

Vancouver School of Theology
LS500: Introduction to Christian Worship
Tuesdays 2-5
Instructor: Travis O'Brian
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Purpose

Because it is God who always takes the initiative, Christian Worship is best discussed in the terms of response. In worship, (the Church) is responding to God and this is true of the whole of the liturgy, whether it be praise, thanksgiving, supplication, or repentance, whether it be Eucharist or baptism, or liturgical prayer, or the celebration of the Church's year. If this is so, worship must be seen in the context of saving history, which is the record of the divine initiative.

With these words, J.D. Crichton begins his short essay "A Theology of Worship."¹ It lays out several of the aims of this course, which will concentrate on braiding together three strands of enquiry. The aim of this course is to: introduce students to the study of the roots and development of the liturgies (primarily of Baptism and Eucharist); identify the structure and parts of the liturgy, and finally to learn to reflect theologically on the liturgy both as a whole and in its parts. How is God shaping us, both individually and corporately, in and through our worship? Can we contemplate, in faith, God's purpose in doing so? Is worship one activity out of many, or is worship in some way essential to our life in God and therefore to what it means to be a human creature of God? How does the worship of the Church shape its mission? And how are we to evaluate our own traditions and congregations in the light of these reflections? These are the kinds of questions we shall be exploring together as we move through the course.

Format

The study of the liturgy can be confusing and complex. For this reason, we shall concentrate our lectures on the trajectory of the development of Christian Worship from first century Judaism up until the Reformation in the West. In our seminar discussions, we will then begin to apply that history, and our theological reflections on that history, to our experience of our own traditions and congregations. It is hoped that by learning and theologically reflecting on the history of Christian worship, that we will be better able to evaluate what is at the core of Christian worship, thereby enabling wise leadership in our own worshipping communities.

The class will meet weekly over a 12 week period for a total of 11 three hour weekly sessions.

This course is available at the audit, Certificate and basic degree level. There are no prerequisites.

¹ J.D. Crichton, "A Theology of Worship" in *The Study of the Liturgy*, Jones, Wainwright, Yarnold (eds.) (London, SPCK, 1978), 7.

Competencies

1. Ability to identify and describe basic 'parts' of the services of worship (the liturgical structures and rites) prior to and following the Reformation.
2. Ability to identify cultural, historical, and theological factors that have influenced the development of those structures and rites, and to reflect on that development in terms of your own and other traditions.
3. Reflect on Christian worship 'theologically,' that is, in terms of the purpose and mission of God's Church.
4. Ability to use primary and secondary sources in liturgical studies.

Expectations

In order to successfully the course, students will:

1. Attend at least 80% of class sessions
2. Complete the assigned readings.
3. Prepare for and participate in lectures and seminars, including taking responsibility for leading one week's seminar discussion of the week's lecture topic.
4. Attend one worship service in a tradition significantly different from one's own and submit a written personal, historical, and theological reflection on the experience (maximum 1200 words)! To reflect 'historically and theologically' means to reflect, not on the subject "Eucharist" in general for example, or on a particular 'denomination' in general, but on the particularities of the words and actions you observe in the particular service of worship you attend. The 'Thursday Worship' at VST does not count as attending a tradition different than your own! **DUE DATE: Nov. 1**
5. Complete a 10 page written assignment applying the historical and theological learnings of the class to the worship either of your 'home' or 'placement' parish congregation. **DUE DATE: Nov. 29**
6. Final exam in the exam period.

For Audit students, expectations 1-3 apply. For Certificate Students, expectations 1-5 apply.

Evaluation

Demonstration of competency objectives will be achieved through weekly participation in the lectures and seminars which reflects a careful reading of assigned materials as well as a one double-spaced page reflection on the previous week's lecture; submission of two written assignments; and the final exam.

Every assignment in this course must receive "Approved" in order to pass the course.

Policy on Late assignments

Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus for each course. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.

Apart from the weekly lecture summaries, two written assignments are due this term on the dates specified. Unexcused failure to submit either on time will result in reductions taken from the final grade.

Required Reading

** Schmemmann, Alexander, *For the Life of the World*, 2nd Revised & Expanded ed., (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press), 1973.

** White, James. *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 2000.

Variety of readings available on the internet or as Reserve Readings held in the VST library.

**** Both these books are available at the UBC bookstore or online. Paper copies only please ****

WEEKLY SYLLABUS

Lecture 1: September 13

Title: Introduction to the Study of Christian Worship: Thinking Theo-Logically

Reading:

Anglicans: *Book of Common Prayer*: "Holy Communion"; *Book of Alternative Services*: "Holy Communion," "Baptism"

United Church: *Celebrate God's Presence*, "The Sacrament of Communion"; "The Covenant of Baptism"

Presbyterian: *Book of Common Worship*: "The Service of the Word and Holy Communion"; "The Sacrament of Baptism"

Or the equivalent in your own tradition.

