

## TH 6XM6 Missional Theology MA/PhD (6-Level)

McMaster Divinity College  
Fall 2021 (Sept 13–Dec 10)  
Modified hybrid  
In-person Tues 4:00–5:50,  
alternates with online weeks

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Office Hours W 1:00–2:30pm (Zoom room) and  
by appointment

### Delivery Format is Modified Hybrid:

Modified Hybrid courses meet in person and online in an alternating sequence. One week the course meets in person, on campus; the following week the course meets online (in either synchronous or asynchronous ways depending on the course objectives). The exception is the first two weeks of class, which are in-person. This pattern allows for some on-campus community time for each course but also maximizes the benefits of hybrid with reduced trips to campus and the use of online learning strategies.

**\*\* Program students at a distance (more than 100 km) or anyone who is feeling unwell/unsafe (with permission from Registrar's office) can join the in-person sessions through live-streaming.\*\***

### I. Description:

What does it mean to be a missional church in an increasingly post-Christian, secular, and religiously plural culture? This course explores that question with a comprehensive overview of missional theology and examples of its practice, particularly in North American culture. Biblical foundations and historical approaches to embodying the Gospel in cultural context are considered with primary focus on the contemporary “missional” movement (e.g., Newbigin, Bosch, Guder, Frost, Hirsch, Fitch).

### II. Course Objectives:

My goal for the course is that you will develop vocational competency as a scholarly researcher in the area of missional theology and in your area of doctoral research. Toward that end this course will serve you in fulfilling your research program at McMaster Divinity College and more broadly your calling as a practical theologian. With this in mind, the knowing, being, and doing learning objectives delineate specific objectives to facilitate achieving the vocational goals of the course.

#### A. Knowing:

1. Know and expand key areas of missional theology and ways they relate to your doctoral research.
2. Know and be familiar with the contributions of key figures in missional theology and their relevance for your research program.

3. Begin to acquire specialist command of a specific area of theology related to your area of research.
4. Deepen your understanding of the approaches/methods appropriate to your research program.

B. Being:

1. Become a critical and constructive leader in practical theology.
2. Appreciate the value of current theological movements for the church and your life.
3. Be a respectable, respectful, and significant practical theologian.
4. Appreciate that theology is a dynamic and contextual effort to discern appropriate ways to embody the redemption revealed in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

C. Doing:

1. Develop the ability to present informative presentations and facilitate student discussions.
2. Research and present original research on a substantial topic in missional theology and significant for your research topic.
3. Hone critical reading skills in primary literature.
4. Develop the ability to analyze secondary scholarship in light of primary texts.

## II. Required Text(s):

Resources for getting started in missional theology: Student Selected Textbook and Blog:

- Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012).
- Ryan K. Bolger, *The Gospel after Christendom: New Voices, New Cultures, New Expressions* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2012).
- Francis Chan, *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013) (<http://www.crazylovebook.com/>).
- Mary Sue Dehmlow Dreier, *Created by the Spirit: Planting Missional Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

- Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003).
  - David Fitch, *Faithful Presence: 7 Disciplines That Shape the Church for God's Mission & Prodigal Christianity* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2016) ([Reclaiming the Mission blog](#))
  - Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2011).
  - Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).
  - Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emergent Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2005).
  - Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
- Darrell L. Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).
- Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmanson, *Missional Spirituality* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011).
  - Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).
  - Scott McKnight, *Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others, 10th Anniversary Edition* (Paraclete, 2014) ([Jesus Creed blog](#)).
  - Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).
  - Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).
  - Stefan Paas, *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).
  - David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010) (website: <http://radical.net/>)
  - C. Christopher Smith and John Pattison, *Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus* (Downers Grove: 2014). Also see <http://slowchurch.com/>
  - Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens*, The Church and Postmodern Culture series, ser. ed. James K. A. Smith (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

- Gary Tyra, *A Missional Orthodoxy: Theology and Ministry in a Post-Christian Context* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Academic, 2013).
- Dwight J. Zscheile, *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).
- Tyndale Seminary has a list of readings in Missional Church in their Missional Church Reading Room ([link](#)).
- Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- *International Journal of Practical Theology*
- *Journal of Pastoral Theology*
- *Journal of Practical Theology*
- *Journal of Missional Practice* ([link](#)).
- *Millennial Magazine* ([link](#)).
- Verge Network ([link](#)).

