Bangor Theological Seminary
Fall 2012 - PW 1601
Introduction to Christian Worship

Instructor: Rev. Martha Spong
Day and Time: Mondays, 1-4 p.m., Portland campus
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PW 1601
An exploration of the history, theology, and practice of Christian worship. Participants study their own denominational worship traditions and gain confidence in liturgical leadership. Required for all Master of Divinity Students. Prerequisites: At least one course in theology or church history or permission of instructor. Credits: 3

The goals of this course are:
1) To provide an overview of the history of Christian worship.
2) To explore the theological and Biblical foundations of worship and the sacraments.
3) To learn to prepare and lead a service of worship.
4) To reflect on the intersections and collisions between the way things have “always” been done and the faithful people God is calling to be.
5) To practice shaping worship creatively, with attention to all the elements of a service, the participation of the congregation and the importance of the context.

The course is directed toward the M.Div. goal of providing students with the tools, the knowledge, the confidence and the humility to shape and lead worship in a variety of settings and circumstances.

Evaluation will be based on the following assignments:
1) The preparation and leading of one complete worship service, given in class. More information about this assignment will be shared in class. (40%)
2) 4-5 page paper due 10/18 in response to Don Saliers’ “Worship Come to Its Senses.” (20%)
3) Brief weekly homework assignments, 1-2 pages, to be shared in class. (20%)
4) 2-3 page paper reporting on attendance at a worship service of another tradition, describing differences/similarities and the responses evoked by each. (10%)
5) Classroom exercises including writing liturgy and preparing creative presentation of scripture. (10%)

Grading:
Grading in this class will be A, B, C, D, F. Passing this course will depend on timely submission of all written material, reading of all assigned texts, full participation in class discussions, and the successful completion of the above assignments.
**Required Texts:**
Book of Worship from your denomination.

**Texts on Reserve for Supplemental Readings:**

Specific articles or chapters will be included in the schedule below and marked ***. There will likely be handouts as well.

**Other Texts of Interest in the Seminary Library**
Week #1 – September 10 – What is Worship?
Introduction to the course, with an overview of expectations.
Please bring one tangible item that speaks to who you are. We will use these as part of a worship experience.
Conversation: What is worship? How have you experienced it? We'll share some personal history of worship and any assumptions we have about our denominational traditions. (Later we'll discover whether they are true!)

Week #2 – September 17 – What is Christian Worship?
Required Reading:
- Duck, Chapter 1
- White, Preface and Chapter 1
- Miller, Chapters 1, 2 and 3
- ***Kapp, Preface and Chapter 1 (“Frames”)
- ***Blount and Tisdale, Chapter 5
Writing assignment:
- Option One—Tell a story about a ritual you've observed that was surprisingly important to the person or people performing it. It may or may not be a church experience.
- Option Two—Describe something or someone you've seen people worship, either inside or outside a church context, which was decidedly not God.
(1-2 pages)

Week #3 – September 24 – The Language of Time
Required Reading:
- Duck, Chapter 2
- White, Chapter 2
- Miller, Chapter 8
- Hickman, pages 1-36, “Prelude” and “Gathering”
- ***Kapp, Chapter 2
Writing assignment: Kapp describes the different frames used to mark the start and end of two contrasting worship services. How is the worship familiar to you framed? Of the two models Kapp shares, do you prefer one? (1-2 pages)

Week #4 – October 1 – The Language of Space
Required Reading:
- White, Chapter 3
- Duck, Chapter 3
- Miller, Chapter 4
- Hickman, pages 39-73, “Proclaiming”
  “Creating Sacred Space” – handout
Writing assignment: Reflect on a space that is sacred to you and compare or contrast it with your primary “official” worship space. (1-2 pages)

October 8 – Research Week – no class meeting
Be sure to look at the assignment for next week!
Week #5 – October 15 – Worship Come To Its Senses
Required Reading:
  Saliers, *Worship Come To Its Senses*
Writing assignment: Write a 4-5 page reflection paper on one or more of the senses Saliers describes. This is not a research paper. Share your impressions and experiences and reactions. We will talk about the papers in class.
Class Guest: The Reverend Stephen Carnahan, Pastor, High Street UCC in Auburn
In Class Exercise: Creative presentation of scripture for worship.

