

THEO 211:
Brethren in Christ Life and Thought

Messiah College
JTerm 2020

Professor: Devin Manzullo-Thomas
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Class Location: Boyer 230
Class Time: MTWHF 9:00 a.m.-12 p.m.

Office: Boyer 101E
Phone: Ext. 5235
Office Hours: MTWHF 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Course Description

This course fulfills a General Education requirement for Christian Beliefs. The catalog description reads as follows:

Founding, historical development, and present situation of the Brethren in Christ, with special attention to their interaction with other religious bodies and with society generally. Meets General Education Christian Beliefs requirement. Prerequisite: BIBL 201, BIBL 202, BIBL 203, or BIBL 204.

Our focus in this course will be much narrower than in your average Christian Beliefs course. In fact, of all the Christian Beliefs options listed in the Messiah College catalog, this course has the narrowest content focus. In this course, we'll spend almost all of our time discussing the history and theology of the Brethren in Christ Church, the college's founding denomination.

I realize that not every student in this class attends a Brethren in Christ church. Maybe some of you have never even heard of the Brethren in Christ Church! If you **are** a Brethren in Christ student, I hope this course will increase your understanding of and appreciation for your local congregation and the denomination to which it belongs. If you **are not** Brethren in Christ, I hope the ideas and issues you encounter in this course will help you reflect more thoughtfully on your own theological tradition. In the final analysis, my goal for each one of you is to help you become a more thoughtful, reflective Christian who is articulate about what you believe (and don't believe) and more fully aware of what you don't know.

Though this course counts as a Christian Beliefs course, my background as a church historian will orient it more toward the historical than the theological. Nevertheless, we'll engage some of the key questions of Christian theology—questions about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, and the church—and consider them within the categories important to historians: context, causality, contingency, complexity, and change over time.

Course Objectives* & Methods of Assessment

By the end of this course, you will have demonstrated to me that you have successfully achieved all of the course goals listed below. The extent of your success in achieving those goals will determine the final grade that you receive for the course (A–F). In the chart below, I list each of the course goals and then indicate which of our course requirements I'll use to determine whether or not you have successfully achieved a given goal.

All of this may sound very cold, formal, and structured—and, to a certain extent, it is. Rest assured that the class itself won't be as cold, formal, and structured as this chart may suggest. My responsibility as the instructor is to make sure that your learning, as students, matches the goals that I and my department have set for this course. Thus, the chart.

By the completion of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

<u>Course Goal</u>	<u>Method(s) of Assessment</u>
A. Practice theological ways of thinking and writing	Daily Assignments, Exams
B. Articulate central beliefs of historic Christian faith about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, and the church	Discussions, Daily Assignments, Exams
C. Recognize Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan theological emphases, such as compassion, peace, justice, reconciliation, and the importance of personal piety	Discussions, Daily Assignments, Exams, Group Presentations
D. Recognize that the Christian faith can be articulated in many ways	Discussions, Daily Assignments
E. Examine your own theological convictions and spiritual practices	Daily Assignments
F. Articulate key developments in the history of the Brethren in Christ Church in North America	Daily Assignments, Exams

G. Trace the theological roots of the Brethren in Christ Church and identify the ways these roots continue to influence the life and practice of Brethren in Christ churches today	Daily Assignments, Exams, Group Presentations
H. Connect the experience of the Brethren in Christ Church to larger societal and cultural trends, including trends in American Christianity	Daily Assignments, Exams

* Objectives A-E are standard for all QuEST Christian Beliefs courses; Objectives F-H are unique to this particular course.

Course Texts

Brensinger, Terry L., ed. *Focusing Our Faith: Brethren in Christ Values*. Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Publishing House, 2000. ISBN 1928915108.

Manzullo-Thomas, Devin, ed. *Coursepack for THEO 211: Brethren in Christ Life and Thought*. Grantham, Pa.: Messiah College Press, 2020.

Course Delivery

Most of the content in this class will be delivered in lectures. However, although this class isn't a seminar *per se*, class discussion will constitute a significant portion of the course. Sometimes we'll discuss ideas and issues as a whole class, and other times we'll break into smaller groups of three or four students. In both contexts—the small groups and the larger classroom—please be honest but tactful, sensitive but forthright, as you express your opinions.