**III. Course Performance Criteria:**

Assignment	Percent	Due
A. Lecture and Syllabus:	50%	
1. Class lecture	25%	Oct 19
2. Syllabus	15%	Oct 22
3. Annotated Bibliography:	10%	Oct 22
B. Paper/Project:	50%	
1. Presentation	10%	Nov 23 or 30
2. Interaction	10%	Nov 24, Dec 1
3. Paper	30%	Nov 30, Dec 7
	Total:	100%

**IV. Course Outline:**

Week and format	Date	Topic	Due Dates
1 In-person	Sept 14	• Personal Introductions	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the Course and Syllabus</li> </ul> <p>I. History of Missional Theology and Church</p>	
2 In-person	Sept 21	<p>II. Missional Theology: Primary Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Missional Context Paper (MDiv/MTS)</li> </ul>	
3 Online	Sept 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Concepts <i>continued</i></li> </ul>	
4 In-person	Oct 5	<p>III. Cultural Context &amp; Missional Theology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing and discussion of textbook blog (MDiv/MTS)</li> </ul>	
5 Online	Oct 12	<p>IV. A Missional Theology of Culture</p>	
6 In-person	Oct 19	<p>A Missional Theology of Culture <i>continued</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop discussion of project/paper topics &amp; approaches</li> <li>• <i>PhD Lecture presentations</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus and annotated bibliography due Oct 22</li> </ul>
7 Online	Oct 26	<p><b>10/25–29 Reading Week and Intensive Hybrid Week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our class will not meet this week and will not have online content.</li> </ul>	
8 In-person	Nov 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPT Seminar presentations</li> <li>• Short presentations of missional context papers (MDiv/MTS)</li> </ul>	
9 Online	Nov 9	<p>V. Challenge of Missional Theology &amp; Evangelical Identity</p>	
10 In-person	Nov 16	<p>VI. Missional Theology and the Future of the Church</p>	

11 Online	Nov 23	<p>VII. Integrative Paper Presentation &amp; Collaboration</p> <p>Zoom or WebEx synchronous (live) session for paper presentations.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="407 386 1040 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Paper Presentations</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5.</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Paper Presentations		1.		2.		3.		4.		5.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper interaction (post on Padlet) due Nov 24</li> </ul>
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12 In-person	Nov 30	<p>Integrative Paper Presentation &amp; Collaboration</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="407 753 1040 982"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Paper Presentations</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>6.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>8.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>10.</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Paper Presentations		6.		7.		8.		9.		10.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First group of papers due Nov 30</li> </ul> <p>Paper interaction (post on Padlet) due Dec 1</p>
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13 Online	Dec 7	Conclusion and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second group of papers due Dec 7</li> </ul>												

## V. Assignment Descriptions:

### General Guidelines:

- Please submit course work in the appropriate folder on Avenue to Learn (A2L).
- I prefer Word docs rather than PDF. If you submit your work in PDF, comments may be limited.
- All assignments marked according to the Grading Criteria Form available on A2L.
- All papers and assignments should conform to (and will be marked according to) the MDC Style Guide (<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>).

## A. Lecture, Syllabus, and Annotated Bibliography:

1. Purpose:  
This assignment provides experience *preparing* a syllabus and *delivering* a lecture for teaching in an undergraduate setting. The preparation of the syllabus also helps fulfill one of the requirements of the Mastery Checklist.
2. Description:  
You will prepare a syllabus on a topic related to Christian theology (determined in consultation with the professor). You may use this assignment to investigate an area that will promote your research program (e.g., prepare for doctoral comprehensive exams and MA thesis/PhD dissertation topics). You should, however, gear the syllabus and the lecture toward an undergraduate audience.
3. Guidelines:
  - a. Research:
    - 1) Research for the lecture will account for the supplemental reading for research degree students (approximately 5,000-6,000 pages)
    - 2) Documentation of reading:  
Please provide an annotated bibliography of the reading consulted in the preparation of the lecture (the annotations for the texts should be about one paragraph—identify the key thesis and contributions of the text).
  - b. Lecture:
    - 1) The lecture should present and discuss the primary content points of the topic (or sub-topic)
    - 2) Lecture handouts/outlines and PowerPoint/Prezi are helpful, but not required.
    - 3) Length:  
The lecture and discussion will take approximately a fifty-minute period of the course. You will present the lecture during one of the campus class days.  
  
Note: If COVID-19 requires the conversion of this class to all online delivery, you will post a video presentation of your lecture and will have the opportunity to provide feedback to your class colleagues in an online venue.
  - c. Syllabus:  
Be sure to craft the syllabus for an undergraduate class.

The syllabus should contain the essential features of a class syllabus:

- Course title
- Course description
- Course objectives
- Texts (required and supplemental)
- Assignments
- Course outline (weekly lecture topics)

4. Evaluation:

Grading of the lecture and discussion session will be based on the following . . .

- a. Please submit to the professor a copy (electronic in Avenue folder) of your lecture notes and annotated bibliography used to develop the lecture.
- b. Does the lecture accurately present and discuss the topic?
- c. Does the lecture engage in critical evaluation/discussion of the content?
- d. Does the lecture highlight the transcendent value of the material—e.g., does it have value for contemporary Christian thought, life, and ministry?
- e. Does the lecture facilitate student discussion?

