



McMaster Divinity
College

Devotional Practices in the New Testament

MA PhD NT 6XD6

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

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Online (Asynchronous)



Course Description

Devotional practices, or spiritual disciplines, are fundamental ways that we enter the sphere of grace and foster our love for God. The devotional actions of the first Christians with which they worshipped Jesus Christ as God were stunningly innovative in their contexts. Understanding those actions anew in those contexts provides a repertoire that moves us beyond our typical traditional and our popular devotional practices. This course combines the *study* of the devotional practices in the New Testament with *interactive experience* in which we explore the application of early Christian devotional practices together.

Course Objectives

Specific Objectives—through reading, lectures, discussion and interactive participation the student will...

Knowing

- Describe the spectrum of devotional practices in the New Testament and early Christianity
- Explain the social, historical, literary and religious cultural contexts in which the early church developed its devotional practices
- Acquire a generalist knowledge of devotion to Jesus in its ancient context

Being

- Be an academic and teacher who is transformed by biblical devotional practice
- Allow the text to motivate and form spiritual disciplines in practice and teaching

Doing

- Research and write an academic paper & present the research to the class

- Identify and apply a methodology to the analysis of the text
- Teach a unit on early devotional practices to the class

Course Requirements for NT 6XD6

View Videos (attendance)

Students are required to view the weekly videos online every week before completing the weekly exercises. Expect several videos each week to be released late Monday.

Online Participation/Attendance (15%)

There will be a couple of venues in which you will be expected to participate in online activities and contribute to the course online:

- Post a video on A2L that introduces to you the class by **January 11, 11:59 p.m.**
- Complete the weekly “exercises” given in the videos and submit to A2L Content: Exercises
- Initiate one discussion thread a week based on the exercises under Communication: Discussion, creating and embedding videos—have some creative fun with it!
- Comment with videos on a minimum of 3 other discussion threads per week
- Post one current event or article relevant to Welcoming the Other per week on the course Padlet (7 total).

Reading (10%)

Students will read 5,000 pages from works on biblical interpretation & hermeneutics. Submit the reading list to A2L by **11:59 p.m. on April 5** with a full bibliography, pages read and a total page count.

Core Texts

Hurtado, Larry W. *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

A modern version of the NT

Recommended

Hurtado, Larry W. *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Hurtado, Larry W. *How on Earth Did Jesus Become A God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Textbook Purchase

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.

Additional Materials

Any handouts for lectures and class discussion will be made available on A2L.

Written Assignments

Methodology paper (20%)

Each student will write a paper on a methodology they will use to research early devotional practices (c. 4,000 words excluding notes and bibliography) **due Friday, March 1 at 11:59 p.m.**

Final Paper which combines the Methodology Paper with the Analysis of a Topic, a Passage or a Theme on Devotional Practices (40%)

Each student will submit a paper on A2L that applies their methodology to an appropriate passage or passages (c. 4,000 + 6,000 words excluding notes and bibliography) **due by Monday April 1, 11:59 p.m.**

A 5–10 min video that explains the student’s research to the class will be uploaded to Communications: Discussions by **Tuesday, April 2, 11:59 p.m.**

The professor assumes that students already know the basics about how to research, write and orally present papers. However, we will work at further developing skills that are utilized in scholarly discourse and publication. Both content (research, analysis, organization of material) and presentation (mechanics and style) are important. Each student must utilize the MacDiv style guide. The general guidelines are that the paper should be 12 pt. font, double-spaced, with 1” margins and utilize footnotes (not endnotes). The paper should include a title page, numbering and a staple cover (not fancy). Each paper should include a formal introduction and conclusion as well as implications for contemporary hermeneutics and any applications for contemporary ministry.

Teaching Unit (15%)

The student will prepare and teach 1 hour of the course in a video that will be viewed by the other students in the course, covering a passage/topic determined by the professor and student.

Grading Summary

- Participation 15%
- Reading 10%
- Methodology Paper 20%
- Final Paper 40%
- Teaching unit 15%

Classroom Behavior

Attendance

Attendance will consist of watching the course videos. 100% attendance is expected.

Participation

Participation will consist of your online participation in the various venues. Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond to the postings of others logically and critically in an orderly manner. Similarly content in all papers should be irenic while it may critique alternate positions.

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

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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.

Appointments & office hours

Wed: 1–3, my zoom personal room will be open to you as a class 4-5 p.m.

Tues: 12–2

Appointments in person or on zoom can be arranged. I suggest that you make an appointment with me for a minimum of one zoom call.

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.

NT 3XD3 COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	CLASS SESSION	Hurtado	NT & Activities
Jan 8–12	Introduction to the course 1 st vs. 21 st Centuries		Introduction Video Specializations Joining the two horizons
Jan 15–19 On campus	Greco-Roman & Jewish Contexts vs. our context	1–53	The dynamics of household worship & the synagogue
Jan 22–26 Online	The historical Jesus	53–78	How to know Jesus
Jan 29–Feb 2	Jesus and the OT	563–602	Use of the OT
Feb 5–9	Stories about Jesus	217–348, 427–86	Mt, Mark, Luke, John Memorization, story telling
Feb 12–16	Jewish-Christian Devotion	155–216	Catholic Epistles Use of the calendar Symbolism Space/place
Feb 19–23	MDC Reading Week		
Feb 26–Mar 1	Paul & Worship Methodology paper due Friday, March 1, 11:59 pm	79–154	Pauline Epistles themes Exercising spiritual gifts, Dreams, prophecy
Mar 4–8	Johannine Worship Passover Seder Forms of Worship	349–426	Themes in John, 1, 2, 3 John, Rev Confession
Mar 11–15	Prayer & worship in practice	606–619	Prayer Communion/Eucharist/Seder Table Fellowship Practice of multifaceted worship
Mar 18–22	Martyrdom	619–24	Sacrifice (lent), fasting
Mar 25–29	Doctrinal Developments & Diversity	519–562; 625–48	Role of theology
Apr 1–5	Major Paper due Apr 1 Video on research due Apr 2 Reading Reports due Apr 5		Presentations on A2L

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