

TH 3XG3
Grace in the Christian Life
CC/CW/PS

McMaster Divinity College
Spring 2022
5 weeks (weeks of May 30-June 30)
Mondays at 1pm-2:50pm
Office: 216

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Hours: Mon 3:00–4:00 & by appointment

◆ These courses meet completely online for the entire term in both synchronous and asynchronous meetings. The synchronous meeting times are scheduled to avoid conflicts with other courses. ◆

I. Description:

This course explores the biblical, historical, and contemporary ways that Christians understand Christian redemption. Considering the nature of human brokenness (sin) is part of this discussion. It considers historical issues related to atonement theology and traditional doctrines of justification and sanctification. It also explores contemporary ways Christians endeavor to participate in God's grace through various ministries and cultural activities.

II. Course Objectives:

A. Knowing:

1. Know a variety of biblical, historical, and contemporary ways Christians have understood grace and its meaning for Christian life and ministry.
2. Know some of the key challenges and controversies on Christian understandings of grace and salvation (e.g., the Incarnation in the early church and the challenge of proclaiming Christ in a post-Christendom cultural context).
3. Know some of the contemporary new directions and emphases in Christian views of grace and salvation and how they shape contemporary visions for Christian life and ministry.

B. Being:

1. Appreciate that theology is a dynamic and contextual effort to discern appropriate ways to embody the redemption revealed in Jesus Christ.
2. Embrace a deeper sense of your own Christian identity and how to live your Christian life vis-à-vis contemporary culture.

C. Doing:

1. Investigate and write a constructive paper on a biblical theology of grace.
2. Develop an understanding of a Christian theology of grace that is both credible within culture and authentic to the Gospel.
3. Develop skills in academic analysis, writing, and presentation of research.

III. Required Text:

1. Gene L. Greene, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo, eds., *So Great a Salvation: Soteriology in the Majority World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).
- Additional reading may be assigned

IV. Course Performance Criteria:

Assignment	Percent	Due
A. Biblical Vision of Grace:	25%	June 10
B. <i>So Great a Salvation</i> Blog:	20%	June 17
C. Major Paper/Projects:	55%	
1) Presentation	20%	June 27
2) Paper	35%	July 1
D. Participation:	X%	
Total: 100%		

V. Lecture Outline (*tentative*):

Week	Date	Weekly Sessions	Readings & Assignments
1	May 30	Synchronous 1:00–2:50pm • Our Stories of Grace • Introduction to the Course	Online I. Biblical Theology of Creation-Redemption
2	June 6	Synchronous 1:00– 2:50pm • Q & A on Biblical Theology of Creation & Redemption lecture	Online III. Medieval theologies of grace • June 10, Biblical Vision of Grace Paper due

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group sharing/discussion: Biblical Vision of Grace <p>II. Early church theology of grace</p>																				
3	June 13	<p>Synchronous 1:00–2:50pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDiv/MTS: Share with the class <i>So Great a Salvation</i> Blog • DPT seminar presentations <p>IV. Protestant Theology (e.g., justification, sanctification, evangelical atonement theology)</p>	<p>Online</p> <p>IV. Grace and Contemporary Issues</p> <p>A. Human Identity & Activity (<i>Imago Dei</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 17, <i>So Great a Salvation</i> Blog due • June 17, DPT seminar due 																		
4	June 20	<p>Synchronous 1:00– 2:50pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q & A on identity & divine image lecture <p>B. Creation Care</p>	<p>Online</p> <p>C. Theology of Religions</p>																			
5	June 27	<p>Major Paper Presentations Synchronous 1:00–2:50pm</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 5%;"></th> <th style="width: 95%;">Presenter</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> <tr><td>6.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>8.</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Presenter	1.		2.		3.		4.		5.		6.		7.		8.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 1, Paper/Project due
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VI. Assignment Descriptions:

General Guidelines:

