

The World and Writings of John Wesley

PhD – CHTH G105-C05

MA – CH/TH 6XJ6

McMaster Divinity College
Fall Semester 2022
Tuesday, 11:00am-12:50pm

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Considered by many to be the “father of evangelicalism,” John Wesley is a fascinating figure who was instrumental in the formation of modern-day evangelicalism. This course will examine his life, theology, impact, as well as study his social context and associates (and enemies!).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Knowing

- to provide students with an understanding of John Wesley’s life and writings, as well as his contribution to the life of the church over the centuries

Being

- to explore - and ultimately appreciate - the diverse ways people and movements have shaped the history of Christianity
- to create an awareness of the breadth and diversity of the Church, and provide a sense of “place” within the many church traditions
- to be discern one’s calling for service in the church

Doing

- to develop in each student an ability to assess documents and situations from an historical perspective – and in particular, to be able to assess critically the various claims made about Wesley throughout the church’s history
- to learn from Wesley’s life and writings so as to be a more effective leader in the church, academy and the world

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Richard P. Heitzenrater. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- John Wesley. *The Journal of John Wesley*. (see professor or bookstore about print edition – this can also be found online: http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Wesley_Journal.pdf)
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- Reading of primary sources from sites such as <http://wesley.nnu.edu/>

All required textbooks for this class and others at the Divinity College are available from READ-ON Books. Of course, you can purchase your books anywhere, but I encourage you to support our local bookstores by purchasing from READ-ON Books. Contact can be made by mail: 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2; phone: 416-620-2934; fax: 416-622-2308; email: books@readon.ca; website: www.readon.ca.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (*not* required for purchasing):

The following books are related to the course material and provide a helpful reading list for those who would like to pursue the course material further. Students are *NOT* required to purchase or read these books.

- John R. Tyson. *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- John Tomkins, *John Wesley: A Biography*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Harry S. Stout. *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Five volume “History of Evangelicalism Series” by IVP Academic:
 - Mark A. Noll. *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*
 - John R. Wolffe. *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of More, Wilberforce, Chalmers and Finney*
 - David W. Bebbington. *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*
 - Geoff Treloar. *The Disruption of Evangelicalism: The Age of Mott, Machen and McPherson*
 - Brian Stanley. *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Graham and Stott*

ASSIGNMENTS:

Along with completing participating in class, weekly readings, and participating in class discussions and debates, each student will be required to complete the following written assignments and presentations. More information will be provided in class:

- Journal Reflection (15%)
- Presentation on Theology (15%)
- Presentation on Biography (15%)
- Presentation on Theme (15%)
- Research Paper (and presentation) (30%)
- Participation (10%)

GENERAL COMMENTS:

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

Gender Inclusive Language: McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

Style: Unless noted otherwise by the professor, 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 <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf> Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 3% per day (not including weekends) if they attach to their assignment a note explaining the genuine emergency that delayed them. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will not receive comments and constructive criticism from the professor. Submit an electronic copy on the due date or a hard copy before the due date if you are unable to be in class on the due date because of a foreknown absence.

Please turn off your cell phone and/or pager before the class begins.

Respectful dialogue and disagreement is expected.

If you are sick, please do not attend class.

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE:**(Schedule may shift according to number of people enrolled in course.)**

- September 13: Introduction to the Class
 Reading: *Doing Church History*
 Reading: Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, ch. 1
 Reading: Maddox and Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, ch. 1
- September 20: John Wesley's Life (ONLINE: links provided on [avenuetolearn](#))
 Reading: Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, chs. 2-3
 Reading: Maddox and Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, ch. 2
- September 27: John Wesley's Life
 Reading: Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, chs. 4
 Reading: Maddox and Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, ch. 3
- October 4: John Wesley's Life
 Reading: Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, chs. 5-6
 Reading: Maddox and Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, chs. 4-7
- October 11: **Journal Reflection Due**
- October 18: **Biographical Presentations**
- October 25: *Hybrid Intensive Week (No Class)*
- November 1: **Theology Presentations**
- November 8: **Theology Presentations**
- November 15: **Theme Presentations**
- November 22: **Theme Presentations**
- November 29: **Research Paper & Presentations**
- December 6: **Research Paper & Presentations**