B. Major Paper:

1. Description:

Research degree students will write an academic thesis paper or prepare a cultural engagement project. If you have an idea for a paper or creative project, please come and discuss your idea with me. I am open to papers/projects that cohere with the essence of the course and are suited to your research field and interests.

2. Purpose:

This assignment gives you experience writing article, essay, and chapter length theological papers and presenting research in an oral form similar to that performed at academic conferences.

3. Guidelines for the Paper:

The paper should include (description categories below correspond to those of the grading rubric) . . .

a. Content and argument:

- 1) Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports).



- Example of a thesis statement: the Emergent church movement is an authentic Christian way of being the church in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.
- 2) Describe your topic.
  - 3) Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.
  - 4) Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms and interact with them vis-à-vis your view.
- b. Style and format:
- 1) Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., you should avoid excessive first-person discourse, colloquialisms (academic is different than conversational voice), passive voice (use active).
  - 2) Use and document a *minimum* of fifteen scholarly resources.
  - 3) Accurately document sources according to the College’s Style Guide.
  - 4) Paper length: 20–25 pages. Not to exceed 7,000 words (including footnotes).
  - 5) Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).
  - 6) Use footnotes.
- C. Class Presentation:
1. Time: 30-35 minutes
 

Each presentation includes two parts:

    - a. The paper presentation (15–20 minutes)
    - b. The response and facilitation, which is led by another student (10–15 minutes), see below for more details on the response and facilitation).
  2. Presentation content:
 

You should articulate the paper’s thesis, topic, and argument. You can use PowerPoint, etc. if you wish. The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience presenting papers as you might at an academic conference. You should prepare and present your

paper for that type of venue. I encourage you to consider presenting your paper for this class at a conference and/or the Theological Research Seminar of the Divinity College.

A written submission/outline is not required, but it is encouraged as it may be beneficial to other students in the course

D. Guidelines for the Interaction:

1. Purpose:  
Provides experience in responding to academic presentations and discussions, such as one might do at an academic society meeting.
2. Description:  
Each student *prepares a critique* and *facilitates a discussion* of a thesis paper presentation.
  - a. The critique:
    - 1) Remember to be charitable; not only Christian, but since academia is a small guild, it is self-preservation.
    - 2) Critical (includes highlighting and discussing problems *and* strengths):  
  
The critique should explore the following sorts of issues:
      - Does the paper have a thesis?
      - Does the content develop and support the thesis?
      - Does it use appropriate sources?
      - Does it interact with the relevant secondary literature?
  - b. The discussion:  
You should keep the presentation to time limit and effectively manage student discussion (do not let one person dominate the interaction; move on to a new issue if discussion begins to go off on tangents and run down rabbit trails). Be sure to elicit comments from all people present. You might want to have some prepared questions and discussion prompts to facilitate the initial discussion.
  - c. The critical interaction:  
You can go through point by point as a monologue or start by raising and offering your thoughts on the paper's primary contributions and arguments and invite discussion based on your remarks and interaction with the paper and then so forth through the rest of the points you have identified.

## VI. Policies:

- A. **Textbook Purchase:**  
 All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.
- B. **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 ~ <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>
- C. **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 the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).
- 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.
- Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.
- E. **Late-Assignment and Exam Policy:**
1. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus.
  2. Students take exams on the date and at the time scheduled in the syllabus.
  3. Late assignments are reduced five percentage points for each day late (e.g., if the grade is 90 and it is one day late [after the beginning of class equals one day late], the grade will be reduced to 85).

4. Assignments and exams will be accepted without penalty after the specified date in the syllabus only in the case of an excused absence. If a student misses an exam or assignment submission due to a reason that he/she believes is excusable, then he/she must notify the instructor and schedule an exam date and/or late-assignment submission date within twenty-four hours of the beginning of the missed class session.
5. Assignments and exams will not be accepted late on the basis of the student's involvement with school-approved activities. If you are not able to be in class for an exam or assignment submission, then you must pre-arrange with the instructor to take the exam and/or submit the assignment before the scheduled date in the 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.**

### **Bibliography: Missional Theology**

Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012).

Ryan K. Bolger, *The Gospel after Christendom: New Voices, New Cultures, New Expressions* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2012).

Francis Chan, *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013) (<http://www.crazylove.org/>).

Mary Sue Dehmlow Dreier, *Created by the Spirit: Planting Missional Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003).

David Fitch, *Faithful Presence: 7 Disciplines That Shape the Church for God's Mission & Prodigal Christianity* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2016) ([Reclaiming the Mission blog](#))

Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2011).

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Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Dwight J. Zscheile, *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

### **Additional resources that may be helpful**

The British and Irish Association for Practical Theology (BIAPT) ([link](#))

*Practical Theology* ([link](#)) BIAPT's journal

*International Journal of Practical Theology* ([link](#))

*Journal of Pastoral Theology* ([link](#))

*Journal of Missional Practice* ([link](#)).

*Millennial Magazine* ([link](#)).

Verge Network ([link](#)).