



# McMaster Divinity College

## Theology and Practice of Christian Leadership

(Online)

MS/TH 3XL3

PS/CC/CW

Winter 2022

Instructor: Dr. Lee Beach

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Office # 237

**Class Time:** Thursdays, 4:00 pm-5:50 pm ET

**Schedule:** As an online course the class schedule is as follows

**Class meetings Online:** Jan. 13, Feb. 3, 10, 17, Mar.10, 31.

**Online Presentations:** On the weeks that the class does not meet together course material will be posted on the Avenue to Learn (A2L) course site.

\*There will be no class the week of Mar. 3.

### 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 is an introduction to the theology, philosophy and practice of Christian leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The course is meant to help students understand leadership as a concept as well as gain perspective on key developmental issues related to their own leadership lives. The course will examine a number of theories of contemporary leadership and especially focus on the challenges of Christian leadership in today's North American culture as well as consider appropriate strategies for leadership that address these challenges.

As an online course we will be using a course shell provided by McMaster University's Avenue to Learn (A2L) as well as other online technology (Zoom). 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. As a result of this course students will understand foundational scriptural and theological principles for leadership in the church in contemporary culture.
2. As a result of this course students will have gained knowledge on a wide range of approaches to leadership in contemporary leadership theory.
3. As a result of this course students will become conversant with some of the particular challenges to Christian leadership in this particular historical moment in North American history and begin to identify ways to address them.

### **Being:**

1. Students will grow in their confidence to lead in their own unique, God given style of leadership.

### **Doing:**

1. Students will develop their own philosophy of leadership and consider how to implement this philosophy in their own leadership context.
2. Students will identify relevant strategies for personal leadership development.

## **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 online on the Thursdays they are scheduled and that you will participate in the material that is posted on our A2L site and the discussion boards that will also appear on the A2L site. 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 week days (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 please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

## **Required Reading**

Dugan, John P. *Leadership Theory: Cultivating Critical Perspectives*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2017.

Smith Gordon T. *Wisdom from Babylon: Leadership for the Church in a Secular Age*. Downers Grove, IN: Intervarsity, 2020.

Bolsinger, Tod. *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*.  
Downers Grove, IN: Intervarsity, 2015.

## Assignments

### 1. Paper and Class Presentation: Approaches to Contemporary Leadership

On or near the first day of class students will be assigned a contemporary approach to leadership as offered in the course text *Leadership Theory*. Students will do a study of that theory based on the course text and at least three other sources. This research will be the basis of a short paper. It will also form the basis for a short class presentation. The paper should cover the basic theory and practices behind the specific approach to leadership assigned and the presentation should reflect the same. Each presentation will be followed by class discussion where the presenter should be prepared to answer questions and give input to class comments. A presentation schedule will be finalized on the first week of class and presentations will take place (online) over the weeks of Feb. 3, 10, 17.

**The paper should be 3-5 pages (double spaced) in length and is due Feb. 3, 2022. It will constitute 15% of the course grade. The presentation is due on the date you are scheduled to present in class and will constitute 5% of the course grade.**

### 2. Paper and Video Presentation: The Challenge and Possibilities for Christian Leadership Today

This paper is designed to invite reflection and research on the unique aspects of contemporary North American culture and their effect on leadership in general and Christian leadership in particular. Some guiding questions for the paper include; What are some of the specific challenges of contemporary culture that affect how a leader leads today? How do these challenges have a unique effect on Christian leadership in the church, a Christian organization or in a secular setting? (you can focus on one of these in particular if you want to, or you can do some reflection on two or three), What are some of the ways that Christian leaders need to think about the practice of leadership today in order to practice leadership effectively? The paper should address these, or these types of questions and reflect a sensitivity to cultural trends and realities that are present in today's North American culture as well as ways that Christian leaders can address these challenges in a way that is theologically rooted and practically oriented. It should draw from the course texts *Wisdom from Babylon* and *Canoeing the Mountains* as well as at least five other sources.

Accompanying the paper a short TED talk style video should also be produced and submitted on video to the course instructor. The talk should be a 10-12 minute oral summary of your paper that seeks to be both informational but also inspirational to contemporary Christian leaders.

Presentations should reflect a desire to communicate your ideas effectively and creatively. They will be evaluated on their content/ideas, engagement with the audience and creativity.

**Both pieces of this assignment are due Mar. 10, 2022. The paper should be 8-10 pages (double spaced) in length and will constitute 25% of the final course grade. The presentation should be 10-12 minutes in length (format and further details will be discussed in class) the presentation will constitute 10% of the course grade.**

### **3. Paper: My Personal Theology and Philosophy of Leadership**

This paper builds off of the previous assignment but seeks to go to the deeper foundations of Christian leadership. The paper should offer an introductory biblical and theological foundation for leadership, a personal philosophy of leadership that reflects consideration of various leadership theories and some thoughts on several key leadership practices that you believe are essential to effective leadership in the contemporary church and/or society today. The paper should demonstrate comprehension of course materials, required texts and pertinent research on the issue of leadership (All course texts should be cited as well as at least 7 other sources). Because of the page limitations for this assignment it is not expected that this paper will be a comprehensive study of Christian leadership but the grade will be based on your ability to concisely articulate a clear understanding of leadership and a beginning vision for how you see yourself practicing leadership in the future.

