
Lecture/Seminar Outline and Schedule

1. Research

- a. The Components of Research September 13
 - i. Mapping Your Degree: From Application to Graduation and Beyond
 - ii. Mapping the Components of Research (Marilyn Draper)
- b. Building a Database: Bibliographies and Book Reviews September 20
- c. Library resources and tour (Rick Stapleton; Mills Library/Connections Centre, L113)
- d. Athens vs. Berlin: Learning Styles, Teaching Preferences, and the Theological Enterprise
 - i. Research with human subjects
Annotated Bibliography due September 27

2. Reflection and Method: Field-Specific Hermeneutics and Methodologies

- a. Can These Bones Live? Old Testament Research for Christian Scholars (Dr. Paul Evans)
- b. How Does the Bible Mean? Text- and Language-Based Research (Dr. Cynthia Westfall)
Book Review due October 4

Class cancelled for Thanksgiving Monday, October 11

Biblical Methodology Summary due October 12

- c. Ethics and the Development of a Christian Worldview (Dr. Jim Peterson)
- d. God, History, and Doctrine: Researching Theology and History (Dr. Steve Stuebaker)
Research Abstract due October 18
- e. Critical Methods in Ministry Studies/Pastoral Theology (Dr. Phil Zylla)
- f. Plagiarism vs. Proper Documentation (Dr. Eleanor Irwin)
Theological/Historical Methodology Summary due October 25

3. Writing

- a. Developing a Thesis Proposal and Abstract
- b. From Outline to Argumentation
- c. Style, Editing, and Proof-Reading
Ministry Studies Methodology Summary due November 1
- d. Getting into print (Dr. Stanley Porter)
- e. Panel discussion: Publishing as a graduate student (participants TBA) November 8

3. *Summary of Research Methodology* 20%

Faculty guest lecturers will offer a basic introduction to methodological issues in their respective fields (i.e. Hebrew Bible; New Testament; Theology/Ethics). On the basis of this introduction (and using any additional resources identified by the lecturer), summarize the critical methodological issues in your academic discipline, with special reference and application to your particular area of research interest.

Length: 1,500 words

Due: October 12 (Biblical Studies)
October 25 (Theological Studies)
November 1 (Ministry Studies)

4. *Research Abstract* 10%

The first step in presenting a paper at an academic conference is usually the submission of a short summary of the proposed presentation outlining the central thesis, research methodology, and anticipated conclusions. In the context of this course, the abstract is meant to represent the initial formulation of a possible dissertation topic.

Length: 300 words

Due: October 18

5. *Research Proposal/Presentation: Work in Progress* 30%

Each student will prepare a brief research proposal based on the abstract submitted earlier. The proposal will explain the research question or hypothesis and the proposed research methodology, offer a summary of relevant secondary literature (which may include counter-proposals to the hypothesis), outline the structure and development of the research programme, and briefly delineate the anticipated conclusions or outcomes. As a “work-in-progress,” the proposal will identify any difficulties that have been encountered and questions that remain unanswered, as well as explaining the possible relevance of this research to the life and ministry of the church in general. This assignment will be graded on the logic and clarity of the proposed programme of research, the degree to which it demonstrates a clear understanding of field-specific methodologies, and its integration with existing knowledge.

a. M.A. Students

Length: 2,000 – 2,500 words

Due: November 22

b. Ph.D. students

In addition to the written format outlined above, each doctoral student will present their research proposal as a teaching module to the class. Written summaries will be due and are to be submitted to the professor and distributed to other class members one week in advance of the oral presentation. Rather than simply reading the text of their written submission, each

student will take 15 minutes to summarize their proposal and anticipated conclusions (however preliminary) in an accessible, creative, and engaging manner, then will interact with class members for a further 10 minutes. Again, students should give an account of particular challenges, unanswered questions, and the broader implications of their research. The assignment will be graded on the quality of the presentation as a whole (structure, argumentation, clarity, creativity, class interaction) and its ability to explain the research process.

Grading: Written/class presentations 15 + 15 = 30%

Due dates:

Written: November 15, 22, 29

Oral: November 22, 29,
December 6

Style

All assignments are to be typed in double-spaced format, with footnotes and bibliographic references conforming to the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses* (<http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>). Failure to observe appropriate format and style will result in grade reductions. See also “CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS,” below. Electronic submission of assignments will not be accepted.

Academic Dishonesty

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 McMaster Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php

Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College is committed to employing inclusive language for human beings in worship services, written materials, and all publications. With regard to biblical texts, the integrity of original expressions (including references to God) should be respected; the NRSV and TNIV provide appropriate examples of the use of inclusive language for human subjects. With the exception of direct quotations from historical documents, inclusive language is to be used in all assignments submitted for academic credit.

Late Submission Penalty

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the designated due date. Assignments submitted thereafter will be assessed a penalty of 1% per calendar day (without limit).

*The final date for submission of all course assignments is December 8
Assignments received after this date will not be accepted for grading or credit*

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.

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CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading of written materials will be based on the following general criteria

Grade Range	Content	Argument	Presentation
90–100 A+ 85–89 A 80–84 A–	Mastery of subject matter; creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationships; exceeds required elements	Clear, logical structure; comprehensive introduction, persuasive argumentation, and innovative conclusions	Detailed adherence to relevant style for formatting of text, notes, and bibliography; no errors of grammar or syntax; elegant presentation
77–79 B+ 73–76 B 70–72 B–	Above-average grasp of principles and concepts, and their inter-relationship; completion of all required elements	Coherent structure and consistent argumentation; well-stated introduction and conclusion	General adherence to relevant style and format; few errors of grammar or syntax
67–69 C+ 63–66 C 60–62 C–	Adequate understanding of theoretical foundations; minimal completion of required elements	Rudimentary structure; minimal introductory and concluding statements	Significant errors of grammar, syntax, or style
57–59 D+ 53–56 D 50–52 D–	Low level of comprehension; required elements incomplete or missing	Lack of coherence or structure in argumentation; introduction or conclusion missing	Abundant grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors
0–49% F	Inability to grasp basic concepts; required elements missing	Incomprehensible or illogical structure and argumentation	Failure to follow stylistic guidelines; incomprehensible syntax