

## **CHTH G105 – C02 - NT/OT 6ZG6 Linguistic Stylistics**

McMaster Divinity College  
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Winter 2022 (Term 2)  
Monday, 2:00 pm–3:50 pm

### **Course Description**

This in-person course focuses upon developing appropriate linguistic models and linguistically-based approaches to the study of the New Testament as a piece of Greek literature (and Hebrew Bible for those approaching it through Hebrew). Linguistics traditionally focuses upon occasional instances of natural language but has often neglected the study of literature. This course addresses this shortcoming by working to develop appropriate linguistic methods for the analysis of literature (note that this is not a Bible as literature course, but a linguistics course using linguistics to study the Bible considered as a collection of pieces of literature). Although students can utilize a range of discourse theories and linguistic approaches in this course, the professor will approach the topic from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics. This course may be taken by those working in either Greek or Hebrew, and may be repeated in a new program with new content. This course will fulfill the expectations for Linguistic Modeling, with an added dimension addressed to literature. This course also may serve as an introduction to linguistics for study of the Bible.

*For in-person course meetings, we will strictly adhere to all MDC health and safety policies in effect at the time. MDC will keep you informed of these, especially if there are changes required. Please do everything possible to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the course, as well as all the members of the MDC community.*

### **Course Objectives**

The general objectives of the course are as follows, although individual students will have personal objectives based upon their own linguistic and research interests.

#### Knowing:

1. to develop the student's ability to formulate and analyze advanced linguistic methods and models appropriate to study of the Bible as a piece of written literature in its original languages
2. to master the pertinent secondary scholarly literature regarding such methods and models
3. to gain familiarity with a wide variety of linguistic models as applied to the study of literature

#### Being:

4. to become a competent constructive critic of the linguistic models of others

5. to apply such methods or models in appropriate and interesting ways to enhance understanding of the Bible
6. to become an astute linguistic analyst of literature

Doing:

7. to be able to articulate the nature of the method or model chosen in dialogue with others
8. to become competent at devising and developing relevant linguistic models for biblical analysis
9. to utilize recent advances in supporting media, such as OpenText.org, in the development of such methods and models

### Course Prerequisites

Prerequisites: At least two years of study of the appropriate ancient language(s), admission to the M.A. or Ph.D. programs of McMaster Divinity College. A conversation with the professor is recommended.

### Course Requirements

This is a graduate research-level course in biblical studies and will be taught in this way. Therefore, it is assumed that students will perform as research degree students to facilitate learning. This means that students will be expected to do suitable academic work outside of the classroom.

The major requirements include demonstrated knowledge of an approach or issue in linguistic stylistics (as demonstrated in a single 5,000-word short paper), the critical discussion of a significant issue in linguistic stylistics applied to a significant biblical text (9,000 word major paper), critical response to the work of other students, including one formal response to work introduced by a fellow student (2,500 words), and a final statement of definition of linguistic stylistics (1,000 words). The student is to do new (for the student and the discipline) work that goes beyond summary of previous research and suggests and develops new ways of understanding (i.e. secondary literature surveys are to be kept to a minimum in the second major paper). Dates for discussion of topics and presentation of material will be set on the first meeting of the course (the first meeting is Monday, **January 10**). The expectation is that all students will be present for all meetings, and materials for discussion will be distributed in advance per the agreed schedule. For any paper submitted, the student must determine the total number of words in the draft and include that number on the title page. All final papers are to be submitted no later than 4:30 on the date due.

### Course Textbooks

There is no set required reading in this course, but students are expected to gain sufficient knowledge in stylistics/literary analysis, as well as such areas as discourse analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, other pertinent linguistic theories, and any other necessary theories or

approaches. I also include a short bibliography of some important works in the area I am calling linguistic stylistics. Students will want to ensure that they are familiar with the major issues in a significant number of these volumes.

It is recommended that students be familiar with the major issues in this book:

Anne H. Stevens. *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Introduction*. Peterborough: Broadview, 2015.

The following volume is highly recommended for those students who wish to learn how to become publishing scholars, as well as learning how to write their dissertations or theses:

Stanley E. Porter. *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.

