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**LS500 Introduction to Christian Worship**  
**Fall, 2019**  
**Syllabus**

**PURPOSE:** The seasons and cycles of our liturgies and church year echo the rhythm and flow of our lives and their daily and seasonal movement. This class will explore the terminology, history, shape and meaning of Christian worship as it both reflects and helps shape these patterns. Students will identify the structure and parts of the liturgy, reflecting theologically and exploring their own and other traditions through these lenses.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:** Students will be able to identify the seasons of the church year, core liturgical terminology and will be able to create a basic structure for a worship service based on the integration of readings, lectures, seminars and assignments. A capacity to reflect theologically on one's own faith life and practices will be developed and encouraged. During the term, each student will have an opportunity to present the week's topic of discussion, crafting questions that help create thoughtful conversation among participants.

**FORMAT AND CONTENT:**

This semester course meets weekly on Wednesday afternoons, and is worth 3.0 credit hours. For on-campus students, work in the course consists of classes including lectures, discussions and small group exercises, some prepared before class. Distance students will participate through Adobe Connect either synchronously at the same time as class, or asynchronously through recordings of class.

**TEXTS:**

Senn, Frank C. *Introduction to Christian Liturgy*. Augsburg-Fortress, Minneapolis, MN, 2012.  
<http://store.afcanada.com/store/productgroup/545/Introduction-to-Christian-Liturgy>

Chittister, Joan. *The Liturgical Year*. Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN, 2009.

[https://www.bookfinder.com/search/?ac=sl&st=sl&ref=bf\\_s2\\_a1\\_t1\\_1&q=4wLjt,UehQVTwy7Z04aB2wp7lqI\\_1497963026\\_1:3:2&bq=author%3Djoan%2520chittister%26title%3Dliturgical%2520year%2520the%2520spiraling%2520adventure%2520of%2520the%2520spiritual%2520life%2520%2D%2520the%2520ancient%2520practices](https://www.bookfinder.com/search/?ac=sl&st=sl&ref=bf_s2_a1_t1_1&q=4wLjt,UehQVTwy7Z04aB2wp7lqI_1497963026_1:3:2&bq=author%3Djoan%2520chittister%26title%3Dliturgical%2520year%2520the%2520spiraling%2520adventure%2520of%2520the%2520spiritual%2520life%2520%2D%2520the%2520ancient%2520practices)

[https://bookoutlet.ca/Store/Details/9780849946073B?gclid=CjwKCAjwkrbBRB9EiwAhlN8\\_HdgqxVoGgG0mkfrQ1gWcKH-22bSKYstQMUPra7HCFrTNTKoxT01NBoCBP4QA vD\\_BwE](https://bookoutlet.ca/Store/Details/9780849946073B?gclid=CjwKCAjwkrbBRB9EiwAhlN8_HdgqxVoGgG0mkfrQ1gWcKH-22bSKYstQMUPra7HCFrTNTKoxT01NBoCBP4QA vD_BwE)

## **RESERVES**

All reserve articles will be available through Canvas and downloads as specified.

“Liturgical Time” from *Liturgical Year: Supplemental Liturgical Resource 7* from The Ministry Unit on Theology and Worship for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, 1992, pp. 19-58.

“Faith, Understanding and Reflection” Chapter 1, *How to Think Theologically*. Howard W. Stone, James O. Duke, Augsburg-Fortress, Minneapolis, 1996, pp.

<http://gordonatkinson.net/essays-fiction/let-the-big-people-say-what-needs-to-be-said>

<http://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2013/01/worth-reading-worth-pondering-spirituality-thats-worth-the-effort.html>

<http://www.christianweek.org/seeking-place-ancient-liturgy-21st-century-church/>

“The Early Church and Our Modern Worship” and Justin Martyr, Didache

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0714.htm>

“Bathing the Body” from *Honoring the Body* by Stephanie Paulsell, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2002, pp 35-56.

*The Early Church and Our Modern Worship*, The Rev. C.C. Richardson from the 1952 Edition of, “The Rotunda,” the College yearbook of Emmanuel College, Saskatoon.

“Writing Theology Well in Its Own Context” Chapter 1 from *Writing Theology Well* by Lucretia B. Yaghjian. Continuum International Publishing, London and New York, 2008, pp. 3-17.

“Singing Our Lives” by Don E. Saliers from *Practicing Our Faith*, Dorothy C. Bass, Editor. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1997, pp.179-193.

“Author’s Note” and “Reading a Church: Preliminaries” from *How to Read a Church* by Richard Taylor. Rider, London, 2007, pp. 12-25.

