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Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
CHTH G125- C04
Winter Term 2023 | Tuesdays 11:00am – 12:50pm | ROOM TBA

The mission of McMaster Divinity College is to develop effective evangelical Christian leaders for the Church, academy, and society through graduate-level education, spiritual development, and vocational formation.

I. Faculty Information

Name: Dr. James D. Dvorak

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Office hours:
- Tuesday TBA
- Wed TBA
- By appointment as needed

II. Dr. Dvorak's Christian Worldview and Teaching Philosophy

Christian Worldview

God created human beings with "minds," i.e., with the capacity for reasoning, thinking, knowing. Furthermore, he expected human beings to use their minds to the glory of God. However, as the result of the fall of humankind (cf. Gen. 3) and the introduction of sin into the world, not all knowledge is valuable and not all things are worth knowing or even contemplating, especially if those things detract from the glory of God or lead a person away from God and his purposes. Thus, an indispensable part of *Christian* education is to teach learners how to think critically about the information with which they are presented, in order that they may discern what is good and what is not, what is valuable/beneficial and what is not, and what is God-glorifying and what is not—that in "test[ing] everything" learners may "hold on to what is good and keep away from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21–22).

Teaching Philosophy

It's unclear whether the following quotation is from John Dewey, though it is often attributed to him (cf. C. Crumly, et. al., *Pedagogies for Student-Centered Learning, Online and On-ground,* Seminarium Elements [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014], 149); regardless, it summarizes concisely what I believe to be the purpose of teaching and of education in general:

> *The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think—rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men.*

Of course, this does not mean I avoid listening to and engaging in dialogue with others or that I will not learn from and present the research of others. Rather, the value position it expresses, to which I subscribe, is that teaching involves not only the delivery of content but also—and perhaps more importantly—frameworks for understanding and evaluating both the ideas of others and my own. In other words, I

believe instruction involves not only the transmission of information about the subject matter but also models/frameworks for making sense of that information and the critical and creative skills necessary for formulating new hermeneutical/interpretive frameworks as needed. As Robert Harris put it, "Education is not about memorization; it is about learning how to think" (Robert A. Harris, *The Integration of Faith and Learning* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2004], 12). It is about enabling people to "test everything; hold on to what is good; keep away from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21–22).

In terms of teaching practice, the literature shows that for students to achieve deep learning and to develop mastery, active learning strategies and practices are *vital* (cf., e.g., Ambrose, et. al., *How Learning Works*, Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010], 91–152; Weimer, "More Evidence That Active learning Trumps Lecture," http://bit.ly/1FtcYHT). For this reason, I try to find high-impact teaching practices and learning activities that create an environment in which students have the potential to think critically and creatively, to "engage knowledge actively, demanding justification for it, looking into the process of its construction to see what underlying assumptions it is built upon, and how reasonable was the process of inference that led to it" (Harris, *The Integration of Faith and Learning*, 12).

III. Course Description

The course is designed to help prepare students for the challenges of teaching. Teaching requires an understanding of students in social, emotional, physical, and intellectual dimensions; every aspect of a student's life is integrated in the learning experience of each student. Teaching and learning may take place in physical and/or virtual environments, each of which offer both benefits and challenges. One must consider these factors during the instructional design phase. This course covers both theory and practice of teaching, learning, and course design.

IV. Course Objectives

Knowing…	*Being…*	*Doing…*
• *Define* key terms in educational theory • *Examine* seven fundamental principles of learning • *Consider* various student-centered methods of enacting the seven fundamental principles of learning • *Identify* the pros and cons that come with the use of technology in teaching and learning	• *Articulate* a Christian worldview and philosophy of teaching • *Establish* appropriate habits for developing into a master teacher • *Nurture* the internal motivation required to be a lifelong learner • *Develop* technological savvy and creativity that will foster and bolster teaching and learning	• *Design* lessons that integrate sound learning theory and demonstrating proven teaching practices and that can be delivered multi-modally • *Teach* lessons that demonstrate a student-centered approach • *Provide* meaningful feedback on lessons • *Evaluate* the use of technology in teaching and learning

V. Course Resources

The books listed below by Ambrose, et. al., and Merriam and Bierema (marked with a *) will be the primary textbooks for this course. However, I expect you to read and consult the other books as references.

Occasionally, I will assign readings from sources not listed here (e.g., articles, chapters, and the like); these reading assignments will be posted to the A2L course shell. I will do my best to note when resources are available electronically from Mills Library or elsewhere online.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the MDC chapel entrance. To purchase in advance, you may contact READ On Bookstore, International Blvd, Etobicoke, ON, M9A 3C3: phone 416.620.2934; mobile 416.668.3434; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

* Ambrose, Susan A., Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, and Marie K. Norman. *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Learning Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010. [limited availability in electronic format via Mills, but I recommend that you purchase your own copy]

Crumly, Cari, Pamela Dietz, and Sarah d'Angelo. *Pedagogies for Student-Centered Learning: Online and On-Ground*. Seminarium Elements. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. [available in Kindle edition or Google eBook]

* Merriam, Sharan B., and Laura L. Bierema. *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014.

