

**Foundations for Effective Ministry 1a: Worldview, Mission and Leadership
(MS 1A03)
Fall 2015**

Instructors:

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Term: Fall 2015
Room: TBA

Time: Tuesdays 1:30 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.
First Class: Sept.15

Course Description

This course is designed to help students explore what it means to engage the world in distinctly Christian way and orient their lives, talents, callings and abilities around God's perspective on the world and how we are invited to participate in his transformational purposes for it. The course will help students consider how a theological vision for life in this world and a personal encounter with God influences every aspect of life regardless of what their own specific calling may be. Students will consider the key elements of a Christian worldview, a foundational philosophy of Christian leadership and an introduction to the mission of the church.

Course Objectives

Knowing

1. To help students understand the concept of worldview and how it is formed.
2. To help students understand foundational scriptural and theological principles and/or categories for the mission of the Church in contemporary Canadian culture, and in light of the concerns of post- Christendom.
3. To understand key features of contemporary Canadian culture as they relate to issues of spiritual need, and the proclamation of the Christian message.
4. To help students understand foundational scriptural and theological principles for leadership in the church in contemporary Canadian culture.

Being

1. To encourage reflection and integration in terms of personal, congregational, and political aspects of Christian identity
2. To help students develop confidence in their own ability to proclaim the Christian gospel and lead a congregation in evangelistic enterprise.
3. To develop a clear connection between ones inner life as a Christian leader and ones effectiveness as a Christian leader.
4. To help students develop confidence in their own unique, God given style of leadership.

Doing

1. To help students develop and/or hone their own worldview.
2. To help students develop their own philosophy of mission and evangelism for their lives and the church.
3. To equip students with relevant strategies for leadership development and practice.

A core value of our class is that it is a “learning community,” designed to be a place where each member of the community can grow through positive affirmation and constructive input. We should all come to the community as people in process, open to be deconstructed and formed through our mutual learning experience.

It is the professor's responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. We come to position ourselves as fellow learners in the community and to offer information, reflection, experience and questions for us to reflect on together. Further, it is our responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class and through written work so that your growth through this class can be maximized as a result of our collaboration.

As a responsible member of our learning community you will be expected to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This means that in our class interactions you will endeavor to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity. Your attendance is required as your presence is necessary for our community (that is our class) to function at an optimal level. Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order. All late assignments may be docked at the rate of 2% for each day (including weekends) late. Assignments can be submitted in hard copy on standardized paper or electronically in a word document.

We are available and would welcome making connections with each of you outside class time. Please feel free to make an appointment with either of us if there is any way that we can assist your learning experience in this course.

Course Topics for Fall Term

Introduction to Worldview

Biblical and Historical Worldviews

Developing a Christian Worldview

What is Mission?

A Biblical Theology and History of Christian Mission

The Church and mission

What is Leadership

Leading in the 21st century church and society

Required Texts (a number of these texts will also function as texts for the second half of this course MS 1A03 b - winter semester)

Goheen, Michael and Bartholomew, Craig. *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Michael W. Goheen. *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Newbiggin, Leslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Jacobson, Eric O (editor). *The Three Tasks of Leadership: Worldly Wisdom for Pastoral Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

***Books will be available at the campus bookstore on the first day of class (or prior) and can also be ordered from READ ON books: phone—416-622-2934; fax: 416-622-2308; Email: books@readon.ca (READ ON will provide great service, usually for the most reasonable price available)*

Course Requirements:

Fall Semester

1. Book Response

Write a response to the book *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. This paper should explore the issue of Christian Worldview by thoroughly engaging Goheen and Bartholomew's work and answering questions such as: What is worldview? What impact does worldview have on people's daily lives? How does the book help you in the development of your own worldview? What do you appreciate about this book? What weaknesses do you find in this book? What questions do you have and/or what disagreements do you have with this book? The paper should offer a brief description of the book's overall thesis and main arguments, however it should focus primarily on personal interaction with the book and not be a retelling of the content of the book.

