



McMaster Divinity
College

Devotional Practices in the New Testament

MTS MDiv Cert: NT 3XD3
(CC/CW/PS)

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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.

Specializations

This course is an elective for specializations in Church and Culture (CC), Christian Worldview (CW) and Pastoral Studies (PS).

Church and Culture (CC)

Students who specialize in Christ and Culture will find that when they encounter Christ through the engagement of the two horizons of first century Christianity and twenty-first century Western culture, that it will yield insights into the personal and global issues of Christ and culture.

Christian History and Worldview (CW)

Students who specialize in Christian History and Worldview will have an opportunity to focus on the origins of Christian theology and worldview in regards to devotional practices. This not only includes the historical practices in worship, but the implications of the early worship of Jesus.

Pastoral Studies (PS)

Students who specialize in Pastoral Studies will find fresh and practical approaches to biblical practices of devotion and worship that will enrich them personally and equip them for ministry. Come to class with an open mind and a willingness to step out of our twenty-first century comfort zones.

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
- Grasp the nature of devotion to Jesus within exclusive monotheism

Being

- Be open to diverse biblical practices and experiences of devotion and worship
- Grow in radical commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
- Become a multi-faceted worshipper of the triune God

Doing

- Participate in interactive practices of devotion and worship
- Research and write a paper on an aspect of early Christian devotion that is suitable for the student's area of specialization.
- Utilize the research and course resources to develop a project in the area of the student's specialization that speaks to the contemporary context.

Course Requirements for NT 3XD3

View Videos (attendance)

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

Online Participation (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%)

See the Daily Schedule for the weekly reading. The student will submit to A2L the percentage of reading completed on **Thursday, April 5 by 11:59 p.m.**

Textbooks and Materials

Required

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.

Additional materials will be distributed on A2L or accessed on DTL.

Written Assignments

In order to pass the course, all assignments must be completed

Research Paper (40%)

Each student will write a research paper on an aspect of early Christian devotion that concerns Biblical Studies, Christ and Culture or Pastoral Studies. **Each student will submit a PDF copy to A2L Friday, February 16, 11:59 p.m. Late papers will lose 2% a day for a week, then 5% a day**

Length & style: It should be approximately 4,000 words (about fifteen pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For instructions on how to write a research paper, see the video and links under the introductory material under content. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide at: <http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuideDec709.pdf>.

Approach: Choose an aspect or topic of early Christian devotion that reflects your specialization. Utilize a minimum of twelve academic resources.

See the Rubric on A2L for marking.

Portfolio Project & Presentation (35%)

Each student will complete a paper or project designed to apply their research in a contemporary context. **Submit a PDF copy to A2L by Monday, April 1, 11:59 p.m.** No late papers or projects will be accepted. **Upload a 5-10 min video explaining your project to the class by Tuesday, April 2, 11:59 p.m.**

If your project is a type of paper—Length & style: It should be approximately 3000 words (about twelve pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For instructions on how to write a research paper, see the video and links under the introductory material under content. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide (above).

If your project is an artifact, it should be somewhat comparable in time and effort to a 12 pg. research paper submitted in PDF copy to Avenue. Provide an exegetical explanation of its features (approximately 2 pages). Marking will be based on

- The expression of the biblical message/content,
- The quality of the medium
- Appropriateness for the target groups
- The calculated effort expended.

Some suggestions include:

- A sermon on devotional practices
- A study guide that will assist young adult learners in exploring or understanding biblical practices of devotion. Include questions, explanations, directions and other material that both enlightens the theme in its historical context and helps learners to connect the text with life today

- A movie presentation, critical review and discussion which encapsulates the practice of devotion in a modern context*
- A parable, allegory or practice that utilizes significant or powerful contemporary imagery, symbols or metaphors for the practice of devotion*
- A collection of poetry or songs that explore thought, themes and/or emotions in devotional practice*
- A devotional experience for a church or small groups that simulates the situation of the early church and the devotional practices*
- A description of connections between the characters, contexts and themes in your life story and the theme of devotion in the NT*

A written description of the paper or project will be submitted to A2L **on Friday, March 1**. For the project, specify the audience and context targeted, the goal and the approach.

Grading Summary

Reading	10%
Participation	15%
Research Paper	40%
Profile Project	35%

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

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.

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 Research papers due Feb 16	155–216	Catholic Epistles Use of the calendar Symbolism Space/place
Feb 19–23	MDC Reading Week		
Feb 26–Mar 1	Paul & Worship Proposal for Project due Mar 1	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	Projects due Apr 1 Videos presenting projects Apr 2 Reading Reports due Apr 5		Presentations

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