- Submit papers to the assignment folder on Avenue to Learn. Use the following format for file names: your last name.assignment name.docx [Studebaker.BiblicalGrace.docx]. PDF files may not receive electronic comments—I find them clunky and difficult to deal with.
- Papers and assignments may be submitted early for feedback from the professor and resubmitted on the due date for grading.
- All assignments marked according to the Grading Criteria Form available on Avenue to Learn
- All papers and assignments should conform to (and will be marked against) the MacDiv Style Guide

A. Biblical Vision of Grace:

1. Purpose:

This assignment provides the opportunity to interpret a biblical vision of grace. The biblical passage, story, image, or theme can be from either the Old or the New Testaments.

2. Description:

- a. This essay describes the theological content of the selected passage or theme and identifies what it contributes to a Christian theology of grace. When detailing the contribution of the theology of grace do so in light of your area of degree specialization: e.g., what does the theology of grace mean for Christian Worldview, Church and Culture, or Pastoral Studies?

2) Length: 5–6 pages.

- 3) Sources: six to eight sources (combination of books, journal articles, book essays, etc.). Endeavor to draw on sources that reflect different approaches and theological viewpoints.

B. *So Great a Salvation* Blog:

1. Purpose: This assignment develops analytical, synthetic, and critical skills.
2. Description: After reading *So Great a Salvation*, select and write a 500 word blog on one of its chapters.
3. Elements for a blog:

* Note: Given the chapter and the nature of your engagement as well as length of the blog, it may not be possible to include all of these elements in your blog. The key for evaluation is thoughtful description and engagement with the book.

- a. Summarize: Present the primary content, arguments, and problems and solutions identified in the chapter.
- b. Critique: Identify and describe several areas/issues that the chapter misses about the nature of contemporary Christian life and ministry. Where do you think the chapter is weak about contemporary Christian life and ministry? Is its description of the “problem” and its proposed “solution” misguided, blinkered, one-sided? Identify, describe, and make your suggestions for alternative solutions.
- c. Correlate: Based on your observations of contemporary church life, ministry, and Christian life, identify helpful correlations with the themes discussed in the chapter.

C. Project/Paper—Class Presentation and Written Submission:

1. General guidelines:

This assignment constitutes the “major paper” and presentation of the course. The purpose of the paper/project is vocational development. It should advance your vocational trajectory. Selecting whether to prepare a project or a paper is an important step in the process. If you anticipate further graduate work or writing a thesis as part of your MTS or MDiv, then an academic research-thesis paper is an excellent option. A research-thesis paper provides skill development in conducting the concentrated study on a particular research topic necessary for advanced academic work. If your vocational track is vocational ministry or an alternative professional field, then a project may be an effective option. Completing a project provides skill development in contextualizing and applying the fruit of theological research and reflection.

If you have an idea for a paper or creative project that does not neatly fit into the parameters of the assignment, 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. Specialization focus:

◆ Please consult the assignment focus for your degree specialization ◆

a. *Christian Worldview*

This specialization relates to the intellectual environment—historical, contemporary, and global—of contemporary Christianity. Engage a topic related to grace and redemption that addresses an element of Christian worldview. The paper/project should be constructive and not only descriptive. The heart of this

assignment is your creative interaction with a way a theology of grace impacts Christian worldview.

Possible topics: Grace and Identity Politics.

b. *Church and Culture*

This specialization focuses on the intersection of the church and its cultural setting. Developing the ability to interpret culture *and* to specify an appropriate Christian response and interaction with it is the purpose of this assignment. Discerning appropriate ways to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ in terms of our specific cultural location is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship and ministry and this assignment seeks to facilitate this process. The paper/project analyzes an element of contemporary culture from a Christian perspective on grace and redemption. Careful and accurate description of the cultural area, as well as thoughtful assessment and response from a Christian perspective is essential.

