

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	CANADIAN CHRISTIANITY HIST0642 1P / 1S
Date, Time, and Delivery Format	JANUARY 13 – APRIL 7, 2025 MONDAYS, 11::15 PM – 2:05 PM IN-PERSON WITH SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE OPTION
Instructor	Rev. Dr. JAMES TYLER ROBERTSON, PhD Telephone/voice mail: (416) 226-6620 Ext. 2274 Email: jtrobertson@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The course is offered in person (Room B321) and synchronous online at the designated time noted above. Students may participate in live-streamed/in-person office hours. Set hours will be posted on the course page after the beginning of the semester. Appointments are permitted as well.
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course investigates issues including, but not limited to, Indigenous Christianity, secularization, immigration, Christendom, pluralism, and denominationalism from a specifically Canadian cultural and historical lens. There are aspects of following Jesus unique to Canada, for both Canadian-born and immigrants to Canada. This course will help correct some national myths and offer greater insight for anyone who seeks to minister faithfully and effectively in Canadian contexts.

Through engaging lectures, hands-on assignments, insightful readings, and lively discussions—available for both on-campus and virtual participants—students will deepen their understanding and articulate their faith in a so-called post-Christian Canada. We will confront the growing marginalization of Christianity within our nation’s pluralistic society, examining this shift through cultural and historical lenses.

As the Canadian film, *The Barbarian Invasion*, poignantly states: “In 1966 everyone in Canada stopped going to church and no one knows why.” This course seeks to unpack this profound question, encouraging students to critically reflect on the current state of faith in Canada and discover pathways for meaningful engagement in our contemporary context.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Identify and articulate** the role of religion in shaping Canadian identity and culture, demonstrating an understanding of its historical significance.
2. **Analyze and explain** the historical policies and structures that led to the establishment of residential schools, critically assessing the implications for contemporary Canadian Christian perspectives on Indigenous peoples.
3. **Examine and interpret** key events in Canadian history that have influenced theological understandings of the Bible, articulating their impact on faith practices.
4. **Discuss and compare** the influence, histories, and developments of various Canadian Christian denominations, highlighting their contributions to the broader religious landscape.
5. **Evaluate and critique** concepts such as post-Christendom, secularization, and pluralism within a Canadian historical context, fostering a nuanced understanding of their relevance today.
6. **Compose and create** a unique work of historical research that will root an element of the student’s life within the larger stories of Canadian Christianity.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Robertson, James Tyler. *Overlooked: The Forgotten Origin Stories of Canadian Christianity*. Saskatchewan: New Leaf Press, 2022. **Shown as “R” on the syllabus**

Bradford, Tolley and Horton, Chelsea (eds.) *Mixed Blessings: Indigenous Encounters with Christianity in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016. **Shown as “B” on the syllabus**

Primary (historical) Readings will be available as PDFs on the Course Site. **Shown as “P” on the syllabus**

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Adams, Michael. *Sex in the Snow: The Surprising Revolution in Canadian Social Values*. Tenth Anniversary Edition. Toronto: Penguin, 2006.

Choquette, Robert. [Canada’s Religions: An Historical Introduction](#). Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 2004.

Grant, John Webster. *The Church in the Canadian Era*. Vancouver: Regent College, 1998.

King, Thomas. [The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America](#). Toronto: Anchor, 2013.

Noll, Mark A. *What Happened to Christian Canada?* Vancouver: Regent College, 2007.

Saul, John Raulston. *A Fair Country: Telling Truths about Canada*. Toronto: Viking, 2008.

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR BLENDED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

*exceptions with permission from professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each

other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Class Participation: 15% of Final Grade

This will be an interactive class, with plenty of opportunity for questions and guided study that will help each student’s experience in this course. Therefore, student participation is essential for there to be any hope of a communal learning experience. The student will be graded on the following scale:

D: present, not disruptive; responds when called on but does not offer much; infrequent involvement.

C: adequate preparation, but no evidence of interpretation of analysis; offers straightforward information; contributes moderately when called upon

B: good preparation, offers interpretation and analysis, contributes well to discussion in on-going fashion

A: excellent preparation, offers analysis, synthesis and evaluation of material; contributes significantly to ongoing discussion.

NOTE: This course really has only one assignment broken into three (3) parts. The student is going to compose a uniquely Canadian story by the end of the course. The schedule for creating this story follows below. Other than participation, each of the following grades are connected to this one work the student will compose and submit by semester’s end.

2. Abstract for Proposed Canadian Christian Story: 15% of Final Grade; Due Feb. 7

For the first three weeks, Dr. Robertson and the students will be discussing some unique attributes to the founding of the land known as Canada. During the course times, students will be encouraged to examine what is unique about the Canadian Christian experience.

