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WO 510 Worship Leadership in the Church

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WO510 Worship Leadership in the Church
Spring 2008
Professor: Dr. SweeHong Lim

IMPORTANT: This syllabus may be amended prior to the beginning of class.

FIRST THINGS

Welcome

Welcome to WO510 Worship Leadership in the Church. In a way the course is misnamed, I believe. It could be named, based upon what worship really is, as "How to lead the church in having a dress rehearsal for heaven." What a great opportunity we have in this class: to study leading the church into God's saving presence as we anticipate the quality of life we will enjoy in eternity!

The course will have a Star Wars quality to it as Darth Vader once told Luke Skywalker: "It is your destiny." Perhaps the Orthodox worship scholar, Alexander Schmemmann, said it a little better. According to Schmemmann, we are not primarily homo sapiens (people who know) but homo adorans (people who adore God). Our goal in this class will be to study different ways to fulfill our destiny in the church.

Contacting the professor:

Email:

This mode of communication is preferred. Always send email by clicking on the "to Professor" icon in the class folder. If the matter is really urgent, please say so in the subject line. You will get a faster response on emails if you mail them to this office inbox rather than the professor's general inbox.

Phone: (65) 8118 0715

Phone calls are possible though bear in mind the significant time difference. Singapore is +12 hours (Eastern Time) ahead of Kentucky during Daylight Saving and +13 hours (Eastern Time) during non-Daylight

Saving. Do note that the above number is an international call, and international phone charges will apply. If you are in the United States, do remember to prefix your call with 011.

Virtual office hours

I'll be checking in on our class every Tuesday, and Friday evenings (US Time) at a minimum.

Skype: lshshl (lower case of LSHSHL).

Internet chat including video conferencing is possible. Prior request for this mode of communication is required.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Here's what we will examine:

"Looking at the forest"

First we will examine large worship issues: biblical roots of Christian worship in the Bible, a theology for Christian worship, different orders for worship services, and having fullness in worship. These will occupy the first several modules.

"Looking at the trees"

In the last several modules we will look at specific issues for planning worship services and doing actual worship leadership: time and remembrance, space, music, prayer, the Lord's Supper, Baptism and initiation, and, finally, special services like weddings and funerals.

"Looking at the soil"

Using a new DVD resource called Living Worship, the worship of a specific church on the north side of Chicago, Ravenswood Covenant Church, will serve as the continuing context for our class. We'll continually ask the "And so?" question on course content as we apply our class to this vibrant urban congregation.

By the end of the course you should be able to:

Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of ways of Christian worship, together with self-critical perspective on one's own preferences and commitments in worship;

Enrich congregational worship in prayer, word, and sacraments; and
Make sound worship decisions based on historical, theological, and pastoral considerations;

Contexts and Presumptions:

I have designed this course in a way that presumes certain contexts and contains certain presumptions. First, this is a theological course. Its primary goal is Christian worship that is fully honorable to the God who has been revealed in Jesus Christ. In such it is connected to your other theology classes in that we seek to honor what we have been shown of God through Jesus Christ. The theological presumption is that we worship the Father through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Worship begins with Christ. In some ways our online discussions and exams will be most central to this concern.

The course is also intended to be related to the practice of ministry. What we do here is what I like to call "poetic theology," with poetic not just meaning the opposite of prose but creating out of theology. Worship and its leadership is where knowledge of God gets turned into prayer, into proclamation, into affections of the heart, and postures of the body. We'll seek to look at the creation and the assessment of these. Your videotapes and creative projects deal most directly with this aspect. Of course, we'll discuss these issues in the discussion center, too, as we walk through the modules.

I also designed the course with the presumption that we are not the only ones doing Christian worship. We've been at this for 2,000 years and there are Christians in a wide variety of cultures, showing a wide variety of pieties. You'll see something of the range of this vision particularly in the material on the DVDs. You'll also note that I encourage you in your final project to consider examining a church with which you have little familiarity.