Possible topics: Grace and the culture of consumerism (e.g., human dignity in a culture that commodifies human beings according to market forces).

c. *Pastoral Studies*

This specialization focuses on vocational ministry. The paper/project should address an issue related to a Christian theology of grace from the perspective of vocational ministry. The paper/project should emphasize the ways a theology of grace shapes Christian ministry. Theological reflection is essential, but the focus of the paper/project is the concrete and practical way the theology of grace shapes, challenges, and provides an opportunity for the practice of Christian ministry.

Possible topic: Public ministry (e.g., social justice ministries) in a context of post-Christendom, secularism, and religious pluralism.

3. Paper Presentation

a. Purpose:

- Presenting your paper gives you the opportunity to share your major paper/project with your class colleagues.
- The final paper/project is due one week after the presentation of the paper to the class, so your presentation may not reflect the completed paper/project. Indeed, the gap between the presentation and final due date provides you the opportunity to incorporate feedback from your class colleagues (see below for Paper/Project Interaction).

b. Guidelines for the presentation:

- 1) You will present a summary of your paper/project in either a live Zoom session or an in-person class session that introduces the paper/project's . . .
 - Topic
 - Why you chose your topic
 - Content development
 - Key resources
 - 2) Length: 10 to 15 minutes.
4. Constructive Paper/Project:
- This assignment constitutes the “major paper” for the course. The purpose of the paper/project is vocational development. It should advance your vocational trajectory. Selecting whether to prepare a project or a paper is an important step in the process.
- Paper?
If you anticipate further graduate work or writing a thesis as part of your MTS or MDiv, then an academic research-thesis paper is an excellent option. A research-thesis paper provides skill development in conducting the concentrated study of a particular research topic necessary for academic research.
 - Project?
If your vocational track is vocational ministry or an alternative professional field, then a project may be an effective option. Completing a project provides skill development in contextualizing and applying the fruit of theological research and reflection.

If you have an idea for a paper or a creative project that does not neatly fit into the parameters of the specialization descriptions, please discuss your idea with me. I am open to papers/projects that cohere with the essence of the course and that are suited to your vocational/research field and interests.

a. Guidelines for Paper:

- 1) Content and argument:
 - Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports).
 - Describe your topic under consideration.
 - Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.
 - Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms of the position and interact with them vis-à-vis your view (where appropriate and in so far as space allows).

2) Style, format, and research:

- Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., avoid colloquialisms (academic is different than conversational voice), passive voice (use active).
- Research-thesis papers must have a thesis statement (stated in the introduction). They should include an introduction, content sections, and a conclusion.
- Use and document a *minimum* of ten scholarly resources (books, journal articles, book essays). Internet resources can be utilized, if they are scholarly and/or professional sources.
- Accurately document sources according to MDC Style Guide (<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>).
- Paper length: 10–12 pages.
- Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).

b. Guidelines for Projects/Sermons and Annotated Bibliography:

- 1) Project content: for example, if you choose to prepare a sermon, you would submit a manuscript of your sermon/message that includes footnotes, which detail where and how you applied and adapted your theological research in the area of leadership. The sermon does not need to be a verbatim manuscript; a detailed and annotated outline works.
- 2) Annotated bibliography of research sources: An annotation is a paragraph or two (approx. 100 words) that describes the content of the book, essay, or article and how it relates to your research project. In addition to the sermon outline, you will provide an annotated bibliography that details the content of the sources and ways they contributed to the sermon.
- 3) Double-spaced pages, 12-point Times New Roman font.
- 4) Use and document at least 10 scholarly resources (e.g., books, journal articles, and essays). Internet resources can be utilized, if they are scholarly and/or professional sources.
- 5) Document sources with footnotes and follow MDC Style Guide.

VII. 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. 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.

<https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty.

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.

VIII. Bibliography

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- Kapic, Kelly M, ed. *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014.
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- Lane, A. N. S. *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment*. London: T & T Clark, 2006.
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- Spurgeon, Charles H. *All of Grace*. Chicago: Moody, 2010.
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