

BAPTIST HISTORY & POLITY

TH 3P1060

McMaster Divinity College
Fall Semester 2024

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

Professor: Gordon L. Heath
gheath@mcmaster.ca

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.

Note that this course 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 and recommended books 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.

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.

- Harry A. Renfree. *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada*. Mississauga, ON: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1988.
- Shirley Bentall. *From Sea to Sea: The Canadian Baptist Federation, 1944–1994*. Mississauga: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1994.
- 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.
- Thomas S. Kidd 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.
- William H. Brackney. *Baptists in North America*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Timothy George and David S. Dockery, eds. *Baptist Theologians*. Nashville: Broadman, 1990.

ASSIGNMENTS

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 additional short written works – a two-page blog (for popular audience) and a two-page article for a denominational paper. They will record and post a five-minute video summary of their research results.

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.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you “tidy up” your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

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: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), 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 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 and will be posted on avenuetolearn)

Week Starting Sept 9: Introduction to Class & Reformation Era

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

Week Starting Sept 16: Baptist Origins

- Reading: Heath, Friesen, Murray, *Baptists in Canada*, ch.1
- Position Paper assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Sept 17

Week Starting Sept 23: Baptists in America & Canada

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

Week Starting Sept 30: Baptists around the Globe

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

Week Starting Oct 7: How Baptist Churches Work

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

Week Starting Oct 14: *Reading Week (no class)*

Week Starting Oct 21: Biographical Presentations

- Reading: Bowler, ed., *Canadian Baptist Women*, all

- Biographical assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Oct 22

Week Starting Oct 28: Baptist Distinctives I

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

Week Starting Nov 4: Baptist Distinctives II

Week Starting Nov 11: Baptist Distinctives III

- Resolving Board Issues assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Nov 12

Week Starting Nov 18: Baptist Organizations

Week Starting Nov 25: Baptist Issues

Week Starting Dec 2: Research Paper Presentations

- Research paper assignment to be submitted by 11:00pm, Tuesday, Nov 26

Week Starting Dec 9: 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.