**The paper is due Apr. 7, 2022 and should be approximately 10-12 pages in length (double spaced) and will constitute 35% of the course grade.**

### **4. Participation**

As an online course an ongoing commitment to participation in the online discussion forums is absolutely essential to the ethos and overall quality of the course. Also, participation in class discussions, particularly the class presentations will factor into the grade for this aspect of the course. Thus, students will be graded on their participation based on the quality and frequency of their participation. Details for online discussion can be found in the class outline (below). Grades will be determined rubric found near the end of this syllabus.

**Class participation will constitute 10% of the course grade.**

## **Course Outline** \*subject to adjustment as necessary

### **Section One: What is Leadership? (Jan. 13, 20,27)**

Class meets together online Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> for introductions and orientation to the syllabus and course requirements. Also that day an introductory lecture and discussion on the topic, What is Leadership?

The week of Jan. 17 & 24 material will be posted online that looks at an introductory theology of leadership as well as a profile in leadership; Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The week of Jan. 24-30 an online discussion will take place on our class A2L site. A question for discussion will be posted and you will be asked to offer a 200-250 word response to the question and respond to one of your classmates responses (150 words). Posts should be made no later than Sunday Jan.30 (posts after midnight that day will not be counted toward final grade).

Student Responsibilities: Join the class meeting Jan. 13 and be prepared to briefly introduce yourself. Partake in the online material posted the week of Jan. 17 and 24. Participate in the online discussion the week of Jan. 24. Prepare your paper and presentation on the approach to contemporary leadership that you have been assigned.

### **Section Two: Contemporary Approaches to Leadership (Feb. 3, 10, 17)**

The class will gather (online) all three weeks for student presentations based on assigned chapters from the book *Leadership Theory* (as noted in the assignment section chapters will be assigned and a schedule finalized within the first week of the course).

Student Responsibilities: Join the class gatherings. Be prepared to enter into the presentations and discussion by reading the chapters from the book *Leadership Theory* that will be presented that day. Hand in your first paper by Feb. 3 and present your chapter according to the class schedule.

### **Section Three: The Practice of Christian Leadership in a Post-Christian Context (Feb. 24, Mar. 10, 17, 24, 31)** \* no class or new material the week of Mar. 1<sup>st</sup>

Throughout this section of the course we will consider a number of key practices for Christian leadership in today's context. We will also engage ins online discussion of the course text books *Wisdom from Babylon* and *Canoeing the Mountains*. One of the online presentations will be a profile in Leadership: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Student Responsibilities: Engage with the online materials posted on our A2L site the weeks of Feb. 24, Mar. 17, 24. Also join the online discussion forums posted on our A2L site on the weeks of Feb. 21 and Mar.14. Questions for discussion on the course text books *Wisdom from Babylon* (Feb 21) and *Canoeing the Mountains* (Mar. 14) will be posted. Please offer a 200-250 word response to the question no later than the Sunday of each week (posts after Sunday night

will not count toward the course grade). Join our online class gatherings on Mar. 10 and 31. Hand in your second paper and video presentation on Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>.

Week of Apr. 4 – Writing week. Finish writing your final paper and submit on Apr. 7.

## **Participation Rubric**

### A-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (9-10 Points)

- The participant integrated evidence from the reading, lecture, or past experience in supporting their argument.
- The participant consistently posted insightful comments and questions that prompted on topic discussion.
- The participant consistently helped clarify or synthesize other class members' ideas. If disagreeing with other class members' ideas, the participant stated his or her disagreement or objections clearly, yet politely.

### B-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (8 Points)

- The participant was notably lacking in one or two of the items listed for A-level participation.
- The participant consistently had to be prompted or coaxed to participate.
- The participant usually, but not always, expressed herself or himself clearly.

### C-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (7 Points)

- The participant was consistently lacking in two or more of the items listed for A-level participation.
- The participant was extremely reluctant to participate, even when prompted.
- The participant rarely expressed himself or herself clearly.

### D-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (6 Points)

- The participant frequently attempted (success is irrelevant) to draw the discussion off-topic, even if the participant's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric

### F-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (0-5 Points)

- The participant was rude or abusive to other course participants.
- The participant consistently failed or refused to participate at all, even when specifically prompted or questioned, even if the participant's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric.

**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](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://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

- Banks, R and B. Ledbetter. *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.
- Barton, Ruth. *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008.
- Beach, Nancy. *Gifted to Lead: the Art of Leading as a Women in the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
- Bell, Skip (editor). *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014.
- Branson, Mark Lau and Juan F. Martinez. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2011.
- Clinton, Robert J. *The Making of a Christian Leader: Recognizing the Lesson sand stages of Leadership Development*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988.
- Collins, Jim. *Good to Great*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001.
- DePree, Max. *Leadership is an Art*. New York: Dell, 1989.
- Friedman, Edwin H. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. New York: Seabury, 2007.
- Greenleaf, Robert. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness (25th Anniversary Edition)*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2002.
- Jacobson, Eric O., ed., *The Three Tasks of Leadership: Worldly Wisdom for Pastoral Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Keel, Tim. *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor, and Chaos*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.

Roxburgh, Alan J., and Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*. San Francisco: Joosey-Bass, 2006.

Wright, Walter C. *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Influence and Service*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

\*See also *The Journal of Religious Leadership* at [www.arl-jrl.org](http://www.arl-jrl.org)