Week #6 – October 22 – The Sounds of Church Music
Required Reading:
  White, Chapter 4
  Duck, Chapter 8
  Miller, Chapters 9 and 10
  ***Blount and Tisdale, Chapter 11
  ***Wren, Chapters 2 and 10
Written assignment: From a hymnal in your tradition, choose five favorite hymns and five you dislike. Explain why for each hymn, with reference to musical style, theology expressed and/or worship experience. Some prompts: Do the hymns speak to our experience today? Are the words comprehensible in contemporary culture? Do you love an old hymn because it tugs your heart-strings? Brief answers are fine; we will look at the hymns and discuss them in class.
In-class Exercise: Writing accessible liturgy.

Week #7 – October 29 – Prayer: Daily, Public and Otherwise
Required Reading:
  White, Chapter 5
  Miller, Chapter 5
  Duck, Chapter 6
  Hickman, pages 77-111, “Responding”
  ***Kapp, Chapter 4
Written assignment: Bring in a prayer that you appreciate from any liturgical resource and write a paragraph to tell us why you like it.

Hour 3: Worship #1 – All Saints’ Day Service

Week #8 – November 5 – The Service of the Word
Required Reading:
  Duck, Chapter 5
  White, Chapter 6
  Miller, Chapter 11
  Book of Worship for your denomination, “Service of the Word”
Written assignment: Note the ways in which your local church adheres to or diverges from the service in your denominational resource. Bullet points are fine.

Hour 3: Worship #2 – Community Thanksgiving Service
Week #9 – November 12 – The Sacraments: God’s Love Made Visible
Required Reading:
  White, Chapter 7
  Duck, Chapter 4
  Miller, Chapter 12
  Hickman, pages 115 to 133, “Sealing”
Written assignment: Reflect on the way you relate to the sacraments and the range of “r” words that are sometimes used to reference them: Ritual, Renewal, Remembrance, Real Presence. Which speaks to you or informs your experience? Respond creatively if you wish, or in essay form.

Hour 3: Worship #3 – Interfaith service after a disaster

November 19 – Thanksgiving Break – no class meeting

Week #10 – November 26 – Christian Initiation
Required Reading:
  White, Chapter 8
  Miller, Chapter 7
  ***Galbreath, Leading Through the Water, p. 3-38
  ***Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, “Baptism”
Written Assignment: Pastors are frequently asked to baptize infants or children whose families have loose ties to the worshiping community. How would you respond to such a request? Reflect on the role of the faith community, the family and the pastor and on the action of the Holy Spirit in rites of Christian initiation. (2 pages)
Hour 3: Worship #4 – A worship service with a Baptism

Week #11 – December 3 – The Eucharist
Required Reading:
  White, Chapter 9
  Duck, Chapter 7
  Miller, Chapter 6
  ***Galbreath, Leading From the Table, Chapters 1 and 9
  ***Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, “Eucharist”
Written Assignment: What is the theology of the table in your denomination? Are the unbaptized welcome to share Communion? Are baptized children included before Confirmation? Are there other limitations? As a pastor, how would you react if someone came forward and you knew he or she did not meet the expectations? (2 pages)

Hour 3: Worship #5 – A worship service with Communion

Week #12 – December 10 – Occasional Services
Required Reading:
  White, Chapter 10
Written Assignment: Reflect on the relationship between worship and pastoral care. (2 pages)
Hour 2: Worship #6 – A funeral service for a child or young person

Hour 3: Discussion of funeral preparation and recovery.

**Week #13 – December 17 – Bringing It All Together**

Required Reading:
- Duck, Chapter 9
- Miller, Chapters 13 and 14
- Hickman, pages 137 to 158, “Bearing Out” and “Postlude”
- Kapp, Chapters 6 and 7

Written assignment: None this week. Come prepared to discuss the readings.

Hour 2: Worship #7 – A worship service in Advent

Hour 3: Closing and Evaluation