Ott, Craig. *Teaching and Learning Across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021.

"Teaching Online Pedagogical Repository (TOPR)." https://topr.online.ucf.edu/

VI. Course Grading Scale and Assignment Weights

Grading Scale

From the Research Degrees Handbook, p. 36.

Percent Grade	Letter Grade	Grade Point (12pt scale)	Grade Point (4pt scale)	Grading Guidelines
90–100 85–89 80–84	A+ A A-	12 11 10	4	for work displaying mastery of the subject matter, creativity, and individualized integration of insights and their relationship(s)
77–79 73–76 70–72	B+ B B-	9 8 7	3	for work displaying a good level of competence and comprehension

Important Notes:
- Letter grades are given for all courses. Plus and minus signs indicate work of higher or lower quality within the guidelines for each letter grade. Some courses, such as Theological German, may be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis.
- In the MA and PhD programs, any course below B- does not count for credit and must be repeated (if it is a required course) or replaced with a course in which the student has earned a passing grade.

- Students who fail a course are required to repeat that course (if it is required) or replace the course with another where they have earned a passing grade. The student will be placed on academic probation until the failed course is repeated or replaced. Failing a second course while still on probation will result in a process of academic review by the VP Academic and may result in denial of further registration in the program and dismissal from the College.
- The absolute deadline for all course assignments is the last day of classes for the term. Any missing assignments will receive a grade of "0" unless the student has already been granted an incomplete or deferral in advance (see policy for "Incompletes and Deferrals").
- Once the final grade sheet has been submitted, the course instructor may not change a grade without consultation with the VP Academic or designate.

Activity/Assignment Weights

Attendance and Participation	0%
Learning design and lesson preparation	30%
Lesson delivery	30%
Writing assignments	30%
Teaching and Learning Technology (TLT) assignments	10%
	100%

VII. Course Requirements/Activities

Due dates for all requirements/activities are posted in A2L.

- *Attendance and Participation* (0%). Punctual attendance and participation in class *are expected*. You are all doctoral students; I will not treat you like primary/secondary school children by using points/grades as a carrot to lure you to come to and participate in class.
- *Learning design and lesson preparation* (30%). Each of these assignments will be submitted on their due date via A2L.
  - o *In-person/classroom lesson* – Each of you will prepare a lesson on a topic of your choice (must be approved by Dr. Dvorak) for delivery in an in-person, classroom setting. You should design the lesson for a post-secondary/undergraduate, Christian higher education context (audience age range 18–22 years old; typical class length is 50 minutes).
  - o *Online* – Each of you will prepare a lesson on a topic of your choice (must be approved by Dr. Dvorak) for delivery in an online, *asynchronous* setting. You should design the lesson for a post-secondary/undergraduate, Christian higher education context (audience age range 18–22 years old; typical class length is 50 minutes). You must produce both a lesson plan and a content production plan, which will be shared with your classmates when you make your presentation to the class.
- *Lesson delivery* (30%). Any artifacts that accompany your lessons will be submitted on their due date via A2L. If you have web-based artifacts, you will submit the link(s); if you have physical artifacts (e.g., props, physical illustrations), you will submit photos of these artifacts or links to videos in which you demonstrate the use of these items.
  - o *In person* – Each of you will teach the lesson that you designed for the in-person, classroom setting. These lessons will be discussed during class time, much like a paper read in a seminar style class.