This paper should be 7-8 pages (double spaced) in length and will constitute 25% of the First semester's grade. Due Date: Oct. 20, 2015.

2. Interview project

Identify two (or more) people who do *NOT* presently attend a Christian church. These should be people who are able to provide thoughtful responses to the questions that they will be asked. It is important that you do not recruit from segments of the population who may be vulnerable and not able to properly understand what is being asked of them and how their participation may adversely affect them (this includes people with mental health issues or challenges). Explain that you would like to ask them some questions for a course assignment, but make sure that they understand *this is simply to gather their opinion, it is not an evangelistic endeavor*. When recruiting potential interview subjects be clear that their refusal to participate will not have any adverse affect on your relationship with them and that you will not have a problem finding other participants who can help you complete the assignment. Allow your subjects to choose the place and time for the interview. It is essential that the place of the meeting is one that they are

comfortable with and is conducive to both the nature of the interview and the subject's ability to feel that their responses are kept private. Using the "Letter of Explanation/Informed Consent," (to be distributed in class) provide prospective interviewees with a copy of the following interview questions, explain the process and purpose of the research, respond to any additional questions or concerns about the assignment or the course in general, and ask that they read and sign the affirmation of consent. Once they have agreed to be interviewed, ask the following:

- What do the words "Christian" and "Christianity" mean to you?
- Most people these days don't attend church. Why do you think this is?
- How do you think the church could be more relevant to society today?
- What do you understand to be the essence of the Christian message/religion?
- I would like to explain to you what I understand to be the essence of the Christian message. Then I would like you to tell me what you have understood me to say, what seems attractive (if anything) about it, and what (if anything) seems offensive or incomprehensible?

When conducting the interview it is important that you remember you are not trying to convince or convert your interview subject. Please be careful to watch your tone, demeanor and body language as you conduct the interview. Do not try and rebut their opinions or become overly animated in your own presentation. Be careful to not to invade your interviewee's personal space or behave in an way that could be construed as aggressive or overwhelming to your subject. Reiterate at some point during the interview that your interview subject does not have to answer any questions they are uncomfortable with and that they can withdraw from the process at any point. Please assure them that you will completely understand their decision to not answer or withdraw, and that it will have no bearing on your relationship with them.

When discussing religion some people may encounter negative memories or remember painful past experiences. Please be prepared to discuss potential support persons with them if this is the case for either of the people you interview. Please encourage them to talk with trusted friends or family about these memories. If the experience seems to necessitate it, be prepared to help them locate mental health resources that could be helpful to them. If help is needed with this please contact course instructor Dr. Lee Beach (ext. 23502, beachl@mcmaster.ca) who will provide resource information upon request.

Report and comment on their answers, reflecting on these conversations in the light of the course material so far, and required text books for the fall semester. Offer your own reflections on their responses to the questions as it pertains to the place of the church, the gospel message in Canadian culture today, and the world view of the people you interviewed. Evaluate how the opinions your interviewee's offered connect with trends in our culture and where the message of Christianity may be able to connect with them (your interview subjects).

NOTE: The use of human subjects for a research project entails specific ethical responsibilities for the researcher. In particular, you must scrupulously

- Maintain neutrality
- Avoid influencing the responses
- Guarantee the anonymity of the respondents, and
- Ensure confidentiality with regard to the data.

Students must abide by the terms set out in the “Letter of Explanation/Informed Consent.”

This project should be 8-10 pages (double spaced) in length. It is worth 30% of the first semester's grade. Due date: November 17, 2015.