Finally, I'll confess that I'm thoroughly Wesleyan and hope to offer a Wesleyan take on the biblical story. You'll see this seeping through in a variety of points, some less obvious and some more (we'll address specifically Wesleyan concerns in baptism, for example,

and the emphasis on a full remembrance of the biblical story will be a recurring theme in this class).

COURSE CONTENTS

Here's what we will read:

--[no author], *Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1997; ISBN 1-56212-257-6).

--Thomas G. Long, *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship* (The Alban Institute, 2001; ISBN 1-56699-240-0).

--Timothy J. Mulder, *So You've Been Asked To Lead in Prayer* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1996.)

--John D. Witvliet, *So You've Been Asked To Plan a Worship Service* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1999; ISBN 1-56212-393-9).

--John D. Witvliet, *So You've Been Asked To Lead a Worship Service* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1999; ISBN 1-52212-392-0).

--Other readings will be provided electronically through the e-reserves folder in the virtual Asbury campus (called "electronic reserves" everywhere below).

Note! Note!

It would be good to have, if you don't already have them, your denomination's worship book (or book with services) and official hymnal. We may not necessarily use them in our course, but if you are planning to serve in a particular denomination, it would be prudent for you to know their worship theology and praxis.

--For United Methodists, this is the *United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989) and the *United Methodist Book of Worship* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992; ISBN 0-687-03572-4).

--For Free Methodists, this is the *Pastor's Handbook* and your current hymnal.

--For Nazarenes, this is the latest edition of the Manual and your current hymnal.

--For Wesleyans, this is the latest edition of The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church and your current hymnal.

If you have any questions about your denomination's worship book and official hymnal, please contact your denominational publishing house. If you still need help, please contact me (click on the "to Professor" icon in the course folder).

Here's what else we will look at and listen to: lots of good stuff on DVDs

-- Every week you will be asked to look at and listen to stuff on the resource discs sent to you by Asbury Seminary as well as the e-resources located in the File on your course desktop. There you will find stuff like:

-- Short video clips of different worship services with written guides to tell you what to look for;

-- Short video clips of Prof. Ruth and others lecturing;

-- Longer video clips of Prof. Ruth showing how to do baptisms, Communion, weddings, and funerals from the Wesleyan/Methodist perspective;

-- Additional Powerpoint presentations and brief scholarly reflections by guest lecturers giving you their opinions to chew on and think about;

-- Songs to listen to.

These materials have been compiled and organized in modules (except for the longer video clips about how to do the special services, this will be made available via a web link). The material provides the raw data for our online discussions and, therefore should be reviewed/read/listened to even as each module is posted on every Wednesday.

We will also be using in this semester a test copy of a new DVD resource called Living Worship: Ravenswood Covenant Church. This is a not yet published educational resource that documents in a variety of ways the worship of an Evangelical Covenant Church on the north side of Chicago. Thinking through what it

means to plan and lead worship in this congregation will be our constant point of reference during the semester. You will need to pretend as if you were on the worship staff at this church. Do not duplicate any of the material on this DVD.

I'll send out a notice every Wednesday morning telling you what you need to look or listen to that week. In the meantime, as soon as you get the DVDs, look at the video clip with written guide in Module 1. We will hit the ground running, discussing Module 1 beginning Wednesday, February 13.

You will need to return all DVDs at the end of the semester by Friday, May 23.

ASSIGNMENTS

Here's what you do for your grade:

A. Weekly participation in the online discussions

During each module week, which runs from Wednesday 5 p.m. to the following Wednesday 4:59 p.m. (Eastern Time), you will need to post twice to satisfy participation requirements in this course.

- i) One response to my initial question/assignment for that module.
- ii) One response to a classmate's posting for that module in the discussion center.

Suggestions & Guidelines on Postings:

1. Posting an email that merely states "good point" to your classmates's posting does not count as a posting. I am looking for thoughtful comments/responses with theological-academic substance preferably expressed through a couple of sentences.

