

MCMMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE  
WINTER SEMESTER 2021

PhD – CHTH G125 – C04

MA – CH/MS/NT/OT/TH 6ZM6

**THEOLOGICAL CONTOURS OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY**

*Interdisciplinary Seminar*

Online January 4 – February 14; March 1 – April 11

On-site Monday, February 22 (9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, February 23 (9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

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## Course Description

This course offers a specifically Christological account of the church's ministry, explaining it less as *imitation* of Christ than as *participation* in Christ's ongoing ministry in and on behalf of the world. Lectures, classroom exercises, and assignments will explore such foundational theological concerns as the nature of pastoral identity, the purpose of the church, and the goals of Christian ministry. While the course focuses on ministerial theology and praxis in a congregational setting, consideration will also be given to forms of ministry in other contexts.

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## Course Objectives

### KNOWING

- ▶ To review and assess foundational theological concepts and categories of Christian ministry, focussing especially on the identity and purpose of the church.
- ▶ To explore the Christological contours of discipleship in relation to the ministry of leadership in church and academy, with particular attention to the dynamics of a theology informed by the cross.

### BEING

- ▶ To examine key features of spiritual autobiography with a view to clarifying the relationship between personal spirituality, discipleship, and ministerial vocation.

- ▶ To develop a fuller sense of identity “in Christ” as it applies to ministries of scholarship and teaching.
- ▶ To be formed together as a learning community.

#### DOING

- ▶ To gain practice in theological discernment as it applies to the pastoral dimensions of academic ministry.
- ▶ To identify and clarify personal goals for vocation and ministry within church, academy, and society.

### Lecture Outline

*Week of:*

January 4	Module 1:	Course Orientation The Fragmentation of Theological Education Shaw, “The Hidden Curriculum of Theological Education”	Summary Statement due
January 11	Module 2:	Christian Identity and the Life of Christ	
January 18	Module 3:	The Rôle of the Pastor (I): The Priority of Grace	
January 25	Module 4:	The Rôle of the Pastor (II): <i>Participatio Christi</i> Brené Brown: “The Power of Vulnerability”	
February 1	Module 5:	The Rôle of the Pastor (III): “Apart from Me You Can Do Nothing”	Review Essay due
February 8	Module 6:	The Rôle of the Pastor (IV): The Pastor As Test Case	
February 15	Module 7:	Cruciform Discipleship (I) Gorman, <i>Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross</i>	
February 22 (9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.), 23 (9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)		In-Class Sessions: Case Studies and Student Presentations Peterson, <i>The Pastor</i> ; Blackaby and King; <i>Experiencing God</i>	
March 1, 8		[Hybrid sessions for other courses; no modules scheduled]	
March 15	Module 8:	Ministry as Crucifixion (I): “Ministry in the Shape of the Cross” Purves, <i>The Crucifixion of Ministry</i>	
March 22	Module 9:	Ministry as Crucifixion (II) Luther, <i>LW 21:339–45</i>	



## C. Student Responsibilities and Course Assignments

% of Final Grade

Written assignments are due at noon on the due date, and are to be submitted via the Avenue to Learn course website. In order to avoid late penalties, students are responsible for ensuring that the upload of their assignment has been successful.

1. Comprehensive preparation for, attendance at, and full participation in all class sessions.
2. Course assignments should together provide evidence of approximately 4,000 pages of relevant background reading (e.g. 12–15 volumes).

3. Introductory Presentation: The Impact of Our Research 5%

For the initial module (January 4), submit a 500-word statement that explains the purpose and significance of your MA or PhD research

- a) in your own life,
- b) in the life of the church, and
- c) for society as a whole.

Be sure to address conceptual concerns (*knowing*), questions of identity (*being*), and practical considerations (*doing*) alike, explaining *why* you are undertaking this research, *how* it will have the proposed effect, and *what* it will accomplish in each of the three domains. For the initial, synchronous online class meeting, offer a three to five minute oral presentation on the practical implications of your research, apart from its intended significance for an academic audience.

4. Review Essay 25%

Review and compare the perspectives and contributions to a theology of pastoral ministry offered by Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* and *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation*. These works are to be

- a. reviewed as to content and argumentation, in keeping with the “Basic Guidelines for Composing a Book Review” (below);
- b. compared in this respect to each other; and
- c. evaluated for their contribution to a broader theology of pastoral ministry.

The review should interact with the work of at least one other pastoral theologian whose work is relevant to the student’s programme of research.

Length: 2,500 – 3,000 words

Due: February 1

## 5. Culminating Exercise: Theory and Application of Pastoral Theology

The purpose of this exercise is twofold:

- 1) to identify the pastoral dimensions of ministry to church, academy, and society, and
  - 2) for students to situate their own research and vocational/ministerial interests in relation to broader conceptual and practical considerations raised by theologians both ancient and modern.
- a. Content (choose *one* of the following topics):
- i. Case Study

In conversation with relevant material from Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, and other theological resources (whether ancient or modern), present a case study in the application of pastoral theology to a specific ministry situation, giving attention both to conceptual and to methodological considerations. Describe and analyse the ministry situation from a theological perspective; identify the respective rôles and responsibilities of the minister, God, and/or the congregation; discuss appropriate pedagogical and practical goals; specify suitable courses of ministerial and/or congregational action. Discuss your findings in relation to your own ministry, as well as their specific relevance to the needs of the church, the academic community, and society at large.

