

Liturgical Theology: The Practice and Theology of Worship
BTS-4495/5310



ST JOHN'S
COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1866

Canadian Mennonite University

Course Syllabus [Fall Semester 2019]

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Lecture times: Tuesday evenings, 6:30 – 9:15 pm Sept. 10 – Nov. 26, 2019 at St. John's College

Office hours: as arranged by appointment

Exam: not applicable

Last date for voluntary withdrawal without academic penalty: November 12, 2019

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This one semester course explores the depth of Christian liturgical worship. It employs an action-reflection model in which the learner and learning community's attention moves from practice to critical reflection. Participants will be introduced to the experience of liturgical worship as *doing primary theology*. This will include the significance of signs (including texts) and symbols and how meaning is created and interpreted through them. With this foundation, participants will explore all aspects of worship – such as prayer books and other worship materials, music, physical settings and the worship space, and ultimately, the purpose and intent of the gathered assembly's worship. Examples will be grounded in the historic liturgical tradition as represented in Anglican Church worship, but will also embrace Reformed and other liturgies. Attention will be paid to what the experience of liturgical worship communicates about the nature of God's presence within the community, about the nature of the triune God, the missiological purpose of the Church, and the eschatological hope for the reign of God. This exploration will take place with reference to the current postmodern (late-modern) dominant cultural context and the challenges it presents.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- be introduced to the foundational purposes of Christian worship – its intent and processes
- be introduced to semiotics (the study of signs and meaning) as an approach to understanding how meaning is transmitted and interpreted in worship
- become knowledgeable about the structures and intent of the various parts of liturgical worship – in particular the Eucharistic, Baptismal and Funeral rites of the (Anglican) Book of Alternative Services

- become conscious of the impact of physical setting, artefacts, movement, music and designated leadership upon the worship experience and the meanings it provides including the impact of cultural contexts
- become conscious of, and responsive to, the nature of congregational worship in the missiological outreach of the Church
- have opportunities to gain experience in actual worship leadership, “embodied participation” and reflection on these experiences

Required Textbooks

Vincie, Catherine. *Celebrating Divine Mystery: A Primer in Liturgical Theology*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2009. [Abe Books - \$22.15 USD incl. shipping]; [Amazon.ca - \$33.28 Can incl. shipping, Kindle - \$14.63]; [The Liturgical Press - \$24.95 USD, e-book - \$19.99]

The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada (first published in 1985) *available online at:* <https://www.anglican.ca/about/liturgicaltexts/>

The Book of Common Prayer (1962 – Canada) *available online at:* <https://www.anglican.ca/about/liturgicaltexts/>

Methodology

- Each class gathering will consist of lecture presentation and plenary discussion, and group work. Graduate students (M.Div. MA) will be required to make a presentation to the class.
- Undergraduate and Graduate students will be required to participate in two “Sunday” principal worship experiences – one in a familiar setting and one significantly different from their usual experience. Appropriate (Undergraduate or Graduate) reflection papers will be assigned for each experience.
- All students (for credit) will be required to submit a substantial final academic essay on what they have learned in this course (including reference to the assigned readings) *and why it’s important*.
- Graduate students will be required to submit an essay outlining the planning of all aspects of a eucharistic worship experience based on their learning from this course. Undergraduate students may meet this requirement using either a eucharistic service or a service of the Word.
- Class attendance and participation is expected. There is a maximum of two absences for credit students. Appropriate reading and written summaries will be assigned in lieu.

<u>Evaluation</u>	Undergraduate	Graduate
Worship experience reflection paper	20%	20%
Final academic essay	50%	30%
Class participation	10%	10%
Class presentation	n.a.	20%
Worship planning assignment	20%	20%