



McMaster Divinity College

Foundations For Christian Ministry (Modified Hybrid) MS 3XF3 Winter 2022

Instructor: Dr. Lee Beach
beachl@mcmaster.ca
Office # 237

Class Time: Tuesdays, 11:00 am-12:50 pm ET

Room: TBA.

Schedule: As a modified hybrid course the class schedule is as follows

In Person classes: Jan. 11, 25, Feb. 8, 22, Mar. 8, 22, Apr. 5.

Online classes: (class meets at same time but online instead of in person) Jan. 18, Feb. 1, 15, Mar. 15, Mar. 29

*There will be no class the week of Mar. 1.

**A live streaming option is available for those who live at a distance from campus or are otherwise unable to join the class when we meet together in person.

Instructor Biography

Dr. Lee Beach is the Associate Professor of Christian Ministry, the Garbutt F. Smith Chair in Ministry Formation and the Director of Ministry Formation at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. He teaches courses on the church in culture, pastoral ministry and Christian spirituality. Prior to coming to MDC Lee pastored for over 20 years with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada serving churches in Peterborough, Cobourg and Scarborough, Ontario. He is currently involved in a new church initiative in Ancaster, Ontario where he lives with his family. He is the author of the book, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (IVP) and co-author (With Dr. Franklin Pyles) of the book *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World: Experiencing the Four-Fold Gospel Today* (Wipf and Stock).

Course Description

This course will explore some essential foundations of Christian ministry such as the call to ministry, the importance of understanding our context, the essential content of Christian ministry and the challenge of the ongoing cultivation of our practice of Christian ministry. The gospel of Matthew and Jesus' own development and work with the twelve as it is depicted in this gospel will serve as a foundation for the course as it unpacks each of these themes. We will explore the inner challenges of ministry life as well as the outer ones that must be addressed if we are to serve Christ faithfully in our given context. The goal of the course is to help orient students to some of the foundational internal, external and theological factors that anchor ministry as we also consider their connection to the actual practice of ministry.

As a modified hybrid course, we will be using a course shell provided by McMaster University's Avenue to Learn as well as other online technology. Information about accessing and using these sites will be provided prior to the beginning of the course and as needed. If you have questions about the technological aspects of the course or have any problems with the technology, please contact the instructor. I will do my best to help and if I am not able to answer your questions, I will work with our IT support team to get an answer for you as soon as possible.

Learning Goals:

Knowing:

1. Upon completion of this course students will understand a number of key experiences and practices that contribute to personal formation for ministry.
2. Upon completion of this course students will gain insight into the integrative nature of experience and knowledge in ministry formation.
3. Upon completion of this course students will be able to identify many of the key challenges in the ongoing practice of Christian ministry.

Being

1. As a result of this course students will have reflected on their past and ongoing experiences as a way to consider how they are being formed for ministry.
2. As a result of this course students will consider their present needs in their ongoing development in ministry formation.

Doing

1. Upon completion of this course students will have developed a personal philosophy for ministry formation.

Working together as a learning community

A core value of our class is that it is a “learning community,” designed to be a place where each member of the community can grow through positive affirmation and constructive input. We should all come to the community as people in process, open to be deconstructed and formed through our mutual learning experience.

As a responsible member of our learning community, you will be expected to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This means that in our class interactions you will endeavor to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity. Your presence is necessary for our community (that is our class) to function at an optimal level, therefore it is expected that each student will join the class meetings each Tuesday, whether online or in person. Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order as an attachment to an email sent to the professor. Assignments should be sent in on or before the due date specified in this syllabus. All assignments handed in after the due date will be subject to a penalty of 3% for each day (including weekends) that they are late.

Instructor’s role and availability

As professor it is my responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I come to position myself as a fellow learner in the community and to offer information, reflection, experience and questions for us to reflect on together. Further, it is my responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class in our discussions and through written work so that your growth through this class can be maximized as a result of our collaboration.

I will do my best to answer any email enquiries within 24 hours during weekdays (Mon.-Fri). I do not generally answer emails Saturdays or Sunday during the day. If an email is sent later in the afternoon on a Friday it will probably not be answered until Sunday evening or Monday morning. I will do my very best to grade assignments within three weeks of submission.

I am not only available but also welcome and enjoy connections with each of you outside formal class time. If you would like to meet together via zoom or webex please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

Required Reading

Nouwen, Henri, J.M. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.

Root, Andrew. *The Pastor in a Secular Age: Ministry to People Who No Longer Need a God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2019.

Assignments

1. Reflection Paper: How Have I been Formed?

This paper is a personal reflection paper on the major ways that you have been formed personally and as a ministering person. All of us have many experiences as we go through life that shape us inwardly and in the way that we relate to others and the world around us. This paper asks you to reflect on some of the key experiences and people that have contributed to your own formation. The paper should respond to (but is not limited to) these questions; What are some of the important experiences that you have had that have shaped you? Who are some of the key people who have influenced you? How has your ecclesial tradition played a part in your development? What have been some of the important learning experiences you have had that changed you? How would you describe yourself in terms of your personality and overall approach to life? What are your gifts and strengths? What areas do you believe you need to grow in? Where have you seen God work through you in the past? This paper is a reflection paper and thus does not require interaction with external sources (although using some sources is certainly allowable if they help in your reflection). The paper should NOT be a series of stories, rather it should provide an authentic interaction with yourself as you seek to understand the ways that you are being formed as a person, and specifically as a ministering person. The paper will be evaluated based on the depth of insight displayed and reflection offered.

