

CH/TH 3XR3/5XR5/6XR6: THE REFORMATION: TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

McMaster Divinity College

Winter Semester, 2024
Wednesday, 2:00-3:50pm

In person and livestream

Instructor: Gordon L. Heath
gheath@mcmaster.ca

Specializations: CC/CW/PS

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course deals with the roots, development, and significance of the sixteenth century reformations in Christianity – Protestant and Catholic – in their social contexts. It identifies key people, movements, events, and ideas, as well as briefly outlines the early developments of some significant subsequent movements such as Puritanism.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Knowing

- to provide students with an understanding of the major events and personalities, as well as the significant theological, political, and social issues that shaped the Reformation Era

Being

- to explore (and ultimately appreciate) the different expressions of reform practiced by the various Protestant reform movements, as well as by the reformers within the Roman Catholic Church
- to create an awareness of the breadth and diversity of the Church, and provide a sense of “place” within the many church traditions

Doing

- to develop in each student an ability to assess documents and situations from an historical perspective

TEXTBOOKS:

- Carter Lindberg. *The European Reformations*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996 (or second edition, 2009). (identified as “T” in the reading schedule)

- Carter Lindberg, ed., *The European Reformations Sourcebook*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000. (identified as “S” in the reading schedule)
- Heiko A. Oberman. *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*. Image Books, 1990.
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.

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.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (not required for purchasing):

Please see the helpful and extensive bibliography in Lindberg’s *The European Reformations*.

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).

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.

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).

COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS (MDiv/MTS/ Diploma/Certificate):

Most classes will have a presentation by the professor. This presentation will seek to build upon and further develop the readings of the text and reader, as well as explore other themes not in the two texts.

Assignments:

- Position Paper (10%)

Students will write a two-page position paper answering the question “why I am (or am not) a Protestant.” This is not a research paper, but a personal reflection.

- Book Review (25%)

Students will be required to write a four or five-page review of Oberman’s *Luther*. The review must state the author’s thesis, and the way in which he goes about arguing it (e.g. outline, sources used, etc.). Comments on the strength of the argument are also an expected part of the paper (but these must be based on something more substantial than “I feel”).

- Primary Source Review (25%)

This three-page assignment is an analysis of one of the primary source readings in the source book. This research may be presented by students in class (depends on size of class)

- Research Paper (30%)

Students will write a ten-page research paper on a topic related to their specialization. The topic of this paper will be determined by the student’s specialization, and developed in consultation with the professor. On the days designated in the syllabus, students will present their research paper to the class. After each presentation, there will be a time of questions and discussions. The time allotted for the presentations will depend on the number of students in the class.

○ *Church and Culture (CC)*

The primary focus of this research should be on a theological analysis of sixteenth century (or early seventeenth) culture in regard to the Reformation. The focus should be relatively specific, rather than scattered. The interplay between Christian theology and culture should be a critical part of this analysis.

○ *Pastoral Studies (PS)*

Research for this specialization can go in a number of directions. It can focus on a construction of one's theological position regarding an issue related to the Reformation and pastoral ministry. It can draw on a reformer's ministry to develop a strategy for dealing with issues related to pastoral life today. It can deal with Reformation resources for pastoral ministry. And so on.

○ *Christian History Worldview (CW)*

Research for this specialization should focus on either (1) a construction of one's theological position in regard to an aspect of Reformation issues, with a particular concern for the development of theology in the sixteenth century; or (2) a historical issue related to the Reformation.

There are a number of ways in which this research is to be completed:

- Traditional academic research paper (5 pages)
- Non-traditional formats (5 pages)
 - Popular article for a church or denominational publication (2-3 pages)
 - Popular article for a public audience, and to be posted on a blog or Facebook (2-3 pages)

- Participation and Reading (10%)

Class participation and completing readings is encouraged and expected.

COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS (DPT):

- 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 February 1 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 March 1 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 students 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 April 1 and will constitute 40% of the course grade.

- Class Participation (10%)

COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS (MA/PhD):

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

The student will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources (6000 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 February 1 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 3,000-4,000 words. It is due March 1 and will constitute 25% of the course grade.

- Major Research Paper (40%)

This paper is a major research paper. Ideally the student aims to prepare something for publication such as a journal article. Regardless, the work must be on a subject mutually agreed upon between professor and student. The paper should be approximately 8,000-10,000 words. It is due April 1 and will constitute 40% of the course grade.

- Class Participation (10%)

COURSE OUTLINE:

January 10: Introduction to Class, Reformation Historical Research, Background to the Reformation

Lindberg (T): ch. 1,2

Lindberg (S): ch. 1

January 17: Luther and the German Reformation

Lindberg (T): ch. 3,4,5,6,9

Lindberg (S): ch. 2,3,4,5,8
**Position Paper Due*

January 24: Luther and the German Reformation (cont.)

January 31: Zwingli and Calvin and the Reformed Movement
 Lindberg (T): ch.7,10,11,12
 Lindberg (S): ch.6,9,10,11
**Book Review Due*

February 7: The English Reformation
 Lindberg (T): ch.13
 Lindberg (S): ch.12

February 14: The Radical Reformation
 Lindberg (T): ch.8
 Lindberg (S): ch.7

February 21: Reading Week - No Class

February 28: The Catholic Reformation
 Lindberg (T): ch.14
 Lindberg (S): ch.13

March 6: Theme: TBD

March 13: Theme: TBD

March 20: Paper Presentations
Research Paper Due

March 27: Paper Presentations (and/or theme TBD)

April 3: Theme: Is the Reformation Over?
 Lindberg (T): ch.15
 Lindberg (S): ch.14

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.