

NT 5XP5 – Petrine Epistles

McMaster Divinity College
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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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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;
- Engage in doctoral-level research that invokes James in a responsible manner.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: You 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). A penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments, including assignments submitted in incorrect file formats. Assignments cannot be submitted after June 15th without written permission from the Office of the Registrar (strickpd@mcmaster.ca).

Class Participation (10%)

During each class meeting, we will discuss three things: (1) what James's words likely meant in their *ancient* social and historical setting; (2) what James's message reveals *in general* about the kingdom of God; and (3) how James's message is lived out (or might be better lived out) in *contemporary* individuals and communities. Doctoral students are expected to exemplify a level of engagement towards which other students can aspire.

Attendance at weekly meetings is expected, because class discussions are a significant part of the overall learning experience. If an absence is unavoidable, please email me in advance.

Annotated Bibliography (25%)

DPT students will produce an annotated bibliography that surveys recent biblical scholarship involving the Epistle of James. This bibliography must include at least 15 resources (including at most three commentaries) for a total of around 3,000–4,000 pages of reading. The included resources should display the full range of New Testament studies, exemplifying a variety of different questions and approaches as well as different confessional and/or non-confessional perspectives. Each annotation should, in approximately 100–150 words, summarize the content of a particular resource and its distinctive contribution to scholarship. It is due according to the Course Schedule below.

Peter for Non-Dummies (25%)

Drawing upon the above annotated bibliography, DPT students will compose an introduction to the Epistle of James such as would be suitable for a graduate student (or alum) seeking to think and speak about Paul's letter without being ignorant of contemporary scholarship. This overview should touch on the main issues that impact our understanding of the Epistle and/or its importance for subsequent Christian history and theology. While you need not attempt to be unbiased, it is not the focus of the assignment to advocate for a particular point of view. Instead, focus on laying a general foundation for more specialized research. The paper will be approximately 3,000 words. It is due according to the Course Schedule below.

Research Paper (40%)

In consultation with both the professor and their doctoral supervisor, DPT students will define an area of intersection that involves both the Epistle of James and the student's own practice-led research. A research paper will then be written in which the student explores this area of intersection and thereby advances scholarly understanding of his or her practice. For PhD students, this paper can pursue any line of inquiry that is relevant to the Epistle of James and

potentially publishable as a piece of New Testament scholarship. Research papers must be approximately 8,000 words in length. They are due according to the Course Schedule below.

GRADING SUMMARY

Participation	10%
Annotated Bibliography	25%
James for Non-Dummies	25%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

TEXTBOOKS

Students are required to possess the following:

An English translation of the New Testament.

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Lecture Topics	Written Assignments (Due at 11:59pm)
May 1	Introduction to the Course Peter in the Gospels Peter in Acts Peter in Extra-Canonical Tradition	
May 8	Introduction to 1 Peter	
May 15	1 Peter 1–3	Annotated Bibliography
May 22	1 Peter 4–5	Peter for Non-Dummies
May 29	Introduction to 2 Peter & Jude Jude	
June 5	2 Peter 1–3	
June 12	Concluding Reflections	Research Paper

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CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

So that you can benefit as much as possible from the class sessions, please note the following expectations.

1. Please respect the opinions of others, even if you do not agree with them. Extend courtesy by not ridiculing others' ideas, but feel free to respond to them logically and critically and in an orderly manner.

2. Students should be on time to class or be prepared to offer an explanation after class to the professor.
3. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.
4. Students may eat and drink in class so long as they do not distract others or leave a mess behind.
5. Students should not engage in anything during class time that prevents them from focusing and participating in class discussions.
6. Students are not to carry on private conversations in class. If something is unclear, the whole class will benefit by a question being asked out loud.
7. Cell phones and related devices are to be silenced during class. If a student must for some reason accept a phone call, he or she ought to discretely leave the class in order to do so.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines may be asked to leave the class.

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 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. The binding version of the syllabus is the one posted to Avenue to Learn (A2L).