2. Strongly recommended that at least one of the required 2 postings be made in the first four days of the module (Wednesday through Saturday). One way to do that might be to post your response to my initial question/assignment early in the week, keep monitoring the threaded discussion all week long, and

then jumping in again toward the end of the week. Additional insightful postings are welcome.

3. At all times, please observe net etiquette, exercising God's grace and the fruit of the Spirit.

4. Strive hard for succinct postings and avoid casual chat as this is an theological-academic setting where time is a premium for everyone concerned.

5. Depending on the size of the class and the anticipated amount of postings, discussions may be conducted in smaller groups to facilitate the learning process and to possibly minimize the number of postings that students have to go through each week.

B. Tests

There will be two tests in this course.

--The first test will be accessible via the web starting on 12.01 p.m. (Eastern Time) Wednesday, March 5. It must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12. It will be a comprehensive, thorough, objective test on 2 books: Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture and Long's Beyond the Worship Wars. An email will be sent to you before the exam period providing information for accessing the online exam.

--The second test will be accessible via the web starting on 12.01 p.m. (Easter Time) Wednesday, May 14. It must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21. It will be an objective test on these materials found in the electronic reserves: a section from Bridge and Phyper's The Water That Divides, Wesley's passages on baptismal regeneration, Ted Campbell's essay on Wesley on baptism and conversion, and the 3 small booklets by Witvliet and Mulder (see the reading list above). An email will be sent to you before the exam period providing information for accessing the online exam.

Note! Note! Note! Note!

You can study as long as you would like but, once you start to take the tests, they are closed book. Do not look at a test before you start to take it. Give

yourself 2 1/2 hours maximum to take each test. Make sure you hit the submit button!

C. Project

A two-stage large semester project in which you evaluate a worship service of Ravenswood Covenant Church.

i. Goals

To give you a chance to show evidence of what you have learned, read, and discussed in the semester by having you evaluate your own assessment of a Ravenswood church's worship created at the beginning of the semester. This is a two stage assignment.

ii. The church and the service

You will be writing on the service on the Living Worship DVD labeled simply as the "Sunday Service." It is the third item down in the pull down list of all the videotaped services. The service lasts 1:03.

iii. The Initial Draft Assessment, part 1 of the assignment:

On Wednesday, February 27, submit a written assessment of the "Sunday Service" of Ravenswood Covenant Church on the Living Worship DVD. Describe it in as good and full a way as you can. You can be either positive or negative in your initial assessment. There is no "right" answer to be given. This initial assessment WILL NOT BE GRADED although it must be submitted. Do cover the following issues, at a minimum:

- a. the order of worship; the content of the service and the image of God it suggests;
- b. the types of actions/activities that were done in the service; the kinds and manner of praying;
- c. the worship space;
- d. the music;
- e. what you can tell about the sacraments/ordinances;
- f. how the service was led by the pastor/musicians/others; and to what degree the people participated in worship.

Note:

The professor will not provide any feedback on this initial assessment.

iv. The Final Evaluation, part 2 of the assignment:
Due: noon on Wednesday, May 7. Re-submit your original assessment (This portion does not count towards the page requirement of this final project). In this submission, include your own extended evaluation of the initial assessment, noting what you would now say about the worship of this church in light of the material we have read, seen, and discussed in the semester. You can critique what you said, affirm what you said, or nuance what you said. I am looking for evidence that you have understand the course material and can integrate this material in such a way as to keep to a deeper, more useful appraisal of Christian worship. In short, I am looking for advancement of understanding on the content of this course. I want to see if your understandings of worship in its various dimensions have improved by taking this course so that you evidence these course objectives: an ability to enrich congregational worship in prayer, word, and sacraments and the ability to make sound worship decisions based on historical, theological, and pastoral considerations. Do what you need to do in this final evaluation of your own initial work so as to demonstrate these things to the professor. Note that merely regurgitating what you think the "party line" is will not necessarily result in a high grade.

Length of the final project: no more than 20 pages double spaced.

Formatting: Use 12 point type, Times New Roman. Have all citations and notes as footnotes. For questions of citations and format, see Carole Slade, Form & Style, 11th edition or Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers.

