

CMWO 664
SEASONS OF CELEBRATION
Worshipping through the Liturgical Year

Class Meetings

Fall Semester 2011
Mondays 9-11:50 a.m.

Instructor

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The Course

An introduction to worship shaped by the seasons and festivals of the Christian calendar, with attention to the way sacred cycles form congregations in patterns of Christian life.

Desired Outcomes

The student who has faithfully engaged the course will leave it:

- more familiar with the theology, spirituality, vocabulary, and patterns of the Christian year;
- more creatively and thoughtfully able to shape the congregation's worship throughout the liturgical year;
- more prepared to lead a congregation in holistically exploring the "depths of the riches" of Christian faith and mission through attention to the church's annual cycle;

Required Reading

- Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays* (Jason Aronson, Inc, 1998)
- Joan Chittister, *The Liturgical Year* (The Ancient Practices Series, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2009)
- Laurence Hull Stookey, *Calendar, Christ's Time for the Church* (Abingdon Press, 1996)

Recommended

- Raymond E. Brown, *Christ in the Gospels of the Liturgical Year*

- Holt L. Hickman et al., *The New Handbook of the Christian Year*
- Bobby Gross, *Living the Christian Year: Time to Inhabit the Story of God*
- Gail Ramshaw, *Treasures Old and New: Images in the Lectionary*
- A bible, denominational worship book, and a denominational hymnal.

Also Recommended

- Thomas Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*
- J. G. Davies, ed., *The Westminster Dictionary of Worship*
- *Feasting on the Word*, John Knox Press' multi-volume lectionary commentary
- Joan Halmo, *Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children*
- John H. Westerhoff III, *A Pilgrim People: Learning through the Church Year*
- Harvey Cox, *Common Prayers: Faith, Family, and a Christian's Journey through the Jewish Year.*

Course Requirements

1. *Presence.* More than 2 absences will jeopardize a passing grade.
2. *Participation.* Listen actively, discuss thoughtfully, raise questions.
3. *Weekly Devotions.* Optional. Sign up in pairs or threes to lead devotions each week—5 minutes long, appropriate to the liturgical season.
4. *Four Reflection Papers* of 3-4 pp., double-spaced in 12 pt. type, on a critical question of the students' choosing. Questions may be of a theological or pastoral nature *and must be related to readings, presentations, and class discussions.* Papers will begin with a succinct statement of the question to be considered, followed by a reasoned attempt to reach a conclusion, drawing on learning from the course. Examples will be provided by the instructor. Please note: Students may elect to substitute a book review of one of the following books (3-4 pp) for one of these reflection papers:
 - Mary Boys, *Has God only One Blessing?*
 - Amy Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*
 - Marilyn Salmon, *Preaching without Contempt*

Guidelines for writing a book review will be provided to students who choose this option. **Due dates for reflection papers are indicated in the course calendar below: 10/3, 10/24, 11/7, 11/28.**

5. *A Seasonal Plan for a Local Church* Details of this assignment to be handed out in the first class. **Due no later than 12/12.**
6. “*Controversy*” Paper. Each student will select one of the topics listed below and write a paper of 4-6 double-spaced, 12 pt. pages. The paper will consist of:
 - (a) a concise statement of the issue;
 - (b) succinct and well-grounded arguments pro and con, including liturgical, theological, historical, denominational and pastoral considerations;
 - (c) your own judgment (i. e., what would/will you do, and why?);
 - (d) some suggested pastoral, educational/formational approaches to assisting congregations come to terms with the issue in a constructive, faithful way;
 - (e) notations where necessary (this is not an academic paper, but you must still give credit where credit is due if you borrow others’ words and ideas).

Approaches to these issues will differ from church to church. *Thus you should have a particular worshipping community in mind when writing*—e. g., your home church, your field ed congregation, or some other local community you know well. A brief description of and on-going reference to this particular congregation should be worked into the paper to illuminate the reasons for the approach chosen. Please disguise the name of the congregation and the names of individuals you may mention. It is also recommended that students *talk about the topic with one or more local church pastors* who may be knowledgeable, thoughtful, and skilled in congregational worship.

NB: If you are from a “fixed liturgy” tradition, some topics below will not apply. You may propose other questions that liturgically “vex” your community, with instructor approval. **Due no later than 12/5.**

TOPICS

- Christmas Carols in Advent?
- Christmas Morning Service?
- Ashes on Ash Wednesday?
- Foot-washing on Maundy Thursday?
- Reading the Passion on Palm Sunday? (Including issues raised by dramatization)

- ❑ Communion on Easter?
- ❑ Restore the Easter Vigil?
- ❑ Celebrate Christ “the King”?
- ❑ All Saints Day—a day of local remembrance or a Feast of the Church?
- ❑ Should congregations “bump the Lord’s Day” to celebrate national/cultural/patriotic observances such as Thanksgiving Day, Mother’s Day/Father’s Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July...?
- ❑ Expanding the calendar: introducing Lesser Feasts and Fasts

Evaluation

Students may opt to be graded Pass/Fail. All others receive a letter grade.