“Preamble” and “The Door Swings Open” from *The Geometry of Love* Margaret Visser. Harper Collins, Toronto, 2000, pp. 1-26.

“Liturgical Elements in Worship” from *Worship* by Evelyn Underhill. Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1936, pp. 100-119.

“A History in Brief” from *The Sacred Meal* by Nora Gallagher. Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN, 2009, pp. 97-107.

## COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance** For a weekly course, VST requires at least 80% attendance.
2. **Reading and assignments** Students are expected to read all required assignments before class and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.
3. **Academic honesty** Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
4. **Inclusive language** Inclusive language is expected in speaking and writing when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when making reference to God.
5. **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
  - Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is "Not Approved") with narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.
  - Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.
  - For a passing grade in the course, all assignments must be Approved.
6. **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. 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.
7. **Limitation on use of social media**  
Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.
8. VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

## CALENDAR

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|-----------------|---|
| <b>Sept. 11</b> | <b>Introduction to course and themes</b><br>READ: Senn, pp. 1-16; Chittister, pp. xv-22;<br>from Reserve list: Yaghjian, "Writing Theology Well in Its Own Context" and Stone and Duke, "Faith, Understanding and Reflection."  |
| <b>Sept. 18</b> | <b>History and Culture of Liturgy</b><br>READ: Senn, pp. 17-41, Chronology of Events and Documents pp. 213-222 and <b>from Reserves:</b> "The Early Church and Our Modern Worship" Justin Martyr, Didache <a href="http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0714.htm">http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0714.htm</a> ; and Visser, "Preamble" and "The Door Swings Open" from <i>The Geometry of</i> |

*Love*, pp. 1-26; “A History in Brief” from *The Sacred Meal*, Nora Gallagher, pp. 97-107.

- Sept. 25**      **Structure of the Liturgy**  
 READ: Senn, Chapter 3 pp. 43-73; Chittister, Chapters 4-5, pp. 23-38,  
 From reserve list: Underhill, *Liturgical Elements in Worship*, pp. 100-119.
- Oct. 2**        **Liturgy and Time**  
 READ: Senn, Chapter 4 pp. 75-96; Chittister Chapters 6-7, pp. 39-57;  
 and from Reserve list, Bass,
- Oct. 9**        **Church Year Calendar**  
 READ: Senn Chapters 5 & 6, pp. 97-125, Chittister Chapter 8, pp. 49-57.  
 From Reserve list: *Liturgical Time*, pp. 19-58; and Tish Harrison Warren’s  
 article: <http://thewell.intervarsity.org/blog/how-liturgical-calendar-keeps-me-sane>
- Oct. 16**      **Advent, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost**  
 READ: Senn, Chapters 6,7,8, pp. 107-155 and Chittister Chapters 9-15,  
 pp. 58-99. (You may want to read ahead 10-28 pp. 63-181 as these  
 chapters connect with this week’s particular focus but will also connect  
 with the general overview of the course as we go along).
- Oct. 23**      **Reading Week**
- Oct. 30**      **Life Passages – Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Funeral**  
 READ: Senn Chapter 9, Paulsell, “Bathing the Body.”
- Nov. 6**        **The Liturgical Arts**  
 READ: Senn, Chapter 10 (pp. 177-188), “Singing Our Lives” by Don E.  
 Saliers (14 pages), “Author’s Note” and “Reading a Church Preliminaries”  
 by Richard Taylor, *Geography of Love* by Margaret Visser.
- Nov. 13**      **Participation in Worship (Embodied Prayer)**  
 READ: Senn, Chapter 11, 189-212. Jane E. Vennard, “Our Bodies Teach  
 us to Pray” from *Praying with the Body* pp. 9-26; Warren’s “Brushing  
 Teeth from *Liturgy of the Ordinary*, pp. 37-49.
- Nov. 20**      **Contemporary Challenges and Trends in Worship**  
 READ: Susan White’s “Contemporary Challenges to Christian Worship”,  
 pp 152-173. From Reserves: <http://www.christianweek.org/seeking-place-ancient-liturgy-21st-century-church/>
- Nov. 27**      **The Liturgy of Life, the Life of Liturgy – Integration of Themes,  
 Readings and Learnings.**
- Dec. 4**        FINAL EXAM

