

## **TH/MS 2XA3 Christian Thought and Practice in the Context of Globalization**

McMaster Divinity College  
Winter 2012  
Thursday 7:00 – 9:00 pm

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### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the process of globalization and explores how this phenomenon is intersecting with Christian thought and practice. The course begins with an overview of the social-scientific understanding of globalization then examines three main themes; economic globalization and justice, the globalization of social problems (e.g. the environment, refugees/immigration), and the existence of a truly global Church made possible in part by globalizing infrastructure. The class will reflect on each of these three areas theologically, and the implications for Christian ministry (focusing on the local church) will be explored.

### **Course Objectives**

As with all courses at McDiv, this course seeks to enable the transformation of students through the holistic paradigm of Knowing, Being, Doing.

#### **Knowing**

1. Develop a basic knowledge of the social-scientific understanding of globalization and the vocabulary of the discourse.
2. Become aware of different Christian theological views of economic globalization and global social problems.
3. Understand how global Christianity can influence the way one does theology.
4. Learn the ways that Christian ministry can be affected by both globalization and global Christianity.

#### **Being**

1. Become perceptive of how one's own theology affects one's assessment of globalization.
2. Able to be both respectful of and critically engaging with Christian theologies from other cultures.
3. Embrace a fuller Christian ministry that integrates the local and the global.

#### **Doing**

1. Read and critically engage with texts on globalization from both social-scientific and Christian theological perspectives.
2. Engage in respectful and constructive discussion in the class with others who may have different perspectives on both globalization and Christian faith.

3. Begin to develop one's own theological understanding of globalization.
4. Reflect on and discuss the implications of globalization and global Christianity for ministry in one's local setting.
5. Produce either a research paper examining the intersection of Christian theology and globalization, or a project intended to be used in a ministry setting.

### **Required Texts**

Ott, Craig, and Harold A. Netland, eds. *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.

Lechner, Frank J., and John Boli, eds. *The Globalization Reader*. 4th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2011.

Other required articles/chapters will be provided online in PDF format.

### **Course Evaluation**

Participation	15%
Reading Summary Presentation	15%
Reflection Paper	20%
Thesis Paper/Practical Ministry Assignment	40%

### **Assignment Descriptions**

Participation: Discussion of the readings and the in-class material is an integral part of the course. Come prepared to engage in fruitful and respectful discussion. The weekly readings are very manageable, totaling about 10-15 pages/week.

Reading Summary Presentation: Each week, one student will have read an additional 2-3 articles/chapters on the topic and will present their summary of the major issues and any critiques of the readings they have. A brief handout should be included (max two pages) and should provide some discussion questions. It will be a short presentation, approximately ten minutes. More details will be given, and the dates assigned, on the first day of class.

Reflection Paper: Students will select either 1) a book or 2) 3-4 articles/chapters on globalization and/or global Christianity and write a short reflection paper (4-6 pages) on the reading. The paper should provide a description of the main argument(s) of the author(s) and the student's assessment of the validity and usefulness of the argument(s) from his or her own faith perspective and ministry context. Due: Week 8, at start of class.

Note: Students enrolled in the course as MS students will complete the Practical Ministry Assignment. Students enrolled as TH students will complete the Theology Thesis Paper.

Practical Ministry Assignment: This assignment allows students to craft a paper or other document that addresses an area of globalization/global Christianity and Christian ministry –

preferably at their own church or ministry vocation. The final form is flexible: an outline of a sermon series, a mission strategy, a Christian education plan, a bible study, a presentation for promoting global justice, a thesis paper on Christian ministry, etc. Equivalent of 10-12 pages/3000 words. Due: Second last week of the course.

Theology Thesis Paper – This paper will explore the intersection of globalization and/or global Christianity with an area of Christian theology in greater detail. This assignment provides students with an opportunity to research in their field of expertise or interest. 10-12 pages/3000 words. Due: Second last week of the course.

All papers and assignment should conform to (and will be marked against) the MacDiv Style Guide (<http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuideApr1508.pdf>).

### **Course Outline and Readings**

Note: The readings are subject to change before the course commences. This is especially the case for the readings from Lechner and Boli, as the 4th edition of their reader is due out in October of 2011 and some of the readings from their volume will likely change.

#### **Week One:** Course Introduction, What Is Globalization?

Readings: No reading is expected for the first class, but if you want a general idea/feel of the course read Caric, Nikola T. and Steven M. Studebaker. “Globalization, Global Christianity, and Global Pentecostalism.” In *Pentecostalism and Globalization*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010. (pg. 2, 2nd paragraph to top of pg. 20, the other parts of this chapter pertain to the specific focus on Pentecostalism in this book)

#### **Week Two:** Globalization 101: Facts, Theories, Debates and Vocabulary

Lechner and Boli. “General Introduction.” In *The Globalization Reader*.