Course Expectations

In order to get the most out of this class, you must do the following:

1. **Attend and participate in class.** Although I will not take daily attendance, you are expected to be here each day. You are also expected to contribute to our class discourse, both in large- and small-group settings.
2. **Read, view, or listen to the assigned materials before class.** Lectures and class discussions will supplement or analyze the readings; they will not repeat them. Both will operate on the assumption you've read the assigned readings (or watched the assigned video, or listened to the assigned podcast, etc.) carefully.

3. **Complete ten Daily Assignments.** These assignments involve answering questions related to the day's assigned readings. I will post the Daily Assignments on Canvas well in advance of their due date, and you will need to submit your answers via Canvas at the beginning of the respective class day. These Daily Assignments must constitute your own work.
4. **Develop and deliver a ten-minute presentation on a Brethren in Christ congregation in the United States.** For this presentation, you will work in groups to research various aspects of an existing Brethren in Christ congregation. (I will assign you the particular congregation you will be researching.) More information about these presentations—what sorts of information you should gather, how you can gather it, and how you should present it—will be distributed in class.
5. **Complete two exams—a midterm and a final.** Anything covered in this course—including readings, lectures (including guest presentations), videos, discussions, and student presentations—is fair game for the exams, so you'll need to be an engaged learner at all times.

Grading:

- **Attendance and Participation.** Class participation is worth 100 points. If you attend class every day, you'll receive at least 75 of these points. However, only those who participate actively and regularly in class will receive 90 points or more. In addition to being present and engaged, active participation means entering fully into classroom activities and contributing verbally to classroom discussions.
- **Daily Assignments.** Each Daily Assignment is worth 10 points. They will be graded according to the accuracy, clarity, and thoughtfulness of your response. These assignments are due by the start of the class meeting. You should submit the DAs **online** via Canvas. Late submissions will receive a point reduction.
 - a. Because the Daily Assignments are intended to prepare you for classroom discussion, you must be present in class to receive credit for them. In other words, you cannot complete and submit an assignment and then not show up for the class meeting and still expect to receive credit. If you need to submit your DA late or need to be excused from class, please talk to me in advance.
 - b. There are a total of eleven Daily Assignments on the course assignment schedule. **If you complete only ten Daily Assignments**, then all the scores will count. **If you complete all eleven DAs**, I'll drop the one lowest score. You will **not** earn extra credit for completing all eleven Daily Assignments.

c. If possible, please print your daily DA and bring it with you to class. Having your answers in front of you will help you to participate actively in our discussions.

- **Presentation on a Brethren in Christ Congregation.** This presentation is worth 100 points. I'll distribute in class a detailed grading rubric for the presentation.
- **Exams.** Each exam is worth 100 points.

Again, the point breakdown for this course is as follows:

Participation	20%
10 Daily Assignments	20%
Presentation	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%

Your course letter grade will be assigned according to the following percentages:

93-100	A	77-79	C+
90-92	A-	73-76	C
87-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-86	B	67-69	D+
80-82	B-	60-66	D
		< 60	F

Laptop and Cell Phone Policy

Laptops are welcome during class for note taking but not for other purposes. If you choose to use your laptop to take notes, you must email me a copy of your notes at the end of each class session.

If I determine or suspect that you are using your laptop for some purpose other than note taking, I will first discuss my concerns with you outside of class. If the misuse continues, I will cut your participation grade in HALF. Cell phone use is never permitted during class time.

Late Work Policy

All assignments for THEO 211 are to be handed in on the due date identified in the syllabus. Late submissions, without my prior approval, will receive an appropriate point reduction. However, if you talk to me in advance of the due date and have a compelling reason, I am usually lenient and willing to grant an extension. The important thing is that you talk to me first, not on the due date or after the fact.

Attendance Policy

If you will be absent, please email me in advance of class, if possible. Since J-Term is a short but intensive term, it's imperative that you be at every class meeting (if possible).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services (Murray Library). If you have questions, call extension 5382.

