

McMaster Divinity College

# Women in Christian Ministry

DPT: NT MS 5XG5

Cynthia Long Westfall, Ph.D.  
Email: westfal@mcmaster.ca

Fall 2023  
In Person or Livestream  
Tuesdays 4–5:50 p.m.  
Hurlburt

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## Bibliography

Dr. Cindy Westfall is the Associate Professor of New Testament at McMaster Divinity College. Her research interests are wide-ranging including Greek, linguistics and discourse analysis, the book of Hebrews, Revelation and the Catholic Epistles, Bible Translation, Biblical Social Justice, and most relevant for this course, Gender and Ministry. She is the author of *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ*, which won the Christianity Today Award of Merit, 2018. She is co-editor of the third edition of *Discovering Biblical Equality*. She has also written *A Discourse Analysis of Hebrews: The Relationship between Form and Meaning* and co-edited *The Bible and Social Justice: Old Testament and New Testament Foundations for the Church's Urgent Call*. She is married to Glenn and lives in Dundas, ON.

## Course Description

The debate on the role of women in the home, church and society remains one of the major issues among North American evangelicals and there have been some major developments in the conversation and debate in the last five years. The focus of this course is the biblical, theological and social support for women in ministry, as well as their roles as equal partners in the creation mandate and equal heirs in the kingdom of God. Whatever your position, this course can be a vital path for understanding the times. Christian leaders and committed lay people will do well to understand the current situation, work on a coherent biblical theology, and discern their own role and ministry or courses of action in the home, the church and culture. This course will give each student the opportunity and resources to explore this issue in their area of specialization and to benefit from the insights and contributions of the other areas.

This course relates to the Church & Culture, Biblical Studies, Christian Worldview and Pastoral Studies.

## Course Objectives

Specific Objectives – Through reading, lectures, discussion and assignments the student will:

### Knowing

- Relate to and express the various issues, practices and problems of concern for women in ministry.
- Explore the role gender has played in your identity, story and practice for practice-led discipline
- Identify the key biblical texts that concern women in ministry in your area of interest and explain them within a cogent foundation for a biblical basis and theology in gender

### Being

- Using gender as a lens, recognize your identity and life story as a basis for practice-led research.
- Be a proactive participant in the evangelical conversation on gender in a way that is consistent with your calling, practice and research interest.

### Doing

- Process current gender issues and concerns with classmates.
  - Apply practice-led research a topic of concerning gender and ministry
- Develop a biblical foundation for theology and practices related to gender issues

### Reading

#### *Core Texts to be Included in the Reading*

Pierce, Ronald W., Cynthia Long Westfall, and Christa McKirland, eds. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2021.

Westfall, Cynthia Long. *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016.

Any material & links distributed online.

#### *Recommended*

Barr, Beth Allison. *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2021.

Du Mez, Kristin Kobes. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York: LiveRight, 2020.

Swartz, Lisa Weaver. *Stained Glass Ceilings: How Evangelicals Do Gender and Practice Power*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2023.

## Course Requirements

### *Reading*

The required reading for the course is 4,000 pages. The student will read the texts and select appropriate reading for Gender in Ministry (particularly as it relates to their research question) and submit an annotated bibliography (see below).

### *Student Participation* (10%)

Student attendance is necessary to pass the course, which includes watching the 3 videos that will be uploaded to A2L. This class is highly interactive. Participation includes discussions in class in which you will relate to and express, the various issues, practices, and problems related to women in ministry and develop solutions together. Participation in discussion threads on A2L is not required, but will enhance your percentage.

