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WO 510 Worship Leadership in the Church

Lester Ruth

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Syllabus

Course: WO510 W1 (SP 2009)
Title: Worship Leadership/Church
Hours: 3.00
Published: Yes, on 01/26/2009
Prerequisites:

None

Department: Worship
Faculty: Dr. Lester Ruth



Email: lester.ruth@asburyseminary.edu
 Office: BC
 SPO: 937

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Wednesday and Friday from 1:00p to 2:15p in M302.

Maximum Registration: 40

Catalog Description: This course lays the foundation for the ministry of the whole congregation in corporate worship. Biblical, theological, historical, and practical focus is brought to bear on the elements of prayer, Scripture, music, and proclamation in terms of the design of services, the keeping of time, and worship space. Attention is given to interpreting, planning, and presiding at the church's principal worship services, sacraments, weddings, and funerals.

Objectives:

WO510 Worship Leadership in the Church
 Spring 2009; Wednesday/Fridays 1:00-2:15 p.m.
 Professor: Dr. Lester Ruth

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:

- Phone: 859-858-2175 or 859-219-9166. Phone calls are always preferred over emails.
- Email: lester.ruth@asburyseminary.edu. You likely will get a quicker response if you note the course number in the subject line.
- Office: Beeson Center 218
- Office hours: Wednesdays 2:30-5:30. Other times can be scheduled.

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 theology 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:

These required books and pamphlets, some of which are very short.

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

--Norma deWaal Malefyt and Howard Vanderwell, *Designing Worship Together: Models and Strategies for Worship Planning* (The Alban Institute, 2005; ISBN 1-56699-296-6)

--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).

We will also use these collateral books. Students should acquire 1 (one) of the following three books, based on the following descriptions. We will use these books for a class discussion on Wednesday, April 22.

Musicians should acquire either:

--Debra Rienstra and Ron Rienstra, *Worship Words: Discipling Language for Faithful Ministry* (Baker Academic, 2009; ISBN 978-0-8010-3616-3) [Description: A careful, well-written look at the role and use of language for praying, singing, and preaching in the worship practices of the church. It will lead to a renewed appreciation of the beauty and power of words in worship.]; or

--Greg Scheer, *The Art of Worship: A Musician's Guide to Leading Modern Worship* (Baker Books, 2006; ISBN 978-0-8010-6709-X) [Description: From a practicing musician's point of view, this book investigates both the practical how-to's to the various musical dimensions of leading and preparing for worship, presented with theological substance]

Non-musicians should acquire either:

--Debra Rienstra and Ron Rienstra, *Worship Words: Discipling Language for Faithful Ministry* (Baker Academic, 2009; ISBN 978-0-8010-3616-3) [see above for a description]; or

--Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (IVP Academic, 2006; ISBN 978-0-8308-2763-3) [Description: Written from a solid evangelical perspective, this Singapore theologian lays out a great theology of the church as the basis for seeing what worship truly is and can be.]

--Other readings will be provided electronically on the Virtual Campus website.

•Note! Note! 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 won't necessarily use them much in class, but they are good books to own and we will occasionally make reference to them in class.

--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.

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

You will be asked to look at and listen to material on the resource DVDs checked out by you from Information Commons.

These will be called the "class DVDs" whenever I refer to them below. On these class DVDs you will find stuff like:

- short video clips of different worship services;
- short video clips of Prof. Ruth or others lecturing;
- songs to listen to.

This material has been compiled and organized in modules which will guide the flow of our class. The class preparation guides will tell you what to look at and when.

We will also be using 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. Rather than list all the particular assignments for this resource in the syllabus, which would dramatically increase its size, I'll be sending out assignments through the semester, giving them to you several weeks ahead of time. At the end of the semester, I will be asking for feedback on the resource and how it might be improved for publication and widespread distribution. Do not duplicate any of the material on this DVD.