Closing Thoughts

If you have questions about class, come see me during office hours, email me at dcthomas@messiah.edu, or call me at ext. 3525. Emergencies should be relayed to me via email; please note that I do not check my email between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Schedule (Subject to Change)

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Text(s)</u>
W	Jan 8	<p>Introduction to the Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to Know One Another • Syllabus Review • Considering Historical Theology • The Brethren in Christ Church—An Overview 	Zercher, “The Brethren in Christ Accent” (CP)
H	Jan 9	<p>The Roots of the Brethren in Christ Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianities: A (Very) Brief Introduction • Anabaptism: History and Theology • Pietism: History and Theology <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #1</p>	<p>Jacobsen, YouTube videos on Catholicism and Protestantism (Canvas)</p> <p><i>The Schleithelm Confession</i> (CP)</p> <p>Spener, “Proposals to Correct Conditions in the Church” (CP)</p>
F	Jan 10	<p>Early Brethren in Christ History & Thought</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Brethren Beginnings • The “Brethren” Mindset • Early Doctrines and Practices • Growth and Expansion • 19th-Century Disputes and Divisions <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #2</p>	<p>“Confession of Faith of the Brethren” (CP)</p> <p>Heise, “My Conversion” (CP)</p> <p>Sherk, “The Love Feast as I Remember It” (CP)</p> <p>Sider, “The Ringgold Meeting House as Symbol” (CP)</p> <p>Alderfer, “The Brethren Mindset” (CP)</p>
M	Jan 13	<p>The First Period of Transition, 1880-1910</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Practice of Protracted Meetings • The Debate Over Sunday School • The Theology of Holiness <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #3</p>	<p>Wittlinger, <i>Quest for Piety and Obedience</i> [selection] (CP)</p> <p>Statements on Sanctification (CP)</p>

T	Jan 14	<p>The First Period of Transition, 1880-1910</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The History of Brethren in Christ Schools • The History of Messiah College • Messiah College Today <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #4</p>	<p>Jacobsen, “The History and Character of Messiah College” (CP)</p> <p>Boyer, “Retaining the Legacy” (CP)</p> <p>“Foundational Values” (Canvas)</p>
W	Jan 15	<p>The First Period of Transition, 1880-1910</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Launch of Cross-Cultural Missions • The Role of Women in Early Missionary Efforts • Brethren in Christ Missions Today <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #5</p>	<p>Sider, “Sarah Hoover Bert” OR “Hannah Frances Davidson” (CP)</p>
H	Jan 16	<p>The Brethren in Christ Church and Worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship Practices, Then and Now • Hymn Sing <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #6</p>	<p>Thomas, “From Living Room to Sanctuary: Reflections on Brethren in Christ Worship” (CP)</p> <p>Thomas, “Brethren in Christ Music and Worship in 2015” (CP)</p>
F	Jan 17	Midterm Exam	
M	Jan 20	NO CLASS—Martin Luther King Jr. Day	
T	Jan 21	<p>The Second Period of Transition, 1910-1950</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges to Nonconformity • World War I and World War II • Stemming the Tide of Change <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #7</p>	<p>Swalm, “The War Clouds Gather...” (CP)</p> <p>Sider, “The Christian’s Duty to Government” (CP)</p> <p>Statements at the Time of World War II (CP)</p> <p>Statement on “Christian Apparel” (CP)</p>

W	Jan 22	<p>The Second Period of Transition, 1910-1950</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evangelicalism: History and Theology • Joining the Evangelical Mainstream <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #8</p>	<p>“What is an Evangelical?” (Canvas)</p> <p>Dowland, “American Evangelicalism and the Politics of Whiteness” (CP)</p> <p>Reports of the Committee to Study NAE Affiliation (CP)</p>
H	Jan 23	<p>The Third Period of Transition, 1950-Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting Definitions of Nonconformity and Nonresistance • Experiments in Church Planting <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #9</p>	<p>Weaver-Zercher, “Open (to) Arms” (CP)</p> <p>Weaver-Zercher, “Improvising Faithfulness” (CP)</p> <p>Boyer, “Distinctive Emphases and Church Extension” (CP)</p>
F	Jan 24	<p>The Third Period of Transition, 1950-Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in Ministry and Leadership • Group Presentations <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #10</p>	<p>Holland and Keefer, “Women in Ministry” (CP)</p>
M	Jan 27	<p>The Brethren in Christ Today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Legacies of Pietism & Wesleyanism • The Legacies of Anabaptism • Group Presentations <p>DUE: Daily Assignment #11</p>	<p>Brensinger, <i>Focusing Our Faith</i>, intro & chs. 1-2, 4-6, 8-9</p>
T	Jan 28	<p>The Brethren in Christ Today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentations 	

W	Jan 29	Wrapping Up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Evaluations Final Exam	
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