

**Ministry Formation**  
**MF1AO3a/2AO3a/3AO3a**  
**Fall and Winter 2021-22**

**Course Instructor(s):** Dr. Lee Beach ([beachl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:beachl@mcmaster.ca))  
External Mentors (TBA)

**Class Meetings:**

**Online Orientation Session:** Saturday September 11 9:30 – 11:00 Am ET (This class meeting will be held via an online platform, details will be sent well in advance. Please plan to attend this important orientation session).

**First Time Supervisors Meeting:** Tuesday September 21, 11:00 – 12:00 pm (for first time supervisors). This meeting will be held via. an online platform. Details will be provided well in advance. \*Students are not required to attend.

**Placements begin the week of Sept. 13, 2021**

**Course Description**

This course is an experiential learning course that encompasses five key components. A ministry placement that requires 8 hours per week of engagement in an ongoing ministry context, the development of a ministry learning covenant that sets learning goals for the placement, connection to an experienced ministry practitioner as a placement supervisor, regular meetings with an external ministry mentor (appointed by MDC) and several forms of evaluation at the end of the placement. Three courses in Ministry formation are required for students in the MDiv program and one course is required for students in the MTS program.

**Objectives:**

**Knowing:**

Ministry Formation will help students to develop their own theology and the skill to reflect on ministry theologically drawing from personal experience as a resource for theological development. Further it should offer to students the opportunity to integrate theological thought with ministry practice. This includes a focus on the following:

- a. Significance of Theological Reflection on Experience
- b. Integration of Theological resources with ministry practice
- c. Articulation of Theological understanding

**Being:**

Spiritual formation is the cornerstone of effective ministry. Formation for ministry must introduce basic spiritual practices for spiritual growth and long term inner health. These include:

- a. Understanding and cultivating self-care in ministry
- b. Understanding and cultivating the practice of spiritual disciplines in ministry

c. Understanding and cultivating a vision for ministry as discipleship

Ministry formation should help students get in touch with who they are as a ministering person, both strengths and growing edges. It should help them gain an honest understanding of the potential baggage that they bring to ministry. Further, it needs to provide them with the opportunity to explore and identify their sense of personal calling to ministry. Including:

- a. Understanding one's particular personality.
- b. Discerning your Calling to ministry
- c. Identifying your Gifts and Leadership Aptitudes

**Doing:**

This course will help students to focus on the development of ministry skills with a view to skill discovery and enhancement. Including:

- a. Identification of key skills required for Christian ministry
- b. Reflection on vital ministry skills with feedback from others
- c. Development as self-directed, collaborative learner through engagement in a learning network of ministry mentors and experienced practitioners.

**Course Requirements**

1. Students, in consultation with the course instructor (Dr. Lee Beach) will be required to secure a placement that allows them to invest a minimum of 8 hours per week in ministry activities, preparation and supervision. This can be a new placement, or it may be the students place of employment or current volunteer ministry.
2. This placement is designed to be a supervised placement; therefore a qualified supervisor must be identified who will agree to meet with the student at least 6 times throughout each semester (12 times total) for support and mutual reflection on ministry experience.

**\*\* The Ministry Formation office has an extensive list of approved field placement sites, including churches of various denominations, para-church organizations, healthcare facilities, campus ministries, correctional institutions, and community service agencies. All of these placement sites have indicated their willingness to welcome and supervise student interns. Student-initiated placement proposals, however, are also considered. Placement selection is a collaborative process involving the student, the proposed supervisor, the placement site, and the Director of Ministry Formation. Every effort is made to match students with a placement setting that is consonant with their vocational goals, denominational affiliations, geographic preferences, and ministry interests. (See Appendix below for further information on finding a placement, the role of the supervisor, etc.)**

3. Students will also be connected with an external mentor appointed by the school. Mentors and students meet 6 times over the course of the academic year. Meetings with the mentor will include specific topics and themes. Students will present personal and ministry reflections at each meeting and mentors will offer feedback and ask questions regarding the presentation and any other issues that they and/or the student want to discuss (some details of these meetings are offered below, more will be provided through the course orientation on Sept. 11). Meetings will be approximately 45 minutes and will be arranged at a time that

is suitable for both the student and the mentor. It is assumed that these meetings will be conducted in a virtual format, although face to face meetings are certainly fine if both parties are agreeable. A combination of both is also an option.

