



McMaster Divinity
College

Social Justice and the Bible

Hybrid DPT Course
Spring 2021

MS/OT/NT 5XJ5
DPT

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Spring Semester 2021

Introductory WebEx Session: Wednesday, May 12, 3:00–4:50 p.m.

Online Videos (May 10–June 11)

Closing WebEx Session: Wednesday, June 9, 3:00–4:50 p.m.

Biography

Dr. Cindy Westfall is the Associate Professor of New Testament at McMaster Divinity College. Her research interests are wide-ranging including Greek, linguistics and discourse analysis, the book of Hebrews, Revelation and the Catholic Epistles, Bible Translation, Gender and Ministry, and most relevant for this course, Biblical Social Justice. She is the author of *A Discourse Analysis of Hebrews: The Relationship between Form and Meaning* and *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ* and co-edited *The Bible and Social Justice: Old Testament and New Testament Foundations for the Church's Urgent Call*. She has been committed to crossing the boundaries in church planting and participation in the growth of urban church ministry. She is married to Glenn and lives in Dundas, ON.

Course Description:



In our current cultural contexts, now more than ever, there are few issues more controversial, important and practical than biblical social justice. How do we implement God's justice on earth? This course has practical and urgent implications for the individual as well as the evangelical Church and its mission.

The urgent issues that we are confronting concerning racism are placed within the larger context of the themes of social justice in Scripture and biblical theology. We will bring the two horizons together of Scripture and the present (our current contexts and current events) and determine biblical teaching, biblical practice and relevant strategies that speak to the needs at hand.

This course will examine the biblical foundation for the definition and practice of social justice in the church, by exploring the Old Testament foundations, the theology and practice in the life of Jesus and the early church, and the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities for application in the contemporary Canadian, North American and global context. Content will be alternated with interactive activities of reflection and application. Each student will integrate the biblical content, course activities and field experience with their specialization.

Course Objectives

Through the course work and assignments, the student will:

Knowing

- Understand the biblical basis for the practice of social justice for the individual, the church, society and global contexts.
- Learn exegetical principles that bring the diverse horizons together of the Old Testament contexts, the New Testament contexts and our contemporary contexts.

Being

- Be a person committed to personal and communal righteousness
- Be a person who integrates tangible connections between Scripture, theology and action through practice-led research.

Doing

- Engage in issues of social justice through participation in different genres.
- Through reading and a paper, engage in practice-led theology that addresses your research question, and informs your practice of ministry in the area of social justice.

Core Texts

Required

Nardoni, Enrique. *Rise Up, O Judge: A Study of Justice in the Biblical World*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2001. 368 pp.

Westfall, Cynthia Long and Bryan Dyer. *The Bible and Social Justice: Old Testament and New Testament Foundations for the Church's Urgent Call*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016.

Readings in the DropBox: Cynthia Long Westfall, "Male and Female: One in Christ: Galatians 3:26–29."

Recommended

Sider, Ronald J. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2015.

Tisby, Jemar. *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019.

Textbook Purchase

The bookstore will be open for in-person shopping by appointment only. Textbooks can be ordered ahead of time with free delivery by contacting Bernice at books@readon.ca.

Additional Materials

Any handouts for lectures and class discussion will be made available before class online in the course A2L.

Further procedures and guidance for assignments will be given in announcements online.

Course Requirements

View Online Videos (attendance)

Students are required to view all online videos online and submit an attendance report on **June 25** on A2L Assessments:Assignments:Attendance

Online Participation (15%)

There will be a couple of venues in which you will be expected to participate in weekly activities and contribute to A2L and Padlet:

- You will submit Exegetical Worksheets to A2L in response to each video series.
- You will post a minimum of twice a week in the discussion forum.
- You will respond to the contribution/content/topics of a minimum of five others weekly.
- You will post at current event to Padlet once a week
- You will meet weekly for course discussion

Reading (10%)

The required reading for the course is 4,000 pages. The student will read the core texts and select appropriate reading on social justice (particularly as it relates to their research question) and submit on A2L a list of books and number of pages read on **June 25**.

Written Assignments

Preliminary Annotated Bibliography & Presentation (10%)

The student will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 5–10 resources (at least 1,500 pages) that are the most informative related to your specific interest/category of social justice in the area of your research interest (see schedule for categories), and write a 100-150 word annotation for each resource. Relevant resources previously read for other courses may be submitted (mark with *). This is your summary of the best sources available in your area of interest. **Submit this assignment to A2L in PDF form on Friday, May 21. Present (or make a 10 minute video of) your bibliography in the WebEx session on Wednesday, May 26. Follow the MDC Style Guide for your bibliography entries.**

Summary of Biblical and Theological Foundations (20%)

Utilizing material from the class sessions, online materials and reading the student will describe the biblical and theological basis for *your specific practice-led research* in social justice. **The paper will be approximately 3,000 words (12 pages), and submitted to A2L in PDF form June 9 at 3 p.m.**

