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CH 650 The Book of Common Prayer across The Centuries

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The purpose of the course is to survey the Book of Common Prayer from the sixteenth century, through succeeding three centuries, through the ecumenical liturgical movement of the twentieth century, to the present-day book authorized by the Episcopal Church in 1979. The British churches will provide the major focus up to the latter years of the eighteenth century when, in post-revolutionary North America, Anglicans first begin to modify the exclusively British setting and character of the Prayer Book. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to relate the developments of this distinctive tradition with those in other parts of the larger Christian community. The course will review and analyze the historical development of liturgy, including rite, ceremony, music, and architectural surroundings. Throughout, attention will be given to the relation of community worship to personal devotion and to the character of the larger community in which liturgy is celebrated.

The central focus of class sessions will be the discussion of successive texts from the Prayer Books in relation with the dominant and demotic discourses of the society for which they were intended. Emphasis will be given to “the regular services appointed for public worship” in the Episcopal Church: the Holy Eucharist and Daily Morning and Evening Prayer” although attention will given from time to time to the Litany and the Pastoral Offices. Readings on the historical development and the theological assumptions and implications of the Prayer Book will be read by participants during the course of the semester.

Requirements

Optional: Since the development of the Prayer Book is closely linked with the on-going story of the Anglican communion of churches, some students may wish an overview of their history. One such brief survey can be found in the essays by William P. Haugaard and Perry Butler in The Study of Anglicanism, pp. 3-51 (rev. edn., ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, & Jonathan Knight Fortress Press, 1998).

Weekly reading and class discussion:

Selections from the Prayer Books as assigned for each class except for 8 February and 17 May. These are available from the website: “justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/"

Students are asked to print out the on-line materials; collect them in a folder cumulatively, bringing them each week for reference during class discussion. For the first three Prayer Books, some may wish to substitute library or second-hand copies of The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI (Everyman’s Library, E. P. Dutton, 1910) and The Elizabethan Prayer Book, ed. John Booty (University Press of Virginia, 1976).
Occasional other selected readings.

Each week instructor will suggest a list of questions to be considered in the selections of the following week and students will be assigned those to which they will be expected to pay special attention and to prepare such notes that will enable them initiate class discussion on the questions.

**Reading and reports during course of semester:**

Each of the following assignments (from a personal, borrowed, or library volume) should be completed during the semester. A written report of 500 to 700 words [strictly calibrated] concerning any one of the assignments will be due on each of the following dates: February 22, March 15, April 12, and May 3. The reports should respond to one or more of the following questions:

1. What interested you most in this selection?
2. What most surprised you in the author’s account of the Prayer Books?
3. What was most suggestive in the book for current Prayer Book worship?
4. What insights might be significant for congregational users of the BCP?
5. To what extent do you judge this work to be a useful reference in your future ministry?
6. What do you find in this reading that illuminates the 1979 Book of Common Prayer?

William Sydnor, *The Prayer Book through the Ages* (Morehouse, 1997)

**Final Essay:**

An essay of 2500 to 3000 words on a chosen topic of Prayer Book history should be prepared and distributed through First Class e-mail transmission to all class participants by on or before Monday, 14 May. The essays will be discussed in class during the final session in examination week. No examination will be given in this course.

Essay Topics are to be submitted to instructor for approval by 26 April.

**Grading:**
The final grade will be based on knowledge of the texts discussed and their significance as indicated in class discussions (60%), the four reading reports (20%) and the final paper (20%).
Session Topics and Readings

I. Sixteenth century beginnings  (February 8 – March 8)

February 10: An outline of Anglicanism through the centuries
Worship in the western Church in 1500 and liturgical reform in continental
Europe in the 16th century

February 17: English Litany and the first Book of Common Prayer: the Eucharist
Readings [Litany & Eucharist]:
Items to be downloaded, read, and brought to class either on a laptop or in printed
out hard copy [not necessary to copy any of the explanatory materials; only
original text]:
1544 Litany [not necessary to copy lengthy Exhortation]
1548 Order of Communion
From the 1549 Book of Common Prayer:
The Contents
A Preface [also on pp. 866-867 of 1976 BCP]
The Introit, Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for Sexagesima Sunday
The Supper of the Lord . . . commonly called the Masse
From the Book of Common Prayer Noted [1550]
Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei

February 24: The first Book of Common Prayer: Daily Office and Baptism
Readings [Daily offices, lectionary, and Baptism]
From the 1549 Book of Common Prayer:
A Table and Calendar
Matins and Evensong
Baptism
Of Ceremonies.
Certein notes
From the Book of Common Prayer Noted [1550]
Lord’s Prayer, Suffrages, and Collects from Matins

March 1: Further liturgical reform: the 2nd Book of Common Prayer
Readings [Daily offices, Eucharist, and Baptism]
From the 1552 Book of Common Prayer
The Contents
The Preface
Of Ceremonies
Proper Psalms and Lessons for diverse Feasts
Morning Prayer & Evening Prayer
Order for the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion
Baptism

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March 8: The Elizabethan settlement: shaped by the 3rd Book of Common Prayer as the reign begins; articulated theologically by Richard Hooker as it ends, and reaffirmed by the 4th Book of Common Prayer in the beginning of the reign of James I

Readings: [Daily Offices, Eucharist, and Baptism]
From the 1559 [and 1604] Book of Common Prayer
Act for Uniformity
Proper lessons for Sundays and Holy Days
The Order where Morning . . . Prayer shall be used and said
Opening rubric of Morning Prayer
Litany [only through the “Good Lord, deliver us” petitions from the beginning and the final prayers beginning with that for the Queen]
Holy Communion [only from the Sanctus through the final rubrics]
Baptism in “Private houses” [from beginning to the Minister’s declaration that opens, “I certify . . .”]
The 1603 Millenary Petition [I will post a copy on the class website]

From R. Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, to be found at website “anglicanhistory.org/hooker/.” The website copy has been taken from the standard 19th century edition of The Works of Richard Hooker by John Keble (7th edn), and sections of it are indexed in the website by page numbers of the three volumes)

Book V, chapters 22 (II, pp. 88-115), 50 (II, pp. 219-220); and 57 (II, pp. 255-259)

II. British and North America Churches Respond to the New Contexts of the 17th & 18th Centuries (March 15 – April 12)

III. Oxford and Liturgical Movements Challenge Prayer Book Liturgies in the 19th and 20th Centuries (April 19 - May 10)

IV. Discussion of Final Essays (May 17)