4. Students will form a Ministry Learning covenant (including three specific learning goals) at the beginning of the placement.
5. As the placement reaches its conclusion three evaluation forms will be required. A supervisor evaluation, a student self-evaluation and a student evaluation of their placement and mentoring experience. Specific forms for each will be provided part way through the winter semester.

## Assignments

The following assignments will be course requirements that the student will complete and be graded on. Specific information on how to develop and fulfill these assignments will be provided in the online introductory session (Sept. 12th) and written guidelines will also be provided prior to that time.

1. Ministry Learning Covenant  
Students will construct a “Ministry Learning Covenant” at the beginning of the school year. This covenant invites students to set three specific learning goals and action steps for each goal. As well as provide details of their placement. A template for this covenant will be distributed to students prior to the Sept. 11<sup>h</sup> online gathering in order to give further guidance to the development of this covenant.

**The Ministry Learning Covenant is due Oct. 4, 2021 and should be sent to the Director of Ministry Formation (DMF) as an email attachment. It is worth 20% of the final grade.**

2. Ministry Reflection Reports  
Students will write two ministry reflection reports. In the Fall semester first year students will write a personal spiritual autobiography reflecting on their own spiritual journey and formation, while second and third year students will write a reflection based on a case study from their placement experience. In the Winter semester all students will write a reflection based on a case study from their own ministry experience. Templates for how to construct these reports will be provided prior to the orientation gathering on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>. These reports will be presented to your external mentor and will form the basis for two of the student – mentor meetings.

**Due dates for these reports are TBD (one in the mid to late fall semester, one in the mid to late winter semester) in conversation with the external mentor. These reports are each worth 25% each of the final grade. They should be submitted as email attachments to both the external mentor and the DMF on the date they are due.**

3. Mid-Year Reflection Report  
Students will write and submit a mid-year reflection report that offers a reflection on

how they believe their placement is progressing at the half way point. The reflection should include a recap of activities that the student has participated in and some reflection on key points of learning. Most importantly the report should reflect on the progress being made toward the student's learning goals and any adjustments that need to be made. Honest reflection on positive strides made and places for further attention should be discussed. Templates for how to construct these reports will be provided prior to the orientation gathering on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>. These reports will be presented to your external mentor and will form the basis for one of the student – mentor meetings.

**The due date for this report will be near the end of the first semester (exact date TBD in conversation with external mentor). The report is worth 20% of the final grade. It should be submitted as an email attachment to both the external mentor and the DMF on the date they are due.**

#### 4. End of Year Evaluations

Students are required to provide four evaluations based on their learning goals and overall experience in the course. A supervisor evaluation, a student self-evaluation, a student evaluation of their placement and mentoring experience and an external mentor evaluation of the student. Specific forms for each will be provided part way through the winter semester. It is the student's responsibility to gather these forms and submit them to the DMF.

**End of the year evaluations are Due Apr. 1, 2022 They should be sent to the DMF as email attachments. All three evaluations must be submitted in order to receive the full grade (10/10); incomplete submissions receive a 7 or lower grade.**

\*\* Grades are assigned by the Director of Ministry Formation. The ministry reflection reports and mid-year reflection report will be presented to the external mentor at one of your meetings. The mentor will offer a suggested grade to the DMF for his consideration.

## **APPENDIX: FURTHER INFORMATION ON PLACEMENTS**

### **MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR**

Selecting and arranging a placement is a collaborative process. Students begin by arranging to meet individually with the Director of Ministry Formation to discuss their ministry interests, vocational goals, and learning objectives. This consultation meeting with the Director must take place before any arrangements are negotiated with a particular placement setting or supervisor.

