



McMaster Divinity
College

PETRINE EPISTLES

NT 3XP3 (BS/PS)

McMaster Divinity College
Dr. Christopher D. Land
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Spring 2023
May 1 – June 15
Monday 9:00am–12:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It is always the case that some books of the Bible are emphasized more than others. In this course, we will examine two New Testament epistles that are often neglected in both academic and ecclesial contexts. Together, we will try to determine why these letters are often neglected, and we will strive to understand their distinctive contribution to the New Testament and to Christian theology. We will explore how the letters' emphasis on suffering and hope is relevant in different parts of the world today, including post-Christendom Canada.

SPECIALIZATIONS

NT 3XP3 is available as a Biblical Studies (BS) or Pastoral Studies (PS) specialization.

≈ Students taking 3XP3 as a Biblical Studies (BS) course will be encouraged to explore the historical and cultural settings of the Epistles, as well as recent discussions surrounding the interpretation of their contents.

≈ Students taking 3XP3 as a Pastoral Studies (PS) course will be encouraged to explore how the Epistles are relevant for Christian faith and practice in the 21st century, with special emphases on suffering, social identity, and communal purity/integrity.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through their active participation in this course, students will:

KNOWING

- Memorize the basic structure and content of the Petrine Epistles;
- Learn about the historical and cultural setting in which the Petrine Epistles were written;
- Understand how 1 and 2 Peter seek to strengthen Christian faith;

BEING

- Appreciate the importance of participating in respectful discussions about biblical texts;
- Become self-aware as a modern reader of the Bible, recognizing both the antiquity of the texts and the various ways in which contemporary life influences our understanding of it;

- Learn about and respond to Jesus' example as a human sufferer;

DOING

- Have the ability to quickly locate reliable scholarly resources that discuss a particular NT passage;
- Have the ability to ask key questions in order to explore the meaning of a text;
- Have the ability to reflect canonically, theologically, and contextually so as to explore how people can/should understand the New Testament today.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: Students are required to complete all of the following assignments. No unfinished assignments are permitted. *Written assignments must be uploaded to Avenue to Learn either as Word documents (.doc, .docx) or in Rich Text Format (.rtf). Assignments cannot be submitted after June 15th without written permission from the Office of the Registrar (strickpd@mcmaster.ca).*

CLASS PARTICIPATION (0%)

Students are expected to complete weekly readings and assignments on schedule, to attend class, and to participate in class discussions.

REFLECTION PAPERS (5% EACH = 10% TOTAL)

At the beginning of the semester, each student will briefly describe how they view the Petrine Epistles and how they understand these letters' relevance for discipleship, theology, and ministry. At the end of the semester, the same assignment will be repeated, with emphasis falling on how the student's understanding has been challenged and refined. The initial paper should be roughly 600 words and is due on **January 14**; the concluding paper should be roughly 1,200 words and is due on **April 15**. Please note that, while the use of the first person is an integral part of these assignments, the thoughts included in them should be well-organized and clearly presented.

WEEKLY READING RESPONSES (5% EACH = 20% TOTAL)

For each week with assigned reading in *The Life and Witness of Peter*, students will write a brief email that reflects upon the assigned reading. These emails must demonstrate familiarity with what has been read, and they should describe how the ideas presented in the reading have informed or challenged the student's understanding of Peter or the significance of the Petrine Epistles. The emails should be no less than 150 words, but they need not be lengthy. They should follow the casual style of an email, but must avoid abbreviations and use standard punctuation/capitalization. Emails are due at **10:00am each Monday** according to the schedule below, and should be sent to landc@mcmaster.ca (as emails, not as attachments).

EXEGETICAL REPORTS (30% EACH = 60% TOTAL)

The written assignments in this class will consist of exegetical reports, each of which will explore a specific New Testament passage. You are free to choose which passages to study, but you must pick one chapter

from 1 Peter (for Report #1) and one chapter from either 2 Peter or Jude (for Report #2). Research reports are due according to the Coursework Schedule below.

Detailed instructions for the research reports will be supplied on A2L at the beginning of the semester. In summary, each report will require you to:

1. Select and read a chapter from 1 Peter (Report #1) or from 2 Peter or Jude (Report #2).
2. Search for academic resources that discuss the passage.
3. List and critically evaluate twelve resources (of varying types and representing varying theological persuasions) that you have found to be especially useful, explaining in a paragraph or two for each source how it has contributed to your understanding of the passage and/or its relevance today.
4. Answer four supplied questions in a paragraph or two each. The questions will help you to approach your passage from different interpretive perspectives in order to attune you to different facets of its meaning and significance.
5. Spend 5–10 minutes explaining to the class how your passage is relevant today.

The reports must be formatted according to the MDC Style Guide (i.e. standard page layout, appropriate citation formatting, proper spelling, etc.). They do not need to employ a formal essay style, however. The first part of the report will be a list of twelve sources, with a paragraph or two after each entry. The second part of the report will copy the four supplied questions, with a paragraph or two after each question. The reports should demonstrate that you have taken the time to read widely, to read carefully, and to think deeply. In the end, your report should be something that a committee might receive with confidence as a reliable basis for a lesson, sermon, leadership decision, etc.

The oral presentations need not be formal. You need not use slides. Your goal is to explain, in a conversational manner, how you might move from your exegetical research towards a sermon or teaching or personal exhortation. In other words, what is God saying through your passage today, in relation to some audience or issue? Be specific. Be concrete. Be practical. And please, try not to be trite.

GRADING SUMMARY

Class Participation	0%
Reflection Papers	2 x 5%
Reading Responses	4 x 5%
<u>Exegetical Reports</u>	<u>2 x 30%</u>
Total	100%

TEXTBOOKS

All students are required to possess the following:

An English translation of the New Testament.

Helyer, Larry R. *The Life and Witness of Peter*. Downer's Grove, IVP, 2012.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the MDC chapel entrance. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 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.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Date	Class Preparation (Due at Meeting Time)	Lecture Topics	Written Assignments (Due at 11:59pm)
May 1	Read Course Syllabus	Introduction to the Course Peter in the Gospels Peter in Acts Peter in Extra-Canonical Tradition	
May 8	Reading Response (Chs. 1–5)	Introduction to 1 Peter	
May 15	Reading Response (Chs. 6–10)	1 Peter 1–3	
May 22	Presentation (1 Peter)	1 Peter 4–5	Report #1
May 29	Reading Response (Chs. 11–14)	Introduction to 2 Peter & Jude Jude	
June 5	Reading Response (Chs. 15–17)	2 Peter 1–3	
June 12	Presentation (2 Peter & Jude)	Concluding Reflections	Report #2

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STATEMENT ON 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:

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

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) for plagiarism detection and the student's continuation in the course represents his or her consent to the use of this service. If a student has objections to the use of this service, alternate arrangements for assignment submission must be made with the professor in advance of the assignment deadlines.

A useful guide to avoiding plagiarism is the Harvard Guide to Using Sources:

<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>

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.

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).

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.