

BAPTIST HISTORY & POLITY

CH 3XB3/5XB5/6XB6

McMaster Divinity College
Fall Semester 2023

Regular Asynchronous Weekly Online
Occasional *Optional* Online (time TBD)

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath
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Specializations: Christian History Worldview (CW), Pastoral Studies (PS)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Baptists are one of the world's largest Protestant denominations, numbering close to 100,000,000 adherents. This course is an introduction to the history, doctrine, organization, and style of Baptist congregational life and mission. It begins with the birth of the movement in the early 1600s in England, and continues to the present-day development of a global multi-ethnic movement. Special attention will be given to the development of Canadian Baptist churches, and cultural engagement in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

This class is open to all MTS/MDiv/DPT students, but note that it is required by the CBOQ for ordination.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Knowing

- To survey the major ideas, personalities, and developments in Baptist life.
- To provide an understanding of how the Baptists have grown and developed in a variety of countries and continents.
- To place the contemporary issues Baptists face within a broader historical context.
- To know how Baptists are similar to, and different from, other expressions of Christianity.

Being

- To gain practical insight into the work of being a leader within a local Baptist church.
- To understand the role of Baptist distinctives and practices in the development of effective ministry within the CBOQ.

Doing

- To develop skills in maintaining and nurturing a healthy, effective, and personally satisfying vocation.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Gordon L. Heath, Dallas Friesen, and Taylor Murray. *Baptists in Canada: Their History and Polity*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2021.
- Sharon Bowler, ed. *Canadian Baptist Women*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016.
- Taylor Murray and Paul R. Wilson, eds. *Canadian Baptist Fundamentalism*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2022.
- David Bebbington. *Baptists through the Centuries: A History of a Global People*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010.
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- *Common Expression: A Canadian Baptist Manual for Worship and Service*. Mississauga: Canadian Baptist Ministries, 2020.
- Various online primary sources made available in class.

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. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours. Of course, you can purchase your books anywhere, but I encourage you to support our local bookstores.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (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.

- Shirley Bentall. *From Sea to Sea: The Canadian Baptist Federation, 1944–1994*. Mississauga: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1994.
- William H. Brackney. *Baptists in North America*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Timothy George and David S. Dockery, eds. *Baptist Theologians*. Nashville: Broadman, 1990.
- Stuart Ivison and Fred Rosser. *The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada before 1820*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956.
- Robert E. Johnson. *A Global Introduction to Baptist Churches*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Keith G. Jones and Ian M. Randall, eds. *Counter-Cultural Communities: Baptist Life in Twentieth-Century Europe*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008.
- Kidd, Thomas S., and Barry Hankins. *Baptists in America: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Bill J. Leonard. *Baptist Ways: A History*. Valley Forge: Judson, 2003.
- Leon McBeth. *The Baptist Heritage*. Nashville: Broadman, 1987.

- Renfree, Harry A. *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada*. Mississauga, ON: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1988.

COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS (MDIV/MTS/DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE):

This entire course is online through the *avenuetolearn* system at McMaster. In other words, all instruction will take place online through recorded lectures, online posts, etc. There will be times for “face-to-face” Zoom conversations, but they will be optional for students.

These assignments will be explained in detail in a video presentation by the professor.

- Position Paper (10%)

Students will write a two-page position paper on why they are (or are not) a Baptist. This not a “research paper” that requires a trip to the library, rather, it is a personal statement of where students are in relationship to the movement.

- Online Engagement (& reading report) (20%)

Students will complete weekly readings and watch lectures, as well as respond to posted comments by other students and professor. This is an important part of the class that allows for interaction and engagement by all. There will also be occasional *optional* virtual face-to-face meetings for times of discussion. At the end of the course students will report on how much the texts they have read – and that will also factor into this grade.

- Biographical Presentation (20%)

Each student will post on *avenuetolearn* a five-minute video summary of a prominent Baptist’s life and contribution. Students will comment on *avenuetolearn* on other presentations.

- Resolving Board Issues (20%)

Students are to prepare papers that resolve “board issues” discussed in class. Particular attention is to be paid to Baptist distinctives and context. Students will post their papers online and respond to comments from other students.

