



McMaster Divinity
College

Devotional Practices in the New Testament

NT 3XD3
Modified Hybrid

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Winter 2022 (Term 2)

Tuesdays 4–5:50 p.m.

On Campus: Jan 11, 25, Feb 8, 22, March 8, 22, April 5

Online/Off Campus: Jan 18, Feb 1, 15, March 15, 29



Course Description

Devotional practices, or spiritual disciplines, are fundamental ways that we enter the sphere of grace and foster our love for God. The devotional actions of the first Christians with which they worshipped Jesus Christ as God were stunningly innovative in their contexts. Understanding those actions anew in those contexts provides a repertoire that moves us beyond our typical traditional and our popular devotional practices. This course combines the *study* of the devotional practices in the New Testament with *interactive experience* in which we explore the application of early Christian devotional practices together.

Specializations

Biblical Studies (BS)

Students who specialize in biblical studies will find insight into the contexts of the early church, its Scripture, and its additional early Christian literature, the application of biblical theology to the study of devotion and worship, and the goal of bridging the gap between biblical scholarship and contemporary application.

Christ and Culture (CC)

Students who specialize in Christ and Culture will find that when they encounter Christ through the engagement of the two horizons of first century Christianity and twenty-first century Western culture, that it will yield insights into the personal and global issues of Christ and culture.

Pastoral Studies (PS)

Students who specialize in Pastoral Studies will find fresh and practical approaches to biblical practices of devotion and worship that will enrich them personally and equip them for ministry. Come to class with an open mind and a willingness to step out of our twenty-first century comfort zones.

Course Objectives

Specific Objectives—through reading, lectures, discussion and interactive participation the student will...

Knowing

- Know the spectrum of devotional practices in the New Testament and early Christianity
- Understand the social, historical, literary and religious cultural contexts in which the early church developed its devotional practices
- Grasp the nature of devotion to Jesus within exclusive monotheism

Being

- Be open to diverse biblical practices and experiences of devotion and worship
- Grow in radical commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
- Become a multi-faceted worshipper of the triune God

Doing

- Participate in interactive practices of devotion and worship
- Research and write a paper on an aspect of early Christian devotion that is suitable for the student's area of specialization.
- Utilize the research and course resources to develop a project in the area of the student's specialization that speaks to the contemporary context.

Course Requirements for NT 3XD3

Class Participation (15%)

Student participation will be in a hybrid format involving both in-class and online participation based on the readings for the week and any online videos. The course will include participation in a Seder held on campus during class time and a common meal (pot luck) off campus during class time on March 15, if pandemic restrictions allow or are lifted.

Reading (10%)

See the Daily Schedule for the weekly reading. The student will submit to A2L the percentage of reading completed on **Apr 8**.

Written Assignments

In order to pass the course, all assignments must be completed

Research Paper (40%)

Each student will write a research paper on an aspect of early Christian devotion that concerns Biblical Studies, Christ and Culture or Pastoral Studies. **Each student will submit a PDF copy to A2L Friday, 11:59 pm, February 25. Late papers will lose 2% a day for a week, then 5% a day**

Length & style: It should be approximately 4,000 words (about fifteen pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For instructions on how to write a research paper, see the video and links under the introductory material under content. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide at: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>

Approach: Choose an aspect or topic of early Christian devotion that reflects your specialization. Utilize a minimum of twelve academic resources.

See the Rubric on A2L for marking.

Portfolio Project & Presentation (35%)

Each student will complete a paper or project designed to apply their research in a contemporary context. The project will be presented in class on **April 5. Submit a PDF copy to A2L before class at 4 pm, Monday, April 5.** No late papers or projects will be accepted.

If your paper is a project—Length & style: It should be approximately 3000 words (about twelve pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For instructions on how to write a research paper, see the video and links under the introductory material under content. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide (above).

If a project, it should be somewhat comparable in time and effort to a 12 pg. research paper submitted in PDF copy to Avenue. If your project is an artifact, provide an exegetical explanation of its features (approximately 2 pages). Marking will be based on

- The expression of the biblical message/content,
- The quality of the medium
- Appropriateness for the target groups
- The calculated effort expended.