The student is required to have the following available for use in class on a regular basis: A standard edition of the Greek New Testament, such as the Nestle-Aland (26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, or 28<sup>th</sup> ed.), UBS (3rd or 4th or 5th ed.) or Westcott-Hort. Neither the Textus Receptus nor the British Bible Society 1st/2nd ed. is acceptable as a primary edition, but should be consulted where pertinent; or The Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia or Biblia Hebraica Quinta, or equivalent Hebrew Bible.

## Course Assessment

Each student is required to complete all the following requirements (failure to complete all assignments and assessment vehicles constitutes grounds for failure of the course). We will do much of the support work for this course, such as distribution of papers, by electronic means to be agreed upon in the class.

1. Participation and Reading (0%). Participation is required in all course meetings, including evidence of having read the paper(s) of the day and required reading, and active participation in discussion of the paper(s). Failure to participate adequately can result in reduction of the student's final grade. The student is expected to read in a range of linguistic books appropriate to the course and to produce a list of such readings (with full and specific bibliographical information, including page numbers) on the final day of the course. The student is also required to read any other assigned reading and the assigned reading to accompany each student presentation. Failure to demonstrate adequate quantity, depth, and breadth of reading can result in reduction of the student's final grade.

2. Short Paper (30%). Presentation and defense (5,000 words total) of a particular approach to linguistic study of literature or of the history of discussion of a major topic in the linguistic study of literature. Some topics for such a paper might be: the influence of Russian formalism, the importance of the Prague School, point of view, narrative theory, characterization, prominence, genre theory, and many others. This paper should involve a specific engagement of one linguistic model or topic. This paper is to be electronically distributed by the end of the

previous Thursday. On February 21, all students will make a short presentation of their papers (two minutes maximum) followed by discussion. The written paper is due on **February 21**.

3. Presentation of a major research project (early version of the major paper) on an appropriate method for linguistic study of the literature of the Bible, with application to a selected text(s) (including electronic distribution of the paper by the previous Thursday, with bibliography). The student is to distribute (subject to the laws of copyright) a suitable reading (around 6,000 words; 10,000 words absolute maximum, so count them!) for all students to read in advance of discussion. The presentation will be two minutes maximum, but discussion will take at least one hour. Date for presentation to be agreed. See number 4 below.

4. Major Paper (45%). Submission of a major research paper on an appropriate method for linguistic study of the literature of the Bible, with application to a selected text(s) (c. 9,000 well-selected words; no less than 6,000 words of text, with maximum of 3,000 words of notes and bibliography). The research paper should chart new ground in the subject—both in terms of the student’s own and previous work and in terms of the discipline. This is to be a revised form of the paper presented under par. 3 above, benefiting from the response, class discussion, and further reflection. The theory and application must be suitably balanced so as to contribute to both. The revised and final copy of the paper is due the last day we meet (**April 4**).

For an example of linguistic stylistics produced by a MDC student, see Zachary K. Dawson, “The Message of the Jerusalem Council in the Acts of the Apostles: A Linguistic Stylistics Analysis” (PhD dissertation, McMaster Divinity College, 2021).

5. Presentation of a formal, critical response to the topic and material presented in one of the major research projects, not just a response to the particular paper. The presentation includes two minutes of formal presentation (as well as electronic distribution of the response paper two days in advance, with bibliography). This is the basis of the written critical response.

6. Written Critical Response (15%). A written critical response to the topic and material presented in one other student paper presented for the course (2,500 words). This documented written response, a revision of par. 5 above, is meant to be its own contribution to knowledge, not just a response to the particular paper. In other words, it needs a thesis and arguments. It is due the last day we meet and is to take into consideration the revisions to the originally presented paper, so far as this is possible (**April 4**).

7. Final Statement (10%). The student is asked to define the field of linguistic stylistics with reference to their own work and the work of others (in and outside of class) and be prepared to discuss this definition at the final course meeting (1,000 words) (**April 4**).

Papers 2 and 3, and the associated reading, are to be distributed (we will set up an electronic means to facilitate this process) to the entire class (at least) one week before the seminar presentations. Paper 5 is to be electronically distributed two days in advance of the presentation. The minimum paper to be submitted before presentation is 2,000 words. In the presentation, the student merely summarizes the paper (2 minutes maximum, perhaps less) and then leads discussion, in conjunction with any student who critically responds. The professor will attempt to return a marked electronic copy of each student’s major paper to benefit the student in revisions.