**Dec 17**      **End of Term;** last day for submission of all written work for term

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAM**

1. **Personal Book of Hours** – A Book of Hours is a devotional for personal use. It often includes Psalms, hymns, favourite prayers and readings that help create a rhythm and pattern of prayer for the user. The ancient hours might shape a book of hours, but less elaborate structures can also work well. A longer handout for this assignment, along with examples and resources will be shared the first day of class. We will do some of the work on this assignment in class. **1 -2 pages Due September 25.**
  
2. **Paper 1** Attend a Christian service of worship different from your own tradition and reflect on what you encountered. VST chapel services do not fulfill this requirement – choose something that engages your questions and stretches you. Write a paper using the following questions as springboards:
  - A. What cultural differences did you encounter, did they help or hinder your personal worship?
  - B. How was the structure similar or different from your own? What areas overlapped?
  - C. Where would you place the service in the historical scope of liturgical development?
  - D. What was the worship space like? (Use Taylor's *Reading a Church*, Visser's *Geography of Love* for guidance.)

Remember to use language that makes space for other traditions to be seen as faithful reflections of the ways they have encountered holy, while also observing what you encounter as objectively as possible. **5 pages. Due October 16.**

3. **Paper 2** Choose a particular rite of the church (funeral, wedding, baptism, confirmation or Feast Day) that had particular meaning for you, positive or negative, and describe and interpret that experience. Include how the service was shaped, what was significant to you, how others engaged and shared in the liturgy. Incorporate a brief overview of the historical, liturgical and theological development of the particular rite you have chosen. **5 pages. Due Nov. 6**
  
4. **Liturgical Year Reflection** Craft a paper around the liturgical year and how you have experienced those seasons in your life. An example of how this might be done will be shared in class. Questions to help you get started: Where and when have I been in a season of Advent? Lent? Ordinary Time? What Feast Days turned up in surprising ways? Incorporate our class readings and your own research for this assignment. Grading will be based on an integration and understanding of scriptural themes, liturgical dynamics and services and capacity to demonstrate how the liturgical year resonates with one's own life story. **1-2 pages. Due Nov. 20**

**There will be one exam reviewing liturgical terms and reflecting on the cycle of the church year, the history and elements of worship including the Eucharist and Baptism, and how the people of God shape liturgy and how liturgy shapes the people of God.**

### **EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA**

1. Class participation: Students are expected to participate in class discussions and to prepare ahead for in-class discussions. Evaluative criteria: comments and questions that demonstrate adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings and exercises, a readiness to apply readings to interpretive questions and insights and a capacity to speak and listen with respect, openness to self and other.
2. 2 reflections, 2 five-page papers and 1 exam as specified and due as specified.
3. Final exam: identification, short answer essays, long essay. Evaluative criteria: answers are correct, comprehensive, insightful and clear. (Further instructions for the exam distributed in writing later in the course.)
4. Audit students are required to do all the reading and participate in the class discussions and exercises.
5. Certificate students are required to do all the reading, participate in the class discussions and exercises, and to do the *Personal Book of Hours* reflection.

### **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bass, Dorothy C. *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time*. San Francisco, CA, 2000.

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

Bradshaw, Paul F and Maxwell E. Johnson. *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*. London: SPCK Publishing, 2011.

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

Gallagher, Nora. *The Sacred Meal*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009.

Kavanagh, Aidan. *On Liturgical Theology*. Collegeville, Minnesota: A Pueblo Book, The Liturgical Press, 1992.

Marshall, Michael. *Free to Worship*. London: Marshall Pickering, 1996.

Martlins, Stuart M., Arthur J. Magida. *How to be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook*. Jewish Lights Publishing, 2015.

Mikloszazy, Attila, S.J. *Benedicamus Domino! Let Us Bless the Lord!* Ottawa, ON: Novalis Press, 2001.

Price, Charles P. and Louis Weil. *Liturgy for Living*. Toronto: The Anglican Book Centre, 1979.

Ramshaw, Gail. *Christian Worship: 100,000 Sundays of Symbols and Rituals*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2009.

*Sacraments and Worship*. Maxwell E. Johnson, Editor. London: SPCK, 2012.

Stone, Howard W. and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.

*The Study of Liturgy*. Editors: Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold, SJ. London: SPCK, 1983.

Underhill, Evelyn. *Worship*. New York, NY: Harper Torchbook, 1957.

Warren, Tish Harrison. *The Liturgy of the Ordinary*. Grover, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2016.

Wolf, Miroslav and Dorothy C. Bass. *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

White, James F. *Introduction to Christian Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.

White, Susan J. *Foundations of Christian Worship*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Yaghjian, Lucretia B. *Writing Theology Well*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2006.