A listing and description of current placement options is available for students' perusal in the Ministry Formation office. Student-initiated placement proposals are also considered. After meeting with the Director of Ministry Formation, the student arranges a site visit and an inquiry interview with a prospective supervisor to determine if there is a mutually agreeable fit. The student, the supervisor, and the Director of Ministry Formation must all be in agreement before the placement is finalized.

## **GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING A PLACEMENT**

- Students are encouraged to select placements that provide them with a *broad* exposure to the tasks, responsibilities, and challenges of Christian ministry within their chosen field.
- Students are expected to be self-directed adult learners who are proactive in pursuing the kinds of experiential learning opportunities that meet their individual learning needs and vocational goals.
- Students in the MDiv and DipMin programs are encouraged to have at least one placement in a church setting. Students heading towards ordained congregational ministry should have at least two out of the three placements in a church.
- To maximize new learning experiences, MDiv and Dip Min students should seek at least one placement in a church where they do not currently attend or hold membership. If, however, the student is in a paid ministry position, he or she may arrange to fulfill their ministry formation requirements in that setting provided that a placement supervisor is appointed and objectives for new learning and development are set and met.
- MDiv and Dip Min Students may remain in a placement for three consecutive years only if deemed appropriate to the attainment of new learning goals.

## **GUIDELINES FOR INITIAL INTERVIEWS BETWEEN STUDENTS & PROSPECTIVE SUPERVISORS**

The following are useful questions to consider when students and prospective supervisors are meeting for an initial inquiry interview:

- What personal learning goals does the student hope to meet in this placement?
- What ministry opportunities, learning experiences, and resources can the placement provide?
- What knowledge, experience, and skill does the student bring from previous experience and training?
- What does the supervisor consider to be his/her ministry strengths and supervision style?
- What is the student's preferred learning style and how does this fit with the supervisor's approach?
- What are the supervisor's expectations of the student's participation in the placement in terms of roles, responsibilities, level of independence, etc.?
- Is there a match between what the student expects and what the supervisor and placement can offer?

## **THE ROLE OF THE PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR**

Placement Supervisors are qualified, experienced ministry practitioners who serve as ministry mentors and engage the student in the process of theological reflection and ministry formation. They are responsible for coordinating, facilitating and assessing the student's learning in the placement. The placement supervisor may function at various times as a mentor, role model, coach, accountability partner, colleague, and consultant, but the primary focus is on education for ministry. In special circumstances, arrangements may be made for co-supervisors or for an off-site supervisor.

Specific responsibilities of the placement supervisor include:

- Submit a *Placement Information Form* to the College (supplied by the Director of Ministry Formation upon request).
- Interview prospective student(s) and collaborate with the Director of Ministry Formation in discerning a good match.

- Collaborate with the student in developing a learning plan outlined in the *Learning/Ministry Covenant*.
- Facilitate learning and ministry opportunities that will foster the student's growth.
- Encourage independent yet supervised experience.
- Meet with the student regularly, at least six times per semester (12 times in total) for supervision focused on theological reflection on the student's ministry experiences.
- Provide continuous feedback to the student throughout the placement in addition to a formal written evaluation at the end of the placement.
- Participate in orientation workshop offered by the College (online).
- Liaise with the College through the Director of Ministry Formation.

### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS A PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR**

Supervisors are considered as field instructors working in partnership with the faculty of McMaster Divinity College in educating students for ministry. They are selected and approved on the basis of the following criteria:

- Agreement with the mission and purpose of McMaster Divinity College.
- Theologically trained with a proven record of effective ministry (some flexibility may be allowed on theological training).
- Engaged in a ministry setting that is supportive of educating students for ministry.
- Well-established in their current ministry context for a minimum of one year (some flexibility may be allowable).
- Committed to facilitating the student's identified learning and ministry goals.
- Desire to learn and engage in the process of theological reflection on ministry experiences.
- Willing to follow the Ministry Formation Program objectives, expectations and evaluation methods.
- Completed the Ministry Formation component of their own personal program at McMaster Divinity College, if the supervisor is a current student. (A current student cannot be supervised by another student if they do not meet this criterion).