The professor assumes that students already know how to research and write papers. Content, clear thinking, depth of analysis and research, and clear writing are the most important requirements, but clarity and consistency of presentation are also of high importance. Students *must* follow the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses* in presentations and submission of *all* written work (even presentation versions). Failure to do so will result in a lower grade.

Late papers are reduced 5% per day they are late, including late distribution of papers for others (both major presentation and response). Failure to make a valid attempt at each and every assignment may result in failure of the course.

## **Classroom Behaviour and Policies**

This course attempts to create a learning community focused upon the sharing and growth of knowledge through critical presentation and discussion. This means that there may sometimes be critical opinions expressed. Opinions and statements are always to be courteous and constructive so that all may benefit from them. Some of your long-held critical theories may be called into question, and some of your favorite ideas or even scholars may be challenged. This is part of the process of learning.

The following guidelines are presented to encourage all students to participate together in this learning community and should be kept in mind at all times.

1. Please do not hesitate to offer constructive criticism of the work of others in the class. Be sure to offer serious arguments and do so in ways that address the issues and do not attack the person.
2. Please do not be offended if criticism of your work is offered in the above spirit. Learning to give and accept criticism is part of scholarly development. Respect the right to disagree.
3. Please respect the opinions of others, even if you do not agree with them. Extend courtesy by not ridiculing others' ideas, but feel free to respond to them logically and critically and in an orderly manner.
4. Students should be on time to class, whether in-person or online, or be prepared to offer an explanation after class to the professor.
5. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, whether in-person or online, unless arranged in advance.
6. Students may eat and drink in class so long as they do not distract others or leave the remains of such activities behind for others to clean up. Cleanliness may not be next to godliness but it is essential as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. Students are expected to devote their full attention to this course while in the classroom or livestreaming it and not be doing work on any other subject.
8. Conversation and discussion are welcome, so long as all are able to participate. Students are not to carry on other conversations in class, especially with those seated immediately adjacent to them (at an appropriate distance, of course), or through chat when online. If something being said or done in class is not clear, please ask the professor at an appropriate time and in an appropriate way.

9. No cell phones may be used in any way for other than direct course business, and no computers may be used on anything but immediate and direct course business.

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

### **Statement on 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 at  
<https://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 its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and CEB (2011).

### **READ On Bookstore**

The required textbook for this class is 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 Bookstores at 416-620-2934; fax: 416-234-8840; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca); or [www.readon.ca](http://www.readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

### **Course Schedule**

The course will meet on Monday afternoons (the first meeting is **January 10**) from 2:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m. (or thereabouts—sometimes longer). This outline is approximate. Adjustments may be made in light of student presentations.

January 10: Introduction of Course: Why Linguistic Stylistics?

Discussion of objectives of course

Preliminary agreement of topics and schedule

January 17: A Brief History of Linguistics

January 24: Discourse Analysis and Other Linguistic Approaches to Literature

January 31: The History of and Major Influences on Linguistic Stylistics

February 7: The Major Features of Linguistic Stylistics

February 14: Developing Appropriate Tools for Linguistic Analysis of Literature

Brief discussion of progress toward two presentations and papers

February 21: Presentation and Discussion of Short Paper

All students should come to class having read the papers distributed by the end of the previous Thursday. They are to be prepared to discuss the topic in detail, responding in a creative and helpful way to the subject.

**Short Paper Due**

**February 28-March 4 Intensive Hybrid Week (no class February 28)**

March 7: The Relationship of Related Fields of Enquiry (Literary Criticism, Narratology, etc.)

March 14: Major Paper Presentations and Responses

March 21: Major Paper Presentations and Responses

March 28: Major Paper Presentations and Responses

April 4: Major Paper Presentations and Responses (if necessary)

Final Meeting to discuss general responses to topic and present final statement

**Major Paper, Written Critical Response, and Final Statement Due**

**This syllabus for this course 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 at any time.**

Bibliography

Methods and History of Linguistics

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