The paper should be 8-10 pages (double spaced) in length and is due Feb. 1, 2022. It will constitute 25% of the course grade.

2. Learning from Someone who has Gone Before Us.

This assignment is designed to invite you to study the life of a veteran ministry practitioner and cull lessons from their lives in order to inform your own development as a ministering person. Andrew Root, in our course text *The Pastor in a Secular Age* looks at a number of ancient and contemporary leaders for this purpose, in this assignment you will choose a past or present ministry leader of note (i.e. someone on whom things have been written, but not any of the figures that Root covers in the course textbook) and study their lives with a particular view to discerning the primary elements that have been part of their development and formation in ministry. What experiences, learnings, and ongoing development were crucial to their formation as a ministering person? How intentional were they in their growth? Did they have any blind

spots or weaknesses that were left unaddressed, etc. The person can be anyone from church history or contemporary ministry. You should refer to at least four sources as the foundation for your research on the person that you choose. Your research will be presented to the course instructor in oral form, that is you will record a presentation on your chosen subject and submit it to the instructor on the due date along with a bibliography that reflects the sources you consulted to prepare the presentation. The instructor will subsequently email you a number of questions based on your presentation that you will be expected to respond to within 72 hours after receiving the email. Presentations will be graded based upon the depth of research evidenced, the quality of insights into the persons development offered, helpfulness of your response to the questions and the creativity of the presentation itself.

Presentations are due Mar. 8, 2022. They should be aprox. 15 minutes in length (format and further details will be discussed in class). This assignment will constitute 25% of the course grade.

3. Research/Specialization Paper: Letter to a Young Pastor

This paper invites the student to offer their own philosophy of ministry formation by writing a letter to a young pastor who is newly engaged in vocational ministry. What would you say to him/her about how to think about their development as a ministering person? What are some important things for them to pay attention to? What are some key practices to engage in? What challenges will they face that you would want to alert them to? Etc. This paper should be written in the form of a personal letter but it should also reflect that genuine research has been done to help you develop your ideas (The course text books and at least six other sources should be cited). The paper should ultimately present a philosophy of ministry formation that is applicable to people who are seeking to understand themselves, their calling and the cultivation of that calling, in whatever form it takes, throughout their lives.

Pastoral Studies Specialization

Those taking this course as part of their specialization in Pastoral Studies should include a section in the paper that explicitly focuses on the unique challenges of ministry formation in the pastoral ministry. What are the stress points that need to be recognized? What are the challenges of formation when one is often in the “public eye”? How does pastoral ministry help and sometimes hinder personal formation in ministry? These, and perhaps other, questions should be considered in the paper.

Church in Culture Specialization

Those taking the course as part of their specialization in Church in Culture should include a section that highlights the unique challenges of ministry formation in a post-Christian age. Are there any unique areas that the ministering person should focus on in these days? Does the current age present challenges to the ministering person that were not present in past eras? If so, what are they and how can they be addressed?

The paper is due Mar. 29, 2022 and should be approximately 12-13 pages in length (double spaced) and will constitute 40% of the course grade.

4. Final Reflection Paper

This paper is a final personal reflection paper that invites students to think about their next steps in ministry formation. What are your needs? What steps do you need to take to continue to develop as a ministering person? What insights from the course were most germane to you and what do you want to make sure you capture before moving on? What are your current frustrations in terms of your formation for ministry? This paper is a personal reflection and does not need to be augmented by research (although incorporating sources is certainly fine). The paper should demonstrate an open and authentic engagement with the topic of your ongoing formation for ministry and attention to the topics that have been raised in the course.

This paper is due Apr. 5, 2022 and should be 2- 3 pages (double spaced) in length. It will constitute 10% of the course grade.

Course Outline *subject to adjustment as necessary

Section One: Calling (Jan. 11&18)

- Matt. 3:13-4:11
- What is calling?
- Understanding and living into the call to ministry
- Tension points
- Perseverance

Section Two: Context (Jan. 25 & Feb. 1)

- Matt. 4:12-17
- Why context matters
- Knowing your inner context
- Knowing your cultural context
- Knowing your ministry context

Section Three: Content (Feb. 8 &15)

- Matt. 4:23-25
- Engaging in Christian ministry
- Preaching good news
- Healing the sick
- Confronting the powers of darkness

Section Four: Cultivation (Feb. 22, Mar. 8, 15, 22, 29, Apr. 5)

- Matt. 4:18-22 and various texts and topics from Matthew's gospel
- Growing in ministry through knowledge and experience

Additional notes:

A. Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore you may contact READ On Bookstore, at 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://mcmasterdivinity.ca/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: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/> Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

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.

Introductory Bibliography

- Barton, Ruth Haley. *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008.
- Benner, David G. *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Finn, Nathan A. and Whitfield, Keith S, (editors). *The Spirituality of the Sent: Casting a New Vision for the Missional Church*. Downers Grove, IN: Intervarsity, 2017.
- Jenkins, Michael. *Letters to New Pastors*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Lederleitner, Mary T. *Women in God's Mission: Accepting the Invitation to Serve and Lead*. Downers Grove, IN: Intervarsity, 2018.
- Oden, Thomas. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Purves, Andrew. *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.
- _____. Eugene Peterson. *The Pastor: A Memoir*. New York: Harper One, 2011.
- Root, Andrew. *Faith Formation in a Secular Age: Responding to the Churches Obsession with Youthfulness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2017.
- Willimon, William. *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002.