Lecture 2: September 20

Title: Open Thou Our Lips And our Mouth Shall Show Forth Thy Praise: What is God doing to us?

Readings: Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, "Appendix 2: Sacrament and Symbol"; James White, Chapt. 1

Lecture 3: September 27

Title: The Jewish Roots of Christian Worship:

Readings: The Didache, (<http://newadvent.org/fathers/0714.htm>); R.T. Beckwith, "The Jewish Background to Christian Worship" in *The Study of the Liturgy*, Joes, Wainwright, Yarnold, eds. (London: SPCK, 1978), pp.39-50. (on library reserve)

Another excellent resource is Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, Chapt. 2 "The Problem of the Origin of the Ordo: The First Centuries" (on Library Reserve)

Lecture 4: October 4

Title: What is a Sacrament?

Readings: James White, Chapt. 7; Schmemmann, Chapt. 1; John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, Chaps 1&2 (on library reserve)

Lecture 5: October 11

Title: Rite of Initiation and Baptism

Readings: Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, Chaps. 15-21 (www.bombaxo.com/hippolytus); White, Chapt. 8; Schmemmann Chapt. 4;

Justin Martyr, (100-165 AD) 'New Apology' Chapt. 61:

(<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm>)

Lecture 6: October 18

Title: The Eucharist: Liturgy of the Word

Readings: White chapt. 6; Schmemmann chapt. 2

Reading Week: October 24-28

Lecture 7: November 1

Title: Inculturation & Tradition

Guest Lecturer: Ray Aldred

Lecture 8: November 8

Title: The Eucharist: Liturgy of the Sacrament

Readings: White, Chapt. 9;

Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, chapt. 4 (<http://www.bombaxo.com/hippolytus.html>).

Compare with BAS Eucharistic Prayer #2; Re-read Schmemmann, Chapt. 1&2

Lecture 9: November 15

Title: Liturgical Time, Liturgical Space

Readings:

White, Chapt. 2&3; Schmemmann Chapt. 3

Lecture 10: November 22

Title: Beyond Words: The place and purpose of Gesture, Ornament, and Music in Christian Worship

Readings: J.G. Davies, *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* articles on "Postures"; "Vestments";

Lecture 11: November 29

Title: Worship as Mission: the Prophetic Calling of the Church at Eucharist

Readings: Schmemmann, Chapt. 7 & Appendix 1 "Worship in a Secular Age";

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blount, Brian & Tisdale, Leonaora Tubbs (eds), *Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001)

Bouyer, Louis, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989). [A classic which, when first published in the late 1960's,

revolutionized the way people looked at the Eucharist. Especially important for noting the Jewish roots of the liturgy]

Bradshaw, Paul, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation*

Casel, Odo, *The Mystery of Christian Worship* (1962)

Cavanaugh, William, *Torture and the Eucharist*

Cooke, Bernard, *Christian Symbol and Ritual: An Introduction*

Danielou, Jean, S.J., *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956).

Davis, J.G. (ed.), *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, (London: SCM Press, 1972).

Dawn, Mara J. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for This Urgent Time* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). [Why worship should be God-focused and not 'church growth' focused: "How we worship both reveals and forms our identity as persons and communities" (p.4)]

Dix, Gregory Dom, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945). [A guided journey through the bewildering forest that is liturgically history. This book and its thesis (see White p.233) set the course of thinking about the liturgy for 2 generations]

Francis, Mark R., *Shape a Circle Ever Wider: Liturgical Inculturation in the United States* (Liturgy Training Publications, 2007)

Girard, René, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann & Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987). [On the origins of ritual and the unique (and dangerous) revelation of Christ regarding this origin]

Guardini, Romano, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*

Jones, Cheslyn; Wainwright, Geoffrey, et al (eds.), *The Study of the Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1978). [There are many helpful, short and focussed essays in this book. A copy is available on reserve in the library]

Kavanaugh, Aiden, *On Liturgical Theology*

Kreider, Alan & Eleanor, *Worship and Mission After Christendom* (Waterloo: Herald Press, 2011). [Thoughts on Worship; authors representing the Anabaptist Tradition]

MacQuarrie, John, *A Guide to the Sacraments* (London: SCM Press, 1997)

[An Anglican writes about the 7 sacraments. See especially Chapt. 1: 'A Sacramental Universe.' A copy is on reserve in the library]

Schattauer, Thomas H. (ed), *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999).

Schillebeeckx, Edward, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*

Schmemmann, Alexander, *For the Love of the World*, 2nd Revised & Expanded ed., (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press), 1973.

— *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press)

— *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002)

Underhill, Evelyn, *Worship* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1936) [A classic by the Anglican mystic, beautifully written and still thought-provoking]

Vincie, Catherine, *Celebrating Divine Mystery: A Primer in Liturgical Theology* (Liturgical Press, 2009)

Visser, Margaret, *The Geometry of Love* [A personal and historical journey through the psychology, theology, and architecture of a particular sacred space]

White, James F., *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd ed. revised & expanded (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

— *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 1989).