Hobsbawm, E. J. “The World Unified.” In *The Globalization Reader*.

Robertson, R. “Globalization as a Problem.” In *The Globalization Reader*.

#### **Week Three:** Economic Globalization I: The Grace of God?

Micklethwait, John and Adrian Wooldridge. “The Hidden Promise: Liberty Renewed.” In *The Globalization Reader*.

Stackhouse, Max L. Excerpt from *Globalization and Grace*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

#### **Week Four:** Economic Globalization II: The Work of the Devil?

Gray, John. “From the Great Transformation to the Global Free Market.” In *The Globalization Reader*.

Carroll R., M. Daniel. "The Challenge of Economic Globalization for Theology: From Latin America to a Hermeneutics of Responsibility." In *Globalizing Theology*.

Delgado, Sharon E. Excerpt from *Shaking the Gates of Hell: Faith-Led Resistance to Corporate Globalization*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

**Week Five:** Globalization and Christian Ministry

Reader, John. "Pastoral Care and Globalization." Chapter 3 in *Reconstructing Practical Theology: The Impact of Globalization*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008. 35-52.

Schweiker, William. "The Church as an Academy of Justice." In Stackhouse, Max L., Tim A. Dearborn, and Scott Paeth, eds. *The Local Church in a Global Era: Reflections for a New Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000. 26-38.

**Week Six:** Globalization of Social Problems: Do We Have Obligations to Distant People?

World Commission on Environment and Development. "From One Earth to One World." In *The Globalization Reader*.

Gregory, Eric. "Gape and Special Relations in a Global Economy: Theological Sources." In Hicks, Douglas A., and Mark R. Valeri, eds. *Global Neighbors: Christian Faith and Moral Obligation in Today's Economy*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008. 16-42.

**Week Seven:** Theology, Practice, and Global Poverty

Sider, R. J. "God and the Poor." Chapter 3 in *Rich Christians in An Age of Hunger*. 2nd ed. Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 2005. 41-62.

Schneider, John R. Excerpt from *The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002. Read 87-89 and 211-220.

**Week Eight:** Theology, Practice, and Environmental Issues

"The Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation" -  
[www.earthcareonline.org/evangelical\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.earthcareonline.org/evangelical_declaration.pdf)

DeWitt, C. "A Theological Perspective on Creation Care." Chapter 4 in *Earth-Wise: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive, 2007. 53-64.

**Week Nine:** Theology, Practice, and Refugees/Immigration

Castles, Stephen. "International migration at the beginning of the twenty-first century: global trends and issues." *International Social Science Journal* 52 n. 165 (2000): 269-81.

Bretherton, Luke. "The Duty of Care to Refugees, Christian Cosmopolitanism, and the Hallowing of Bare Life." In James K.A. Smith, ed. *After Modernity?* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008. 143-63.

**Week Ten:** The Emergence of Global Christianity in the Context of Globalization

Jenkins, Philip. "*The Christian Revolution.*" In *The Globalization Reader.*

Netland, H. A. "Globalization and Theology Today." In *Globalizing Theology.*

**Week Eleven:** Global Christianity and Biblical Interpretation

Blomberg, C. L. "The Globalization of Hermeneutics." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38, no. 4 (1995): 581-93.

Ukpong, Justin S. "Reading the Bible in the Global Village: Issues and Challenges from African Readings." In *Reading the Bible in the Global Village: Cape Town.* Leiden: Brill, 2002.

**Week Twelve:** Global Christianity and Systematic Theology

Tiénou, Tite. "Christian Theology in a Era of World Christianity." In *Globalizing Theology.*

Chapter 5, "Christology: Christ as Healer and Ancestor in Africa," in Tennent, Timothy C. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

**Week Thirteen:** Global Christianity and Church History

Walls, Andrew F. "Globalization and the Study of Christian History." In *Globalizing Theology.*

González, J. L. Chapter 1, "The Changing Cartography," in González, Justo L. *The Changing Shape of Church History.* St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002.

**Policies**

**A. Textbook Purchase**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

**B. Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been

obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ [www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php](http://www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php).

### **C. Gender Inclusive Language**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

### **D. Assignment Format and Late Assignments**

All papers and assignment should conform to (and will be marked against) the MacDiv Style Guide (<http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuideApr1508.pdf>).

All assignments are due on the designated due date. Assignments submitted after that date will be assessed a penalty of 1% per calendar day (without limit). The instructor may choose to adjust these penalties in the case of extenuating circumstances (e.g. serious illness).

### **E. 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.