GRADING

Here's how I will allocate grades and assess work:
Test: each test value at 30% of your grade making 60% cumulative of your semester grade;
Large semester project: 40% of your grade; See below for more details about what I'll be looking for.

Here's what the letter grades mean:

See page 28 in the 2000-2001 ATS catalog.

A = exceptional (notice the word) work. Thus this will be an exceptional grade.

B = good (notice the word) work. Good is good. Sleep soundly with this grade.

C = acceptable work.

D = marginal work.

+ and - will also be given, e.g., a B+ is a possible grade.

What the grades will mean in the grand scheme of things: not all that much. I am much more interested in the increase of your wisdom than in you racking up a particular grade. The real test of what you gain in this class will be seen in 5 years when you are leading worship someplace. I won't be able to test the quality of your work then (and thus I must give you a grade now) but God can. Take advantage of this course to its fullest given your current life situation, regardless of what your final grade ends up being, in order to show yourself an approved worker down the road.

SUMMARY OF DUE DATES

--Every module week: at least two times of interaction, including one in the first four days.

--Wednesday, February 27: part 1 of the semester project,

--Wednesday, March 5: access to the first exam is possible

--Wednesday, March 12: last day to take the first exam

--Wednesday, May 7: second part of the project due, your own assessment of your original draft evaluation

--Wednesday, May 14: access to the second exam is possible

--Wednesday, May 21: last day to take the second exam

--Friday, May 23: by this date all media should have been returned to the seminary

Penalty for Tardy Work

Every day that an assignment is late will result in the loss of a letter grade per day on that assignment unless an extension has been requested ahead of time and granted for reasons beyond the control of the student.

Reading schedule

There is no precise reading schedule for the books and pamphlets listed as required reading. A guide will be made available through the modules. Since you will be tested on some of these readings on certain dates, do plan your reading carefully.

Module schedule

February 13-20

Worship as a community's activity

February 20-27

Worship and the Bible

February 27-March 5

Theology of Worship

March 5-12

Developing a vocabulary for assessing worship

March 12-19

Orders of worship

March 19-26

Fullness in worship

March 26-31

Time, remembrance and the calendar

(March 31- April 4 is Spring break reading week.)

April 9-16

Space

April 16-23

Music

April 23-30

Prayer

April 30-May 7
The Lord's Supper

May 7-14
Baptism

May 14-21
Weddings and Funerals

If you need help from the Asbury staff:

ExL Contact Information:

For general questions and administrative assistance
regarding the ExL program, contact Dale Hale:

ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: (859) 858-2393

For technical support, library research support,
library loans, and ExL media contact Information
Commons:

Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: (859) 858-2233

Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

Accessing Information Commons Materials:

1. General Questions:

The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all
student research, circulation and technical needs. The
Information Commons hours are posted here:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/hours.shtml>.

2. Materials Requests:

To search the library catalog for available materials,
click here:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml>

ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed
attachments of journal articles/reference books from
Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business
days for all requests to be filled. Contact the
Information Commons for costs and instructions on how
to make requests.

ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:

ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help choosing a paper topic, determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST: SOME IMPORTANT HOUSEKEEPING CONCERNS FOR THIS COURSE

The first week

Hopefully, you will have looked at this syllabus before the first week of class. I will want everyone to introduce themselves to other class members early during the first week of the semester. I'll post a notice for when it is time to do so.

IMPORTANT NOTE on reproducing course materials

The development of all extended learning material, whether online or by other media, is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by exclusive permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the internet or elsewhere. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from Professor Lester Ruth.

Information on contacting Professor Lester Ruth
Phone: 859-858-2175 or 859-219-9166.
Email: Lester_Ruth@asburyseminary.edu
Wilmore campus: Beeson Center 218

Final thoughts

The song of the twenty-four elders before the throne of God in heaven: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

The song offered to the Lamb in heaven: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

The word "worship" comes from combining worthy and -ship. It is all about coming to recognize the worth of God through Jesus Christ. I pray that God will use our class for that purpose.