You will need to return all DVDs at the end of the semester by May 15.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Here's what you do for your grade:

•3 tests

--The first test will be accessible via the web starting on 12:01 a.m. on Friday, February 27. It must be completed by Friday, March 6, 11:59 p.m. It will be an objective test on the 3 booklets by Witvliet and Mulder (see the reading list above) and an essay test on the article by Robert Taft (provided on electronic reserves in the Virtual Classroom) entitled "What does Liturgy Do?," the lecture by Robert Webber (on the class DVDs in Module 3) entitled "Ancient-Future Worship: content," and the lecture by Dr. Ruth (on the class DVDs in Module 3) entitled "Module 3 Theology of Worship." The weight of this test will be the essay questions on the Taft, Webber, and Ruth materials. An email will be sent to you before the exam period providing the link and password to access the exam.

--The first test will be accessible via the web starting on 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, March 26. It must be completed by 11:59 a.m. (Eastern Time) on Tuesday, April 7. It will be a comprehensive, thorough, objective test on these books: Long's Beyond the Worship Wars and Malefyt's and Vanderwell's Designing Worship Together. An email will be sent to you before the exam period providing the link and password to access the exam.

--The third test will be accessible via the web starting at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, May 15. It must be completed by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on Friday, May 22. It will be an objective test on this material: a section from Bridge and Phyper's The Water That Divides (electronic reserves), Wesley's passages on baptismal regeneration (electronic reserves), and Ted Campbell's essay on Wesley on baptism and conversion (electronic reserves). Another email will be sent to you ahead of the exam providing the link and password to access the exam.

Note! Note! Note! Note! You can study as long as you would like but, once you start to take the on-line 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!

•A two-stage large semester project in which you evaluate a worship service of Ravenswood Covenant Church. More information will be given below. The first stage will be due on Wednesday, February 18 and the second in class on Friday, May 1.

Here's how I will allocate grades and assess work:

- 3 tests: first test=25%; second test=25%; third test=20%;
- Large semester project: 30% of your semester grade; See below for more details about what I'll be looking for.

Summary of due dates:

- Wednesday, February 18: part 1 of the semester project, a draft evaluation of Ravenswood's Sunday service
- Friday, February 27: access to the first exam is possible
- Friday, March 6: last day to take the first exam
- Thursday, March 26: access to the second exam is possible
- Tuesday, April 7: last day to take the second exam
- Wednesday, April 22: class discussion of collateral reading
- Friday, May 1: part 2 of the semester project due, your own assessment of your original draft evaluation
- Friday, May 15: by this date all media should be returned to the seminary
- Friday, May 15: access to the third exam is possible
- Friday, May 22: last day to take the third exam

Here's what the letter grades mean:

See 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.

Policy on Late/Tardy work

Graded assignments which are late will be accepted but please recognize the penalty in doing so. Every calendar day an assignment is late will result in the loss of one qualitative level (e.g., from an A to a B) for that assignment. Late assignments can be emailed or uploaded through the links on the website. The professor will not provide any feedback on late assignments. Note that online exams have strict deadlines for submission.

In the case of absence due to illness or emergency, an assignment can be turned in without penalty after the time it was due. This tardiness must be arranged with the professor. Please arrange with him ahead of time if you will be turning an assignment in late due to these reasons.

More information on the large semester project:

- 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.

- 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.

- The initial draft assessment, part 1 of the assignment: On Wednesday, February 18, 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: the order of worship; the content of the service and the image of God it suggests; the types of actions/activities that were done in the service; the worship space; the kinds and manner of praying; the music; what you can tell about the sacraments/ordinances; how the service was led by the pastor/musicians/others; and how and how much the people participated in worship. The professor will not provide any feedback on this initial assessment.

- The final evaluation, part 2 of the assignment: In class on Friday, May 1, submit your original assessment again. This time include your own extended evaluation of this 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.

- The length of the final project: no more than 30 pages double spaced.

- Formatting: Use 10-12 point type, Times New Roman. Put any notes as footnotes. For questions of citations, see Carole Slade, Form & Style, 11th edition or Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers.

