Instructor: April Stace Vega, Ph.D.

Course Description

In congregational worship, our joys, sorrows, and hopes as a community – as the Church – are given their true and proper place, which is at the feet of Christ. We do not come to congregational worship merely to “feel good” or anesthetize ourselves against the stormy billows of life, but to enter more deeply and honestly into the mystery of God-with-us.

Yet, worship is always situated in different times, places and cultural contexts. This class explores how the content, form, and styles of worship are enlivened through intentional and theologically-grounded worship design. We will explore a variety of perspectives on issues such as music, the use of visual arts, the use of technology in worship, the church year, worship and evangelism, sacraments and ordinances, worship and conflict, worship and social justice, and liturgical spirituality.

Worship renewal is not about just “performing it better” but about walking with our congregations into transformative encounters with God and with one another. We’ll learn from the past and from each other as we all work towards this goal.

Textbooks Required (in course order):

ISBN: 0802841023

ISBN: 0814629687

ISBN: 0664234275

ISBN: 0334029678

Other readings will be provided by the professor.
Learning Goals of Course:
This course provides students with a forum in which to examine the theological foundations for Christian worship, and develop ways to analyze and create patterns and tools for the practice of worship in a variety of Christian contexts.

By the end of this course, students should be able to articulate a theological and aesthetical foundation for the art of public Christian worship, analyze the structure of the order of worship, and ponder the various forms and styles of music and arts that can be used in relation to a given public service.

It is also an aim for this course that students relate this knowledge to a practical expression of the ministry of worship in relation to the other ministries of the church in a particular church setting, and gain a distinct cultural sensitivity that will prepare her/himself to respect and value the tradition of others and her/his own.

Assessments and Expectations
Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussion, give a presentation about a site visit, write regular journal entries about class readings and discussions, and write one research paper on a topic of choice.

Office Hours
The instructor does not live in CT, therefore, office hours will be limited to class days. However, the instructor is available by email and, if necessary, by phone.

Attendance Policy
Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing one session will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing two or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

Email Policy
The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your Hartsem email account regularly.

Class Schedule

September 15.

**For this class, each student should bring one article to class about a faith community engaging in new worship practices. The article does not have to be from a scholarly source; newspaper is fine. Be prepared to share with the class and discuss.**

Duck, Ch. 14

“Chicago Spiritual Communities Think Outside the Box” *Chicago Sun Times*

“Too Busy For Church on Ash Wednesday” *New York Daily.*


Burnim, “Conflict and Controversy in Black Religious Music”

Mann, *The Power of Song*, excerpts

**Due: In-class writing assignment**

**October 13**

**Liturgical spirituality. Worship and spiritual formation. Liturgy and social justice/social transformation.**


James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, excerpts.


**Due: Reflection Paper #1**
October 27

Music, visual arts, architecture, preaching, worship leading, corporate prayers, use of technology.


Chapter 1 in *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*

“Fitting Technology into Worship,” ch. 5 in *High-Tech Worship*, Quentin J. Schultze.

Eileen D. Crowley. *Liturgical Art for a Media Culture*.

DUE: Reflection Paper #2 and presentation about visit to faith community.

November 10

Special Services and the Church Year. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper/Eucharist.

“Praise and Lament in the Psalms and in Liturgical Prayer,” in *Worship Seeking Understanding*, John D. Witvliet -

Duck, Ruth C. Chs. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Ellis, Christopher. Excerpts from *Gathering*

Irwin, Kevin. Excerpts from *Models of the Eucharist*.

DUE: Paper Topics and in-class collaborative worship planning project.

December 8


Chap 1 in *Rivals or a Team* (Guenther)

“Not Rite Now” D. R. Whitt *An African-American Church?*

Chapter 3 in Ruth C. Duck

Excerpts from *Mek Some Noise*

**DUE: Final Paper**