Using these insights, the student will then compose a 300-word abstract detailing one element of Canadian Christianity that he/she wants to explore in greater depth as their final cumulative submission. The abstract must offer a title, concisely explain the scope of the upcoming project, cite how it makes a unique contribution to Canadian Christianity, and briefly explain the research methods that will be employed.

This abstract is the beginning of the student's final assignment and, as such, changes from the abstract to the final submission are to be expected. However, submitting abstracts is an important element of both academic and professional life to help define and limit scope. This assignment is designed to help the student articulate an early vision of their final project.

Note: Make sure to read the description of the final project below as there are multiple options available for content, research focus, style of project, even what format the student wishes to utilize for the final assignment. Each of these should be addressed in the abstract.

The student should receive approval for his/her choice of assignment from the professor before beginning. There will be numerous opportunities for one-on-one and in-class questions related to the abstract.

This assignment is related to outcomes 1 through 4, and 6.

3. Annotated Bibliography of Canadian Sources: 20% of Final Grade; Due: March 21

Over the course of the semester, the student will create an annotated bibliography related to their final project. This should be a total of at least 20 sources (sources include primary readings, books related to the subject matter, journal articles, book chapters etc.). The student will create a bibliography based on the Chicago/Turabian method and will follow each submission with one sentence explaining the thesis of the source and then 1-2 sentences explaining how this source informed their final project.

The annotated bibliography is designed to assist the student's cumulative research project. Therefore, there is flexibility regarding the types of works cited based on the type of final project the student chooses to do. For example, a project on the student's church would necessitate interviews or church documents that help inform the project or the historical fiction option could include resources on how to write fiction well.

The point of this assignment is to help the student begin building a reputable collection of research and resources to aid them in the future as he/she navigates their role within the Canadian context.

This assignment is related to outcomes 1 to 3

4. Telling a Canadian Story Cumulative Project: 50% of Final Grade; Due: April 18

This cumulative project asks the student to demonstrate their understanding of Canadian Christianity by providing a detailed and well-researched story that is unique to the setting of this nation.

The student can achieve this by creating **one** of the following projects:

A. Tell the history of his/her faith community. Write the student's personal faith community's

story and locate it within the larger picture of Canadian culture and religion. Make this story academically rigorous, utilize the topics and methodologies you learn in the class and, above all, make it engaging and approachable for the people of your congregation. This work also needs to demonstrate significant research as detailed in the annotated bibliography.

Length 3000 words.

B. Create a Lecture that can be taught in this class. The student will need to identify a person/people or event that he/she believes deserves fuller attention than it received in this class. The student will create a 30-minute lecture (which can be recorded and submitted) or a 3000-word lecture script. The assignment needs to include slides and demonstrate a substantial amount of research from the annotated bibliography.

C. Historical Fiction. The student can create a work of fiction that takes place within the larger context of Canadian Christianity. The work will be graded on clarity of thought, prose, creativity, and the ability to create a fiction that fits within the history of Canada. This short story will be 3000-3500 words in length and will demonstrate creativity, imagination, as well as solid historical research supported by the annotated bibliography.

D. Biblical Parable in Canadian context. The student can write a biblical parable (or parables) that align with scriptural teachings but are also uniquely suited to the Canadian context. This version of the assignment will require biblical research to augment the Canadian historical research to ensure that the new stories are true to their original intent (as argued by the student) while also granting new insights based on their Canadian setting. All of this research will be present within the annotated bibliography section. This assignment will be 3000 words in length and, as such, will likely mean that several parables will need to be told.

E. Research Paper. The student will choose a person or event and prepare a standard historical research paper that will examine the chosen topic in historical context, bring in primary sources as well as secondary scholarship (both of which will be found in the annotated bibliography), and explain to the reader how this person/event impacted the development of Canadian Christianity.

The student is also free to suggest a final project of his/her own making. Such proposals must be affirmed and accepted by the professor before the abstract assignment is due. More details for each of these will be discussed in class once the semester begins

This assignment is related to all outcomes.

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss

their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Weekly Discussions	15 %
Project Abstract	15 %
Annotated Bibliography	20 %
Canadian Story Cumulative Project	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference the [tip sheet, “Citing Sources in Theology”](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean’s Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Class 1 (January 13): Is "Canada" "Christian"?

Topics:

- Canadian Communion & Constructing a Christian nation.
- Development & Decline Theory
- Syllabus & Cumulative Project questions

Readings:

R: Introduction

B: Introduction

Class 2 (January 20): The DNA of BNA

Topics:

- New France and the British Invasion
 - The Promised Land: Acadians Need Not Apply
 - Canadian Revivalism: An Ongoing Problem
- Contemporary Issue to Discuss: Are Canadians Religious?