Some suggestions include:

- A sermon on devotional practices
- A study guide that will assist young adult learners in exploring or understanding biblical practices of devotion. Include questions, explanations, directions and other material that both enlightens the theme in its historical context and helps learners to connect the text with life today
- A movie presentation, critical review and discussion which encapsulates the practice of devotion in a modern context*
- A parable, allegory or practice that utilizes significant or powerful contemporary imagery, symbols or metaphors for the practice of devotion*
- A collection of poetry or songs that explore thought, themes and/or emotions in devotional practice*
- A devotional experience for a church or small groups that simulates the situation of the early church and the devotional practices*
- A description of connections between the characters, contexts and themes in your life story and the theme of devotion in the NT*

A written description of the paper or project will be submitted to A2L **on Friday, March 11.** For the project, specify the audience and context targeted, the goal and the approach.

Grading Summary

Reading	10%
Participation	15%
Research Paper	40%
Profile Project	35%

Textbooks and Materials

Required

Hurtado, Larry W. *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

A modern version of the NT

Recommended

Hurtado, Larry W. *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Hurtado, Larry W. *How on Earth Did Jesus Become A God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore. 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.

Additional Materials

Any handouts for lectures and class discussion will be made available on A2L.

Classroom Behavior

Attendance

- Students should be on time to the in-class sessions or be prepared to offer an explanation to the professor.
- Students are expected to stay for the all in-class sessions, unless arranged in advance.
- Students are expected to listen to any on-line videos which is equivalent to course attendance. "Absences" will result in the reduction of the final grade.

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.
- Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except that which is appropriate in the course outline.
- Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class.
- Students are not to access e-mail, send or receive text messages, surf the net, etc., while class is in session
- Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines may lose participation points and/or be dismissed from the class.

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. [All papers will be analysed for plagiarism by TurnItIn.](#)

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/> and the

McMaster University Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3:
www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm

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.

Appointments & office hours

Contact me if I can assist you in any way via Avenue or e-mail: westfal@mcmaster.ca
Friend me on Facebook and send me a message!

Office hours (Rm 242):

Tuesday 2–4

Wednesday 1–3

Available by appointment in person or on Zoom calls

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.

NT 3XD3 COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	CLASS SESSION	Hurtado	NT & Activities
Jan 11 On campus	Introduction to the course 1 st vs. 21 st Centuries		Specializations Joining the two horizons
Jan 18 Online	Greco-Roman & Jewish Contexts vs. our context	1–53	The dynamics of household worship & the synagogue
Jan 25 On campus	The historical Jesus	53–78	How to know Jesus
Feb 1 Online	Jesus and the OT	563–602	Use of the OT
Feb 8 On campus	Stories about Jesus	217–348, 427–86	Mt, Mark, Luke, John Memorization, story telling
Feb 15 Online	Jewish-Christian Devotion	155–216	Catholic Epistles Use of the calendar Symbolism Space/place
Feb 22 On campus	Paul & Worship	79–154	Pauline Epistles themes Exercising spiritual gifts, Dreams, prophecy
Feb 25	Research papers due 11:59 pm		
Feb 28– March 4	READING WEEK & INTENSIVE HYBRID WEEK		
March 8 On campus	Johannine Worship Passover Seder experience Forms of Worship	349–426	Themes in John, 1, 2, 3 John, Rev Confession Communion/Eucharist in the context of Seder <i>practiced</i> Experiencing multifaceted worship practices <i>Each student selects a practice and leads the class in that practice</i>
March 11	Proposal for Project due		
March 15 Off campus	Prayer & worship in practice Table fellowship <i>practiced</i> in a common meal	606–619	Prayer Table Fellowship <i>Students enact together 1 Cor 14:26–33 & 11:21–34 in the context of a common meal</i>

March 22 On campus	Martyrdom	619–24	Sacrifice (lent), fasting
March 29 Online	Doctrinal Developments & Diversity	519–562; 625–48	Role of theology
April 5 On campus	Projects submitted on A2L by 4 p.m.		Project Presentations
April 8	Reading Reports due		

Selected Bibliography