- o *Online* – Each of you will describe how you will teach your topic in the online, asynchronous environment. You must share your lesson and production plan, and you must produce at least one element of your plan (e.g., some form of presentation or assessment) to illustrate a creative yet appropriate use of technology.
- *Writing assignments* (30%). There are three relatively short writing assignments in this class. Each of these will be submitted on their due date via A2L.
  - o 3000-word essay on one of the learning principles from Ambrose, et. al. of your choice. There will be an online form (linked in A2L) that you will use to inform Dr. Dvorak about which principle you will research. Your research should include resources beyond the *How Learning Works* textbook (including articles, case studies, etc.). Your essay should also contain a description of some sort of "practical application" of the principle in either an in-person classroom context or an online, asynchronous environment. Follow the MDC style guide meticulously.
  - o 3000-word essay on an aspect of Adult Learning (andragogy) of your choice. There will be an online form (linked in A2L) that you will use to inform Dr. Dvorak about what aspect of andragogy you will research. The basic requirements of this essay are: (1) it should define adult learning (andragogy) (2) describe how andragogy relates to but is distinct from pedagogy; (3) discuss at least one social or cultural factor that influences the practice of andragogical principles.
  - o 2000-word concise Christian worldview and teaching philosophy statement. This will be due at the end of the course and will be submitted via A2L. As an example, see my statements above in this syllabus. More information and discussion to come in class.
- *Teaching and Learning Technology (TLT) assignments* (10%). Each person in the class will submit weekly (via A2L) the following:
  - o A description (can include photos or other multimedia) of a technology that can be used effectively in teaching and learning in either in-person or online context.
  - o An example of the technology in use for teaching and learning (or how you might use the technology for teaching and learning); that is, I want you explicitly to tie the technology to a principled teaching and learning strategy (the TOPR website or similar resource will be useful for you here).
  - o Let me give you an example so that you understand what I am looking for. When I taught beginning Greek, which I taught asynchronously online for many years, I would use tech tools like Explain Everything or ShowMe to demonstrate such things as parsing. I also used my web programming background and experience to create my own alphabet tool.

VIII. Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due at class time
1	January 10, 2023	Intro to class (syllabus); intro to teaching and learning of adults (andragogy)	
2	January 17, 2023	*Principle 1*: Learners' prior knowledge can help or hinder learning	Ambrose, et.al., intro. and ch.1; Merriam & Bierema, chs. 1–3; 6

3	January 24, 2023	*Principle 2*: How learners organize knowledge influences how they learn and apply what they know	Ambrose, et.al., ch. 2; Merriam & Bierema, ch. 9
4	January 31, 2023	*Principle 3*: Learners' motivation generates, direct, and sustains what they do to learn	Ambrose, et.al., ch. 3; Merriam & Bierema, ch. 8
5	February 7, 2023	*Principle 4*: To develop mastery, learners must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned	Ambrose, et.al., ch. 4; Merriam & Bierema, ch. 5
6	February 14, 2023	*Principle 5*: Goal-directed practice coupled with *targeted* feedback are critical to learning	Ambrose, et.al., ch. 5; article(s) on A2L
7	February 21, 2023	*Principle 6*: Learners' current level of development interacts with the social, emotional, and intellectual climate of the course to impact learning	Ambrose, et.al., ch. 6; Merriam & Bierema, ch. 12
8	February 28, 2023	Intensive hybrid week	Merriam & Bierema, chs. 10–11 (by end of week)
9	March 7, 2023	*Principle 7*: To become self-directed learners, learners must learn to assess the demands of the task, evaluate their own knowledge and skills, plan their approach, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies as needed	Ambrose, et.al., ch. 7; Merriam & Bierema, chs. 4–5
10	March 14, 2023	Applying the principles	Ambrose, et.al., conclusion
11	March 21, 2023	lesson presentations	
12	March 28, 2023	lesson presentations	
13	April 4, 2023	lesson presentations (as needed)	

IX. Course Policies

Communication

- *Email* – the best way to communicate with me, aside from speaking to me directly at class meetings, is by email (dvorakj@mcmaster.ca). My personal policy is to respond to the messages you send to me within 24 hours of receiving them. I am not always able to fulfill this ideal; nevertheless, I do my best to at least let you know that I have received your message(s) and that I will respond as soon as I can.
- *A2L* – I will make extensive use of Avenue to Learn (A2L) in this course; it will be the primary hub for all course content and course communication. **It is *your responsibility* to log into the system regularly to check for announcements, course content, and course activities.**
- *Phone* – You may call my office phone (905-525-9140 x24518) if you need to. If you get my voicemail, please leave a message and I will do my best to return you call.
- *Office visits* – I will maintain office hours two days per week (see section I above), and you are welcome to come by to see me. Please note that office hours are for drop-in visits, and these should be kept to 15–20 minutes maximum. If you need more time to visit, you may make an

appointment for a meeting either directly through me (contact me via email) or through Melanie McGlynn. I am willing to meet in person or via Zoom as needed.

Absence Due to Illness
- If you suspect that you have COVID, please take the Ontario COVID self-assessment (https://www.ontario.ca/self-assessment/) and follow their guidelines based on the results of the self-assessment.
- If you must miss class due to an illness, you must contact me (via email) as soon as possible to let me know. Likewise, if I should become ill, I will communicate with you via A2L about how we will make up class sessions.
- Although much of the course content will be made available via A2L, it would still be a good idea to have a friend take notes for you, if possible.

Inclement Weather
- If on a class meeting day MDC closes due to inclement weather, I reserve the right to move the lessons and, where possible, class activities for the week to A2L (asynchronous format).

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 at https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/

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).

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. Students will be kept apprised of any changes.