As identified by Oden, possible categories for consideration include (but are not limited to):

- a. Ordination (26–34)
- b. Spiritual Gifts (64–81)
- c. Liturgical Leadership (85–104)
- d. Baptism and Lord's Supper (105–26)
- e. Preaching (127–40)
- f. Teaching (141–52)
- g. Institutional Administration (153–65)
- h. Pastoral Visitation (169–85)

- i. Spiritual Direction (“Care of Souls,” 186–205)
- j. Ministry to the Sick (249–66)
- k. Care of the Poor (267–92)
- l. Care of the Dying (293–310)

For ministry situations not addressed by Oden (e.g. evangelism, church planting, cross-cultural mission, etc.), students are advised to consult with the instructor in order to clarify the scope of the topic and identify appropriate resource materials.

ii. Christology and Cruciformity

Evaluate the contribution of Andrew Purves to pastoral theology by comparison and contrast to the work of one of the following:

- a. A major theologian in the classical tradition (Augustine, Athanasius, Calvin, Gregory the Great, Luther, Wesley, Edwards, etc.);
- b. A major pastoral theologian from the modern era (Donald Capps, Elaine Graham, Seward Hiltner, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Oden, Letty Russell, etc.);
- c. Another theologian or theoretician relevant to your chosen field of research.

Indicate conceptual and theological distinctives and/or continuities, and discuss their implications for ministerial practice in relation to the needs of the contemporary church, academy, and society.

- b. Format 35% + 35%

This exercise is to be presented in two formats, each of which will be graded on the basis of theological insight and creativity of presentation (in addition to the general criteria that apply to all assignments, indicated below):

- i. In-person presentation of 30 minutes’ duration (+ minimum 10 minutes for questions and discussion), the purpose of which is to convey the significance of your findings for ministry within church, academy, and society, in a creative, intellectually coherent, and engaging manner. Presentations are scheduled for February 22 and 23; students will lead class discussion of their work.

- ii. Summative essay in standard academic format that represents an amended version of the class presentation (as determined by post-presentation critique and review).

Length: 8,000 – 10,000 words  
 Due Date: March 22

<b>Grading Summary</b>			
	Due	Length	%
The Impact of Our Research	January 2	±500 words	5%
Review Essay	February 1	2,500–3,000 words	25%
Culminating Exercise			
Class Presentations	February 22–23	30 + 10 minutes	35%
Summative Essay	March 22	8,000 – 10,000 words	35%
		11,000–13,500 words	100%

#### 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 conventions will result in grade reductions.

To assist with prose composition, students are encouraged to make use of [grammarly.com](http://grammarly.com), which is funded by the university, along with the Writing Support Services provided by the McMaster Student Success Centre (<http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html>). See also “CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS,” below.

#### E. Academic Dishonesty

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/>

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#### F. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College is committed to employing inclusive language for human beings in worship services, written materials, and all publications. With regard to biblical texts, the integrity of original expressions (including references to God) should be respected. The NRSV and NIV provide appropriate examples of the use of inclusive language for human subjects. With the exception of direct quotations from historical documents, inclusive language is to be used in all assignments submitted for academic credit.

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#### G. Cell Phone/Computer Policy

Students are to refrain from conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom. The same policy applies to all computer-generated sound schemes, pagers, or other electronic annunciation systems.

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#### H. Deadlines and Late Submission Penalty

Assignments are to be submitted to the Avenue to Learn website by noon on the due date, after which they will be considered late and penalized 1% per calendar day.

*The final date for late submission of course assignments is April 9, 2021  
Assignments received after this date will not be accepted for grading or credit*

Disclaimer:

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make revisions up to and including the first day of class.

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## Basic Guidelines for Composing a Book Review

### 1. Publication Data

- a. Provide essential bibliographical data, in the proper format.

### 2. Description

- a. Who is the author, and what is his/her expertise or qualification for writing?
- b. What main points does the author make? Is there a key passage or statement?
- c. How does each part relate to what precedes and follows?
- d. For what audience is this argument/discussion intended?

### 3. Evaluation

- a. Is the author's thesis cogent and convincing?
- b. Are there unstated assumptions or gaps in logic? Does the author offer novel insights and perspectives? An innovative synthesis of current knowledge?
- c. Who are the author's main discussion partners? Who does the author cite for support, or argue against, and why?

### 4. Application

- a. How do the author's insights apply to your own field of endeavour or research?
- b. What are the implications of this study for the life and ministry of the church?
- c. To whom would you recommend this book (or not)?

SUMMARIZE

ASSESS

ENGAGE

"what?"

"so what?"

"now what?"

CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading of written materials will be based on the following general criteria

Grade Range	Content	Argument	Presentation
90–100 A+ 85–89 A 80–84 A–	Mastery of subject matter; creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationships; exceeds required elements	Clear, logical structure; with comprehensive introduction, persuasive argumentation, and innovative conclusions	Detailed adherence to relevant style for formatting of text, notes, and bibliography; no errors of grammar or syntax; elegant presentation
77–79 B+ 73–76 B 70–72 B–	Above-average grasp of principles and concepts and their inter-relationship; completion of all required elements	Coherent structure and consistent argumentation; well-stated introduction and conclusion	General adherence to relevant style and format; few errors of grammar or syntax
67–69 C+ 63–66 C 60–62 C–	Adequate understanding of theoretical foundations; minimal completion of required elements	Rudimentary structure; minimal introductory and concluding statements	Significant errors of grammar, syntax, or style
57–59 D+ 53–56 D 50–52 D–	Low level of comprehension; required elements incomplete or missing	Lack of coherence or structure in argumentation; no introduction or conclusion	Abundant grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors
0–49% F	Inability to grasp basic concepts; required elements missing	Incomprehensible or illogical structure and argumentation	Failure to follow stylistic guidelines; incomprehensible syntax