Decorum

Our opinions about worship have been shaped by our backgrounds, convictions, and experiences. Latitude, forbearance, and good humor will be offered by all to all in the expression of our differences. Students will not use a dismissive tone, become stubbornly and unreasonably argumentative, or pontificate. The instructor will be alert to these forms of self-indulgence. Students will alert the instructor if she falls into the same bad practices.

Plagiarism

Just don’t. If plagiarism is proven to be deliberate, you will not receive a passing grade.

Extensions and incompletes

Students will try not to request them. Instructor will try not to grant them. It’s for our own good.

Calendar

CLASS 1, 9/12

- ❑ Introductions, syllabus review, housekeeping
- ❑ The heart of the matter: the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- ❑ Patterns of *anamnesis* and *prolepsis*, humiliation and exaltation

Assignments for 9/19

Jewish Way, pp. 13-33, 121-181; *Liturgical Year*, pp. 1-58; *Calendar*, pp. 39-50

CLASS 2, 9/19

- ❑ Sabbath and the Lord’s Day
- ❑ Calendar and Lectionary

Assignments for 9/26

Jewish Way, pp. 34-65; *Calendar*, pp. 53-77; *Liturgical Year*, pp. 165-176
Bring copies of a favorite Easter or Pentecost hymn.

CLASS 3, 9/26

- Easter and the Great 50 Days
- Pentecost and Ascension
- The faith we sing

Assignments for 10/3

Liturgical Year, pp. 152-164; *Calendar*, pp. 100-104; “The Good Funeral: Recovering Christian Practices,” by Thomas Long, *The Christian Century*, Oct 6, 2009; the funeral/memorial service of your denomination’s service book, or a service from a local church

Reflection paper due 10/3

CLASS 4, 10/3

Reflection paper due today.

- The Easter Vigil; sunrise services
- Baptism and Communion
- Funerals and memorial services

Assignments for 10/17

Jewish Way, pp. 182-215; *Calendar*, pp. 79-90; *Liturgical Year*, pp. 100-128
Bring ideas for observing Lent in the local congregation.

NO CLASS MONDAY, OCT. 10, COLUMBUS DAY

CLASS 5, 10/17

- Forty Days of Discipline, Ash Wednesday
- Sundays in Lent
- The Lenten fast: give it up? Add it on?

Assignments for 10/24

Liturgical Year, pp. 129-57; *Calendar*, pp. 91-103; handout on dramatizing the Passion, and other handouts (a Christian seder?)

Reflection paper due 10/24

CLASS 6, 10/24

Reflection paper due today.

- Holy Week—Passion/Palm Sunday
- The Triduum
- Supersessionism, anti-Semitism in Holy Week.

Assignments for 10/31

Jewish Way, pp. 258-282; *Calendar*, pp. 105-118; *Liturgical Year*, pp. 70-94

CLASS 7, 10/31

- A word about All Hallows Eve
- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day
- Epiphany, Presentation, Baptism
- The “lost” season of revelation and discipleship

Assignments for 11/7

Calendar, pp. 121-132; *Liturgical Year*, pp. 58-69

Reflection paper due 11/7

CLASS 8, 11/7

Reflection paper due today.

- Advent: repentance, longing, hope...”Come, Baby Jesus!”
- Advent: The once and future Messiah—“Come, Lord Jesus!”
- Discussion: Pressures on the congregation in Advent

Assignments for 11/14

Calendar, pp. 133-140, 141-161; *Liturgical Year*, pp.95-99, 177-188, 189-212

CLASS 9, 11/14

- Life and worship in Ordinary Time
- Trinity Sunday, Christ the King
- The Sanctoral and All Saints Day

Assignments for 11/28

Bring ideas, experiences, examples of multi-generational approaches to the celebration of the Christian year.

Reflection paper 4 due.

NO CLASS MONDAY, NOV. 21, FALL BREAK

CLASS 10, 11/28

Reflection paper due today.

- The Christian Year and the formation of children and youth

Controversy Paper due 12/5

No additional assignment

CLASS 11, 12/5

Controversy Paper due

- Working with Music Directors, artists, poets, and others to plan seasonally excellent worship

Assignment for 12/12

Your reflections on the course, what you learned and will take away.

Seasonal Plan due 12/12

CLASS 12, 12/12

Seasonal Plan due

- Loose ends, end of semester reflections

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Summary of Due Dates

Assignments are due no later than

- 10/3 Reflection 1
- 10/24 Reflection 2
- 11/7 Reflection 3
- 11/28 Reflection 4
- 12/5 Controversy Paper
- 12/12 Seasonal Plan