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. Chrichton begins his short essay “A Theology of Worship.” In many ways it lays out many of the aims of this course. We 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 is enormously 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.

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Competencies

1. Ability to describe liturgical structures and rites
2. Ability to identify cultural, historical, and theological factors that have influenced the development of liturgical structures and rites, and to reflect on that development in terms of your own and other traditions.
3. Willingness to reflect on Christian worship in the 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
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).
5. Participate in the construction of a class “dictionary” of liturgical words, concepts, etc.
6. 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.
7. Final exam in the exam period.

Evaluation

Demonstration of competency objectives will be achieved through weekly participation in the lectures and seminars which reflects a careful reading of assigned materials; submission of two written assignments; and the final exam.

Required Reading

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


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

** Students are responsible for ordering these books on Amazon in advance of the start of classes **
**WEEKLY SYLLABUS**

**Lecture 1:** September 17  
**Title:** Introduction to the Study of Christian Worship: Thinking Theo-Logically  
Reading: BCP: “Morning Prayer,” “Evening Prayer,” “Holy Communion”  
BAS: “Holy Communion,” “Baptism”  
United/ Presbyterian/ Other?

**Lecture 2:** September 24  
**Title:** Open Thou Our Lips And our Mouth Shall Show Forth Thy Praise: What is God doing to us?  
Readings: Schmemann For the Life of the World, Appendix 2, “Sacrament and Symbol”; James White, Chapt. 1

**Lecture 3:** October 1  
**Title:** The Jewish Roots of Christian Worship:  
Readings: James White; Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, Didache Justin Martyr??

**Lecture 4:** October 8  
**Title:** What is a Sacrament?  
Readings: James White, Chapt. 7; Schmemann, Chapt. 1; John Macquarrie, A Guide to the Sacraments, Chapt 1&2 (on library reserve)

**Lecture 5:** October 15  
**Title:** Rite of Initiation and Baptism  
Readings: Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, Chaps. 15-21 (www.bombaxo.com/hippolytus); White, Chapt. 8; Schmemann Chapt. 4; BAS “Holy Baptism”; Justin Martyr, (100-165 AD) ‘New Apology’ Chapt. 61: (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm)

**Lecture 6:** October 22  
**Title:** Inculturation & Tradition  

Guest Lecturer: Fr Martin Brokenleg?

**Reading Week:** October 26-30

**Lecture 7:** November 5  
**Title:** The Eucharist: Liturgy of the Word  
Readings: White chapt. 6; Schmemann chapt. 2

**Lecture 8:** November 12  
**Title:** The Eucharist: Liturgy of the Sacrament

**Lecture 9**: November 19  
Title: Liturgical Time, Liturgical Space  
Readings: White, Chapt. 2&3; Schmemann Chapt.3

**Lecture 10**: November 26  
Title: Beyond Words: The place and purpose of Gesture, Ornament, and Music in Christian Worship

**Lecture 11**: December 3  
Title: Worship as Mission: the Prophetic Calling of the Church at Eucharist  
Readings: Schmemann, Chapt. 7 & Appendix 1 “Worship in a Secular Age”;

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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


Cavanaugh, William, *Torture and the Eucharist*

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


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]

Guardini, Romano, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*


Kavanaugh, Aiden, *On Liturgical Theology*


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


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

Schmemann, Alexander, *For the Love of the World*,

— *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*

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

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