Include footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses:

<http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>

Major Paper on Practice-Led Research in Social Justice (40%)

The student will demonstrate practice-led research through a particular focus/interest in social justice and be prepared to discuss their research with the class on June 5. Their paper will include an introduction, five sections and a conclusion (subheadings are advised):

- Clearly explain how the paper is rooted based in your identity, experiences and practice
- Explore the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. Why does this ministry practice need to be addressed?)
- Identify and develop a procedure for a methodology suitable for researching this topic.
- Integrate the biblical and theological foundations for practice from your previous paper with appropriate revisions
- A consideration of new approaches to address and improve ministry practice (local and beyond) and reflection on the application to your own ministry.

The paper will be approximately 8,000 words. Submit to A2L in PDF form on June 25 at 11:59 p.m.

Include footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses:

<http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>

Class Presentation

Present/summarize where you are in your research to the class in the Webex session on **June 9.**

Course Assessment Summary

Online Participation	15%
Reading	15%
Preliminary Annotated Bibliography & Presentation	10%
Summary of Biblical and Theological Foundations	20%
Paper on Social Justice	40%

Classroom Behavior

Attendance

Students are required to be listen to all videos and submit an attendance report on **June 25.**

Participation

Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner. Similarly content in all papers should be irenic while it may critique alternate positions.

Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations on the phone, chat or on the internet during online sessions.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class with consequences.

Late Assignments lose 2% each day for 7 days, and then 4% a day up to 30%. However, no assignments will be accepted after **June 25**.

MDC Policies

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

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Office Hours:

Wednesday every Wednesday after **Online Discussion**

Also available by appointment

****** Disclaimer on Syllabi posted on the web and at the bottom of each syllabus:**

Please Note: 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.

Course Schedule

Date	Social Justice Topic	Reading	Class Activity
May 10–16	Introductory WebEx Session: Wednesday, May 12, 3–4:50 pm Video: Overview of Social Justice Video: Historical Contexts Video: OT Law	Nardoni, 1–94 Westfall, 1–34	Current events: each student uploads a relevant news article Identify areas of concern Develop a working definition Identify current issues/responses
May 17–23	Video: OT Narratives Video: OT Wisdom Literature Video: OT Poetry Wednesday, May 19, 3–4:50 pm Online Discussion on Narratives and Social Justice	Nardoni, 99–150 Westfall 35–63	Current events: each student uploads a relevant news article Bring examples of songs & poetry Tell Stories Engage in songs & poetry Identify contemporary wisdom genres
May 24–30	Video: OT & Second Temple Prophecy & Apocalyptic Video: Jesus—life & teaching Video: Early Church/Jewish Christianity Friday, May 21 submit bibliography Wednesday, May 26, 3–4:50 pm Present Annotated Bibliography Online Discussion Jesus and Social Justice	Nardoni, 151–262 & 290–304 Westfall, 64–124 & 152–75	Current events: each student uploads a relevant news article Use of fiction/media Developing a personal mission statement Addressing church policy/mission and defining responsibility
May 31– June 6	Video: Pauline Epistles Video: Early Christian Eschatology Wednesday, June 2, 3–4:50 pm Online Discussion on questions about Life Maps & final project/paper	Nardoni, 263–89 & 304–24 Westfall, 125–51 & 176–97 Westfall, “Male and Female: One in Christ”	Current events: each student uploads a relevant news article Cross-cultural practices Strategize effective missions Trajectories, probability, and Prediction
June 7–11 June 9	Video: Conclusion to the course Closing WebEx Session: Wednesday, June 9, 3:00–4:50 Theological Paper due Presentation of where you are in your research		Presentations of Life Maps at closing online WebEx session
June 25 11:59 p.m.	Reading Report due Attendance Report due Major Paper on Practice-Led Research due		

Select Bibliography

- Birch, Bruce C. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament Ethics and Christian Life*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.
- _____. *What Does the Lord Require? The Old Testament Call to Social Witness*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985.
- Cone, James H. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. New York: Orbis, 2011.
- Dempsey, Carol J. *Hope Amidst the Ruins: The Ethics of Israel's Prophets*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2000.
- Du Mez, Kristen Kobes. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York: Liveright, 2020.
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- Elliott, J. H. *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005.
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- Howard-Brook, Wes. *Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999.
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- Paris, Peter J, and Olupona Jacob Obafemi Kẹhinde. *Religion and Poverty : Pan-African Perspectives*. E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
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- and their Influence*. JSOTSS 137; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.
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- Rodriguez, Dario Lopez. *The Liberating Message of Jesus: The Message of the Gospel of Luke*. Pentecostals, Peacemaking and Social Justice Series. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012.
- Schiess, Kaitlyn and Michael Wear. *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of Our Neighbor*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2020.
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- Swartley, Willard M. *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.
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