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 ex.26409

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the lives of the saints (“then”) and their relevance to life and ministry today (“now”), primarily through a reading of their (or their follower’s) writings. It is concerned with the historical and theological development of the saints, the role of hagiography in the life of the church, and the appropriation of the lives of the saints for life and ministry today.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Knowing

- to provide an understanding of the historical development of saints, the theological diversity of saints, and the role of the saints in the life of the three main traditions of the church
- to understand the various forms of ministry practiced by saints over the centuries

Being

- to explore (and ultimately appreciate) the different expressions of spirituality and models of ministry as practiced by the many saints of the church
- to provide “friends and mentors” for life and ministry

Doing

- to develop a pattern for one’s own vocational direction
- to develop a spiritual disciplines based on the lives of the saints
- to develop in each student an ability to assess hagiography and situations from an historical perspective

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Lawrence S. Cunningham. *A Brief History of the Saints*. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.
- Mary-Ann Stouck, ed. *A Short Reader of Medieval Saints*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Kathryn Spink. *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography (Revised Edition)*. New York: HarperCollins, 2011.
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- Selected readings distributed in class.

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, 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.
- 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.
- 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 5% 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, and may not be returned at the same time as the papers submitted on the due date. Submit an electronic copy on the due date or a hard copy before the due date if you are unable to be in class on the due date because of a foreknown absence.
- 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).

- 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.

ASSIGNMENTS

- **Online Engagement**

Weekly online engagement is expected (eg. listening to lectures, reading and submitting posts, etc.)

- **Position Paper**

Students are to prepare a 2 page summary of their views on the saints. Things to be considered are their role in prayer, liturgy, pilgrimage, art, inspiration, etc. Reflection on this assignment will be posted on [avenuretolearn](#).

- **Book Review**

Students are to prepare a 2-3 page book review of *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*. The review should answer questions such as: what is the author's thesis? How did the author argue the thesis (structure, sources, methodology, etc.)? What are the weaknesses and strengths of the book? What is the value of reading the book? The analysis should also consider the student's specialization. See *Doing Church History* for further instructions. Reflection on this assignment will be on [avenuretolearn](#).

- **Church Visit Reflection**

Students are to attend a Roman Catholic Church liturgy and prepare a 2-3 page reflection on the experience, paying particular attention to how the saints were referred to in the liturgy, artwork, and architecture. What role did they play? What was the theology being espoused? In what ways did what you see confirm what you have been reading about the saints, and in what ways did it challenge? What you appropriate some of what you heard and saw? Reflection on this assignment will be posted on [avenuretolearn](#).

- **Research Paper**

Each student will write a ten-page research paper on a topic related to their specialization. The topic of this paper will be determined by the student's specialization, and developed in consultation with the professor. Presentation of this assignment will be on [avenuretolearn](#).

- o ***Pastoral Studies***

Research for this specialization should focus on the appropriation of the saints for local parish life. In what way(s) can the saints be used today to deepen the Christian walk or inspire people to do great things?

- o ***Christian History and Worldview***

Research for this specialization can go in one of two directions. First, it can focus on a

theological construction of one's theological position in regards to an issue related to the saints. Or it can develop critical knowledge of a key movement or event in Christian history.

o ***Church and Culture***

Research for this specialization should focus on a construction of one's position in regards to an aspect of Christians and the saints, with a particular concern for the development of saints in a particular culture.

Results of research will be shared with the class at the end of the semester. There are a number of ways in which this research is to be completed:

- o Traditional academic research paper (5 pages)
- o Non-traditional formats (5-6 pages)
 - Popular article for a church or denominational publication (2-3 pages)
 - Popular article for a public audience, and to be posted on a blog or Facebook (2-3 pages)

• **Devotional Journal**

This is not a research paper. This assignment is concerned with the application of "lessons learned" from the lives of the saints. It should be a weekly journal based on reflections related to readings and class experiences. It should note key thoughts, important quotes, insights into spiritual life and discipline, plans for spiritual development in the future, reflections on actual practices begun during the semester, saint and liturgy, and so on. Near the end of the semester all students will have an opportunity to share 1-2 entries of their journal with the entire class.

DPT/MA/PhD students are eligible to enroll, and will meet with the professor to discuss expectations and assignments.

GRADING:

Position Paper	5%
Book Review	10%
Church Visit	10%
Research Paper	25%
Devotional Journal	20%
Online Engagement	30%

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Online weeks will have an online component of lectures, videos, and/or other forms of interaction. This material will be on Avenue to Learn (McMaster website).

The *Hybrid Intensive In-Class Meetings* at MDC are critical for the class, and attendance is required. Depending on the status of COVID-19 and restrictions associated with the pandemic, this two-day portion of the course may be physical face-to-face, or synchronous online face-to-face. Either way, students must reserve the time allotted for this part of the course.

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

Week Starting Jan 4	Introduction to Course
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronous Webex face-to-face component: Saturday, Jan 9, 9:00-10:00am¹
Week Starting Jan 11	Hagiography
Week Starting Jan 18	Discuss/Debate Position Papers <i>*Position Paper Due*</i>
Week Starting Jan 25	Theology of the Saints (Part 1)
Week Starting Feb 1	Theology of the Saints (Part 2)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronous Webex face-to-face component: Saturday, Feb 6, 9:00-10:00am²
Week Starting Feb 8	Varieties of Saints (Part 1)
Week Starting Feb 15	Varieties of Saints (Part 2) <i>*Book Review Due*</i>
Week Starting Feb 22	Reading Week
Week Starting Mar 1	<i>Hybrid Intensive In-Class Meetings (Mar 5- 6)</i> Icons, Liturgies, and Holy Days Saints in Liturgy and Architecture Relics and Pilgrimages (Part 1) <i>*Church Visit Completed*</i>
Week Starting Mar 8	Relics and Pilgrimages (Part 2)
Week Starting Mar 15	The Making of a Saint
Week Starting Mar 22	Research Paper Presentations (Part 1) <i>*Research Papers Due*</i>
Week Starting Mar 29	Research Paper Presentations (Part 2)
Week Starting Apr 5	Journal Discussions <i>*Devotional Journals Due*</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronous Webex face-to-face component: Saturday, Apr 9, 9:00-10:00am³

¹ Discussion will be recorded for those who are unable to participate.

² Discussion will be recorded for those who are unable to participate.

³ Discussion will be recorded for those who are unable to participate.

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.