- Research Paper (30%)

This five-page research paper provides an opportunity for students to pursue an area of research that intrigues them. The topic for the paper should relate to the student’s specialization. Results of research will be shared with the class by way of a five-minute video.

- Christian History and Worldview

The research for this specialization should focus on developing critical knowledge of Baptist history, or a deeper awareness of Baptist theology/worldview.

- Pastoral Studies

Research for this specialization can go in a number of directions. It can focus on a theological construction of one's theological position in regard to an issue related to Baptist history and polity. It can deal with developing a strategy for dealing with issues related to Baptist history and polity. It can deal with Baptist resources for pastoral ministry. And so on.

Students will be expected to turn this five-page paper into two short written works, a two-page blog (for popular audience) and a two-page article for a denominational paper.

COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS (DPT):

Along with taking part in online lectures and discussions, DPT students will complete the following requirements.

- Literature Review and Commentary (25% & 25%)

The student will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources (4000 pages) related to the topic of the course and write a 100-word annotation for each one. The required and recommended texts for the course can be included as part of the book list. The literature review will be approximately 2,000 words. This assignment is due October 6 and will constitute 25% of the course grade.

A commentary paper will also be prepared that summarizes the key learnings from the annotated bibliography and provides a cogent foundation for a theology and practice of the topic of the course. The paper will be approximately 3,000 words. It is due November 3 and will constitute 25% of the course grade.

- Major Research Paper (40%)

The paper should include four key sections. First a brief, but clear explanation of how the paper is rooted in a Practice Led-research approach, second an exploration of the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. why does this ministry practice need to be addressed? What are the problems that you want to identify?) Third, a consideration of a foundational theology of the practice of ministry under consideration in this course and a deep consideration of how new approaches to this practice can be employed in helping to address and improve ministry practice in this area. Fourth some reflection on the application of these ideas to the student's own ministry context (both in terms of the local church and also their ministry beyond the local church). The paper should be approximately 8,000 words. It is due December 1 and will constitute 40% of the course grade.

- Class Participation (10%)

GENERAL COMMENTS:

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.

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.

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).

Online engagement does not require conformity to the MDC styleguide. Further instruction for online engagement will be provided in class.

Unless noted otherwise, submitted written assignments requires conformity to the MDC styleguide.

Essays must be handed in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. All other essays will be considered to be late. Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 5% per day (not including weekends) if they attach to their essay a letter explaining the genuine emergency that delayed them. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will not receive comments and constructive criticism from the professor and may not be returned at the same time as the papers submitted on the due date. 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.

Please do not attend class if you are ill and contagious (e.g. the flu).

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Weekly Online Instruction Accessed Through “avenuetolearn”: avenue.mcmaster.ca.
Occasional *Optional* Face-to-Face Accessed Through <https://mcmaster.zoom.us/j/6185125107>
 (time for this is TBD)

Week Starting Sept 11: Introduction to Class & Reformation Era

- Reading: Heath, *Doing Church History*, all

Week Starting Sept 18: Baptist Origins

- Reading: Heath, Friesen, Murray, *Baptists in Canada*, ch.1
- Position Paper assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Sept 19

Week Starting Sept 25: Baptists in America & Canada

- Reading: Heath, Friesen, Murray, *Baptists in Canada*, ch.2

Week Starting Oct 2: Baptists around the Globe

- Reading: Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries*, all

Week Starting Oct 9: **Reading Week (no class)**

Week Starting Oct 16: How Baptist Churches Work

- Reading: Heath, Friesen, Murray, *Baptists in Canada*, chs.3-7

Week Starting Oct 23: Biographical Presentations

- Reading: Bowler, ed., *Canadian Baptist Women*, all
- Biographical assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Oct 24

Week Starting Oct 30: Baptist Distinctives

Reading: Murray and Wilson, eds. *Canadian Baptist Fundamentalism*

Week Starting Nov 6: Baptist Distinctives

Week Starting Nov 13: Baptist Distinctives

- Resolving Board Issues assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Nov 14

Week Starting Nov 20: Baptist Organizations

Week Starting Nov 27: Research Paper Presentations

- Research paper assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Nov 28

Week Starting Dec 4: Looking to the Future

- Reading: Heath, Friesen, Murray, *Baptists in Canada*, ch.8

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.