3. Assessment Paper: Worldview, Culture and the Church

This paper should articulate key realities of the culture that you and your church identify with here in Canada. That might mean for example, a Cantonese language church in Canada composed of immigrants from Hong Kong, or an English language church composed primarily of people born in Canada, etc. Give a brief analysis of key components of the culture that manifests in your congregation. How are these “cultural” manifestations rooted in a deeper worldview? For example, how leaders are treated is frequently a cultural manifestation of a deeper worldview and is frequently linked to how families function. Pick key items that link to an underlying worldview and describe the impact they have on the identity of your congregation. Next, show ways in which the worldview of your congregation and the prevailing Canadian worldview (as you understand it) intersect and disconnect? Further, how can the Christian worldview show itself in the practical living of the people in the church, and how could it show itself in the missional engagement of the church with its surrounding Canadian society and worldwide? Specific attention should be given to the books *Living at the Crossroads*, *A Light to the Nations*, and *Foolishness to the Greeks*. In essence this paper moves from cultural analysis to Christian worldview to consider how your particular local church is called to engage with society in a practical way.

This paper should be 10-12 double spaced pages. It is worth 40% of the first semester's grade. Due Date: December 8, 2015.

4. Core Competencies (*This assignment covers both semesters of the course)

The Foundations 1 Course is connected to the Student's Ministry Placement and the Ministry Reflection seminar (MRS). One of the goals of this connection between these three experiences is to help the student develop "core competencies" for ministry. Foundations for Effective Ministry 1 focuses on the ministry issues of Worldview, Mission and Leadership. The goal of the course is to help students develop the following competencies in these areas:

Worldview

1. Be able to articulate the meaning of the term "worldview" to others and express why an understanding of worldview is important for Christian ministry.
2. Be able to identify at least five sources that contribute to an understanding of Christian worldview.
3. Set a goal that will provide you with the opportunity to teach, or discuss with a group the concept of worldview and how it is significant for the Christian life and ministry.

Mission

1. Be able to give an overview of a biblical theology of mission and describe its importance to the church.
2. Be able to offer a succinct description of the Christian faith in a way that would make sense to the average, non-church going, secular person in Canada today.
3. Be able to identify the difference between attractional models of church ministry and missional models and articulate a rationale for the need of a missional vision for the church in Canada today.
4. Set a goal that will give you the opportunity to participate in mission, either through a program that is explicitly missional (i.e. designed to be an outreach to those outside of the church) or through a one time opportunity to engage in a faith sharing experience.

Leadership

1. Be able to articulate a personal philosophy of leadership.
2. Be able to identify several specific practices that are essential to effective leadership.
3. Be able to identify some of the challenges of leadership, particularly as they pertain to the current Canadian church context.
4. Set a goal that will help you to be involved in the leadership of a specific group, team or initiative within your placement context. This opportunity should provide you with the chance to be the, or one of the, point leaders of a specific group of people.

Assignment

This assignment will cover both semesters of the course. In the **first semester** students will submit their three goals as specified in the description of core competencies offered above. In the **second semester** students will present a journal that provides reflections/answers to the areas of competency specified in the assignment and also a clear reflection on the progress made on the three goals that have been set. Therefore this assignment asks for two things. One, in the first semester, three clear goals that reflect a response to the requirements set out in the description above. Two, in the second semester, a reflection journal that offers a reflection on and in response to the competencies outlined in the assignment as well as a report on progress made toward the goals that you have set. Further explanation will be provided on the first day of class.

A template will be provided for recording and submitting your goals. These goals may have some overlap with the goals set in MRS but should also demonstrate some distinction from them. The setting of goals in the first semester will constitute 5% of the grade for the first semester. The goals are due Oct. 27, 2015.

The reflection journal is due at the end of the second semester. The syllabus for semester two of the course will specify the date and give further details for this aspect of the assignment. The journal will constitute 10% of the final grade for the second semester.

Additional notes:

Academic Style- All assignments should conform to the specifications of the MDC style guide. https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdc_styleguide.pdf (or go to MDC website, click on "Students" menu and on "resources" icon to find the style guide).

Academic Dishonesty – Academic dishonesty is a serious offence in the academic world 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 the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty located at <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

Inclusive Language ~ McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language 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 is a good example of the use of inclusive language. It is expected that all students will use inclusive language in all MDC assignments.

Sexual Harassment ~ Sexual harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behavior, which discriminates on the basis of gender about a person's body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

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 until the first day of class.