

**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 6: 9:00am-3:00pm

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath  
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*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](mailto: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. Submit an electronic copy on the due date or a hard copy before the due date.
- 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 and Reading**

Weekly online engagement is expected (eg. listening to lectures, engaging in synchronous meetings, reading and submitting posts, etc.). Students will also be asked at the end of the semester what percentage of the textbooks they have read.

- **Position Paper**

Students are to prepare a two-page summary of their views on the saints. Things to be considered are their role in prayer, liturgy, pilgrimage, art, inspiration, etc. This is not a research paper – it is a position paper that requires you to state where you are right now (an exercise in self-awareness and assumptions). Be prepared to talk about this in class.

- **Book Review**

Students are to prepare a two-three 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. Be prepared to talk about this in class.

- **Church Visit Reflection (*This may be cancelled due to Covid 19 – TBD*)**

Students are to attend a Roman Catholic Church liturgy and prepare a two-three 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? Be prepared to talk about this in class.

- **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 by video recording.

- 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:**

Online Engagement and Reading	20%
Position Paper	10%
Book Review	10%
Church Visit	10%
Devotional Journal	25%
Research Paper	25%

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

Weeks will have components such as recorded video lectures and a synchronous Webex face-to-face component. Some weeks will also have online posting on *avenuetolearn*. The one-day *Hybrid Intensive In-Class Meeting* at MDC is important for the class, and attendance is expected.

Week Starting Jan 4                    **Introduction to Course**  
 View Recorded Video Lecture  
 Attend Synchronous Meeting (Saturday, 9:00-10:00am):  
<https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath>

Week Starting Jan 11                **Hagiography**

	View Recorded Video Lecture
Week Starting Jan 18	<p><b>Discuss/Debate Position Papers</b>  Attend Synchronous Meeting (Saturday, 9:00-10:00am):  <a href="https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath">https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath</a>  <i>*Position Paper Due*</i></p>
Week Starting Jan 25	<p><b>Theology of the Saints (Part 1)</b>  View Recorded Video Lecture</p>
Week Starting Feb 1	<p><b>Theology of the Saints (Part 2)</b>  View Recorded Video Lecture  Attend Synchronous Meeting (Saturday, 9:00-10:00am):  <a href="https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath">https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath</a></p>
Week Starting Feb 8	<p><b>Varieties of Saints (Part 1)</b>  View Recorded Video Lecture</p>
Week Starting Feb 15	<p><b>Varieties of Saints (Part 2)</b>  View Recorded Video Lecture  Attend Synchronous Meeting (Saturday, 9:00-10:00am):  <a href="https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath">https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath</a>  <i>*Book Review Due*</i></p>
Week Starting Feb 22	<b>Reading Week</b>
Week Starting Mar 1	<p><i>Hybrid Intensive In-Class Meetings (Mar 6)</i>  <a href="https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath">https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath</a>  <b>Icons, Liturgies, and Holy Days</b>  <b>Saints in Liturgy and Architecture</b>  <i>*Church Visit Completed*</i></p>
Week Starting Mar 8	<p><b>Relics and Pilgrimages</b>  View Recorded Video Lecture</p>
Week Starting Mar 15	<p><b>The Making of a Saint</b>  View Recorded Video Lecture  Attend Synchronous Meeting (Saturday, 9:00-10:00am):  <a href="https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath">https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath</a></p>
Week Starting Mar 22	<p><b>Research Paper Presentations</b>  View Recorded Video  <i>*Research Papers Due*</i></p>
Week Starting Mar 29	<p><b>Research Paper Presentations</b>  View Recorded Video</p>

Week Starting Apr 5

**Journal Discussions**

Attend Synchronous Meeting (Saturday, 9:00-10:00am):

<https://mcmaster.webex.com/meet/gheath>

*\*Devotional Journals Due\**

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