More information on the class discussion of collateral reading:

By Wednesday, April 22, each student should have read one of the 3 collateral texts listed above. On this day, bring to class a 1 page reading report which answers the following questions: What is the overall aim of this book? What does the text assume? Did you see points of contact between this book and other materials from the class? What was the most helpful point of the book? What was the least helpful?

On that day, we will dedicate the class to discussing these three books, first working in small groups and then talking as a whole class. Come ready to discuss the books.

SCHEDULES

Preparation and reading schedules

Because of the bulkiness of referring to materials in the Living Worship DVD, separate guides for class preparation will be posted ahead of time in the Virtual Classroom.

Similarly, these class preparation guides will provide the reading schedule. Remember that some of the other material ought to be read in time to prepare for the exams. (See above under grading and assignments.)

Module schedule (the flow of the semester)

Our modules will guide the flow of the semester. The material on the class DVDs will be coordinated with the Living Worship DVD to provide the course's basic content. We'll also spend time in class integrating in our readings. You'll need to look at both to be prepared for class. Guides for each class period will be provided in the Virtual Classroom. Here are the modules and their respective topics you can get a sense of what we'll cover this semester:

Module 1: Worship as a community's activity

Module 2: Worship and the Bible

Module 3: Theology of Worship

Module 4: Developing a vocabulary for assessing worship

Module 5: Orders of worship

Module 6: Fullness in worship

Module 7: Time, remembrance, and the calendar

Module 8: Space

Module 9: Music

Module 10: Prayer

Module 11: The Lord's Supper

Module 12: Baptism

Module 13: Weddings and Funerals

A 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 my 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 the professor (Lester Ruth)." Thanks for honoring these instructions.

The following is information regarding the technical online aspects of the course.
Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into <http://one.asburyseminary.edu> and clicking on the Virtual Campus tab (upper right corner) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The Course Information Center contains many features to be used throughout the semester:

- a) Course News and Announcements, where I will post items important for the entire class;
- b) Syllabus, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
- c) To Professor, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
- d) Course Questions, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
- e) Prayer Forum, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
- f) Open Forum, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

2. Modules, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.

3.
Virtual Support Contact Information

For technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media contact Information Commons:
Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program, contact Dale Hale:
ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2393

Accessing Information Commons Materials

1. General Questions:

a. 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/information/hours.htm>

2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here:
<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm>

b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of 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.

c. Virtual 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:

a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help 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:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm> 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).

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Appendix A

(Sheet to be used in giving feedback on opening and closing exercises.)

Review of worship presidency

Name: _____
Date: _____ Occasion: _____

Where your presiding was especially strong (a checkmark indicates it was):

What Where especially:

- _____ good use of voice, variety in pitch and tone _____
- _____ good projection of voice _____
- _____ prayers, even if written, seemed liked prayers _____
- _____ helpful positioning of yourself to conduct service _____
- _____ helpful positioning of others _____
- _____ graceful gestures and expressions _____
- _____ graceful use of body and posture _____
- _____ good use of strong signs and symbols _____

Where your presiding could be stronger:

- _____ using a monotone in voice _____
- _____ not projecting your voice adequately _____
- _____ not giving time for silence _____
- _____ not using large gestures and large signs _____
- _____ placing people so as to block sight lines _____
- _____ being locked in one place _____
- _____ praying seemed more like reading than praying _____
- _____ excessive wordiness and explaining _____
- _____ did not use the important prayers _____
- _____ anomalies/unusual practices: _____

specifically:

Did the student avoid the common big mistakes?

#1 big mistake: failing the "sound down" test: if one turned the sound all the way off as you presided, could one tell by gestures, facial expressions, body posture, direction of gaze, etc. what you were doing (praying, challenging, blessing, inviting, instructing, etc.) and to whom you were talking (God, the congregation, the recipients of the rite, etc.)? If you turned the sound all the way off, does your body shows that you realize you are in God's holy and gracious presence?

Comments:

#2 big mistake: being immersed in the words: this is often tied to the first mistake; the book is there to be a guide but our eyes were meant to gaze toward God and to make contact with other people; put the book down in a convenient place so you can use your hands, too.

Comments:

General comments on graciousness and gracefulness in presidency