Readings:

R: Chapter 1

B: Chapter 1

P: *Jesuit Relations* Excerpt

Class 3 (January 27): Where and When “Canada” was Born

Topics:

- Those Pesky Rebels
 - Settling Into Being “Canadian”
 - The First “Canadian”
 - In-class discussion about Abstract Portion of Cumulative Assignment
- Contemporary Issue for Discussion: Does Canada Need a Revival?

Readings:

R: Chapter 2

B: Chapter 2

P: Henry Alline Excerpts (3-4 of them), “Quebec Article of Capitulation”, 1759

Class 4 (February 3): A Nation of Losers

Topics:

- Creation of Ontario
- A Gangrenous Limb: Canadian National Spin #1
- Again With These Americans??: The War of 1812
- Immovable & Unstoppable: Rev. John Strachan & Egerton Ryerson
- “Loyalty”

Contemporary Issue for Discussion: How Do We Feel About America These Days?

Readings:

B: Chapter 4

**P: Strachan Letter, 1812 (5 pages), A Loyalist Letter—1784,
“In These Times of Democratic Rage & Delusion”**

NOTE: Abstract Due February 7

Class 5 (February 10): Canada: Red, White & Orange

- Educating Canadians
- Clergy Reserves
- 19th century Secularization in Canada
- Reversing 19th century Secularization: What can we learn?

Contemporary Issue for Discussion: Should Christians be involved in politics?

Readings:

B: Chapter 5

P: British North America Act, 1867 (2 pages);

Baptist Missionary Report from Metis Lands, 1870s (5 pages)

READING BREAK (February 17)

Class 6 (February 24): The Dominion

- Louis Riel

- Canadians and the Cold
- Postage Stamp Politics
- The Dominion of “God”

Contemporary Discussion: Should Canadians be proud to be Canadian?

Readings:

R: Chapter 3

B: Chapter 6

Class 7 (March 3): Challenging “Canada”

- Selling Land in “Canada”
 - Congregationalists, Catholics & the First Canadian War
 - Immigration in the early 20th century
 - Satan’s Bicycle: Early 20th century Secularization in Canada
- Contemporary Issue for Discussion: Is Christianity Oppressive?

Readings:

R: Chapter 4

Class 8 (March 10): Are We Monkeys or Men? Canadian Christians Read the Bible

- Fundamentalism vs Modernism
 - Second World War
 - The United Church of Canada
 - Pentecostalism
 - The Suburbs
 - Women in the Canadian Church
- Contemporary Issue for Discussion: How Do We Read the Bible?

Readings:

R: Chapter 5

P: “No Woman Need Apply: The Ordination of Women in the United Church

Class 9 (March 17): The End of Christendom OR A Stereotypically Canadian Revolution

- Centennial and a New Canada
 - The Quiet Revolution
 - How Women Saved the Church
 - The Comfortable Pew
 - Elvis, the Beatles & the End of Trust
 - The Teenager: Spiritualizing Rebellion
- Contemporary Issue for Discussion: What is the role of marketing in church?

Readings:

B: Chapter 9

P: *Cite Libre*, April 1962

NOTE: Annotated Bibliography Due March 21

Class 10 (March 24): Seeking the Seekers: Canadian Mass Exodus from Church

- Church Shopping: What Would Jesus Buy?
- Televangelism
- Youth Pastor: A Made Up Job
- Neon Jesus
- Viva la revolution!

Contemporary Issue for Discussion: Did the Church Hurt Christianity?

Readings:

B: Chapter 8

P: Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker Video

Class 11 (March 31): Vader, Cobain & Killing Superman: Skepticism in the 90s

- Darth Vader: End of an Era
- Kurt Cobain: The Christian Prophet
- Superman: Why He Needed to Die
- Gen-X Changed the World By Doing Nothing
- What Canadians REALLY Believe

Contemporary Issue for Discussion: What is the role of doubt in the church?

Readings:

R: Chapter 6

B: Conclusion

P: "Settler Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada"

Class 12 (April 7): Can-orthodox-eh? Ancient Paths for Future Guidance

- How do we go forward from here?
- Ancient fonts of overlooked faith

Contemporary Issue for Discussion: How do you feel about Canada now?

Readings:

R: Chapter 7 and Conclusion

P: Terry LeBlanc Video

NOTE: Cumulative Project Due in One Week (April 18)

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

To be posted on the course page and discussed throughout the semester. This will largely include a collection of articles and videos that are connected to the topics discussed for students' further review.

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)