### *Written Assignments*

#### **Annotated Bibliography** (30%)

The student will read the textbooks and 15-20 resources related to women in ministry (for a total of 4,000 pages) and develop an annotated bibliography by writing a 100-150 word annotation for each one with a total of approximately 2,000. The required texts for the course can be included as part of the book list. **The reading report will be due 11:59 pm on Dec 8.**

#### **Summary of Biblical and Theological Foundations** (20%)

Utilizing material from the class sessions, online materials and reading the student will describe the biblical and theological basis for *your specific practice-led research* for women in ministry. This paper provides the theological component of your major paper. **The paper will be approximately 3,000 words (12 pages), and submitted to A2L in PDF form at 11:59 p.m., Friday, Oct 27.**

Include footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses:

<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>

#### **Major Paper on Practice-Led Research on Women in Ministry** (40%)

The student will demonstrate practice-led research through a particular focus/interest in women in ministry. Their paper will include an introduction, five sections and a conclusion (subheadings are advised):

- Clearly explain how the paper is rooted based in your identity, experiences and practice
- Explore the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. Why does this ministry practice need to be addressed?)
- Identify and develop a procedure for a methodology suitable for researching this topic.
- Integrate the biblical and theological foundations for practice, utilizing your previous paper with appropriate revisions
- A consideration of new approaches to address and improve ministry practice (local and beyond) and reflection on the application to your own ministry.

**The paper will be approximately 8,000 words. Submit to A2L in PDF form at 11:59 p.m., Friday, Dec 1.**

Include footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses:

<http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>

### **Grading Summary**

Participation	10%
Annotated Bibliography	30%
Biblical and Theological Foundations	20%
Major Paper	40%

### **Classroom Behavior**

#### *Attendance*

- Attendance required to pass the course. Missing more than the equivalent of two weekly classes may result in the reduction of grade or failure.
- Watching the course videos is mandatory for the course.
- Students should be on time to class or inform the professor (preferably in advance).
- Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.

#### **Participation**

- Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
- Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except that which is appropriate in the course outline.
- Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class with consequences.

#### **Late Assignments**

Lose 2% each day for 7 days, and then 4% a day up to 30%. However, the projects and all assignments must be turned in by December 11 to complete the course.

#### **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the

purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

### **AODA**

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

### **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, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

### **Bookstore**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

### **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.

### **Office hours**

Tuesdays 12–2; Wednesday 2–4.

I am available by appointment in my office or for Zoom calls.

### **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.

## Women in Christian Ministry Course Schedule, 2023

DATE	Course Outline	Pierce & Westfall	Westfall
Sept 12	Intro to Course/Syllabus Life Map Video		
Sept 19	Culture and Gender Historical perspectives and development	1–32, 620–34	Preface Ch 1
Sept 26	Women, Identity and the Body	372–92, 510–538, 597–619	Ch 2, 6.1–2
Oct 3	Roles, partnership and complementarity Marriage, Sex & Celibacy	108–125, 185–204, 393–430, 554–71, 572–96	6.3–7
<b>Oct 10</b>	<b>Reading Week—No Class</b>		
Oct 17	Hermeneutics/Biblical Interpretation and Women	327–50, 431–509	
Oct 24	Women and the Creation Gender and the Trinity Masculine & feminine and the Image of God <b>Biblical Foundations due 11:59 p.m., Friday, Oct 27</b>	35–52, 282–309, 351–371	Ch 3
Oct 31	OT and the NT—an overview	53–107, 159–84,	
Nov 7	Women and the Fall and Eschatology		Ch 4–5
Nov 14	Gender, Calling and the Role of Experience on Video (due to conferences, no in-person class)	247–262, 310–36,	Ch 7
Nov 21	Gender and Authority on Video (due to conferences, no in-person class)	263–81 (read ahead)	Ch 8
Nov 28	Interpreting the “Clobber Passages” I Cor 11:3–16, 14:34–35; 1 Timothy 2:9–15; & 1 Peter 3:1–7 <b>Major Paper due 11:59 p.m., Friday, Dec 1</b>	126–58, 205–246	Ch 9
Dec 5	Challenges and problems of church leadership Problem-solving and Change	539–53, 635–58	
Dec 8	<b>Annotated Bibliography due 11:59 p.m., Dec 8</b>		

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- Ehrensperger, Kathy. *That We May Be Mutually Encouraged: Feminism and the New Perspective in Pauline Studies*. New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004.
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- Fraser, Elouise Renich. *Confessions of a Beginning Theologian*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.



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