

Canadian Mennonite University/MB Seminary
BTS-4495M / BTS-5310M
Christian Worship: Patterns and Practices

Course Syllabus
Spring-Summer, 2021
May 3-7, 2021 (Hybrid format)

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I Course Description

An introduction to the shape and content of congregational worship, exploring faithful and vital expressions of worship throughout history and in contemporary practice. The course will also examine some of the challenges and opportunities facing worshipping communities and explore recent movements in worship renewal.

II Objectives

- 1 To enable the student to appreciate, plan and evaluate services of Christian worship intelligently and sensitively, and, with this end in view,
- 2 To encourage reflective consideration of the nature and patterns of Christian worship in the light of Scripture, theology, and history,
- 3 To enable the student to gain an understanding of the elements and practices of worship and reflect on various approaches to their expression.

III Course Outline

This course will explore the following areas of study. (A detailed course outline will be made available on Moodle.)

- 1 Developing a common vocabulary
- 2 Looking around: where do we find ourselves?
- 3 What does scripture tell us about worship?
- 4 Traditional and contemporary patterns for worship
- 5 Threats to a biblical understanding of worship
- 6 Holding it together: dialectical tensions in worship
- 7 Paths to faithful and vital expressions of worship

IV Textbooks

- 1 Cherry, Constance M. *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designed Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. (ISBN 978-0-8010-3874-7)
- 2 Cospers, Mike. *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013. (ISBN 978-1-4335-3342-6)

Supplemental Readings (170 pages)

- 1 Ruth, Lester. "A Rose by Any Other Name: Attempts at Classifying North American Protestant Worship." https://iws.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Ruth_Essay.pdf
- 2 Smith, James K.A. "Call to Worship: An Invitation to Be Human" in chapter 5 "Practicing (for) the Kingdom," 159-166
- 3 Robbie Castleman. Chapter 4 "The Shape of Biblical Worship," *Story-Shaped Worship*, 77-94
- 4 John Jefferson Davis. "Reality in Worship: The Real Presence of God on Sunday Morning," in *Worship and the Reality of God*, 97-104.
- 5 Williams, Stuart Murray. "Multi-Voiced Worship," *Anabaptist Mennonite Network* at <https://amnetwork.uk/resource/multi-voiced-worship/>
- 6 Robbie Castleman. Chapter 10 "Contemporary Patterns for Christian Worship," in *Story-Shaped Worship*, 186-206.
- 7 John Jefferson Davis. "Concluding Reflections: Advantages of More Frequent Communion," *Worship and the Reality of God*, 164-170.
- 8 Constance Cherry, "The Importance of Dialogical Movements in Worship," *The Music Architect*, 72-89.
- 9 Morgenthaler, Sally. "Step Three: Defining Worship," *Worship Evangelism*, 43-53.
- 10 Mark Labberton, "False Dangers," "Real Dangers," *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, 41-77.
- 11 Perez, Adam. Chapter 4 "Rethinking the Planning Process," *Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship*, 39-50.

V Assignments - Summary

1	Reading Response	10%	Due: May 3 (8:30am)
2	Participation	10%	Due: May 7 (4:00pm)
3	Reading Log	20%	Due: June 25 (12pm)
4	Final Project		
	a. Description and Analysis	20%	Due: June 4 (12pm)
	b. Project Proposal	5%	Due: June 4 (12pm)
	c. Research Paper	25%	Due: July 16 (12pm)
	d. Practical suggestions	10%	Due: July 16 (12pm)

Assignments – Details

1. Reading response (10%)

Read “A Rose by Any Other Name: Attempts at Classifying North American Protestant Worship” by Dr. Lester Ruth.

Keep in mind the following questions as you read:

- What types of classification categories do you hear when people discuss worship?
- With which of the four initial taxonomies in this article are you most familiar? Do you agree with Dr. Ruth’s assessment of their strengths and weaknesses?
- How useful do you find Dr. Ruth’s new approaches to classifying worship?
- How would you assess your worship according to Dr. Ruth’s new methods of classification?

Write a 4-page (1200 word) response and bring it with you on the first day of class (Monday, May 3).

2. Participation (10%)

Regular attendance and engagement in this course are critical. Classes will frequently be conducted in a seminar format, during which students will be called upon to contribute to the learning of the whole group. These contributions will include discussing the reading assignments and reflecting personally on the material being covered in class.

On the last day of classes, students will be asked to provide a self-assessment of their participation in the classes, based on a tool that the professor will hand out earlier. This self-assessment will provide the professor with a more holistic and objective way of grading each student’s participation during the week.

3. Reading Log (20%)

Read a minimum of 100 additional pages in each of four different books from among those listed in the bibliography below. Clearly identify the pages read, and then offer a 1-page (300 word) response to each reading, focusing on the following questions:

- What have I learned about worship from this reading?
- What are the implications of what I have learned about worship for my worship setting?

Due Friday, June 25 (12 noon).

4. Final project (60%)

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|-----------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| a. Description and analysis | 20% | Due: June 4 (12 noon) |
| b. Project proposal | 5% | Due: June 4 (12 noon) |
| c. Research paper | 25% | Due: July 16 (12 noon) |
| d. Practical suggestions | 10% | Due: July 16 (12 noon) |

a. Description and analysis (25%)

(Note: the groundwork for this assignment will begin in class, May 3-7.)

1. Outline the movement and general content of a typical worship order in your congregation. It might be helpful to begin by simply listing worship activities in order.

For example, “we sing, then we pray, then we read scripture,” etc. Note: If your church has had to make a lot of unusual changes during the pandemic, you may choose to work with pre-pandemic patterns instead.

2. Look beyond the individual activities to identify the underlying organizational framework or “deep structure” beneath the worship order. What are the foundational movements of your worship services?

3. Analyze your worship through each of the following ‘lenses’:

- the six biblical principles of worship we examined in class. Do you see evidence of each of these principles? What is being done well? What might be missing or undervalued?
- the various dialectical tensions we identified in class. What insights into your worship do you gain from an analysis of these tensions in your worship context?
- the potential threats to biblical worship and/or worship music we noted in class (or additional ones you come across in your reading after classes end). Which of these threats might be of concern in your worship context?

4. Consider the form your worship services are taking during the pandemic. How has the move to virtual worship impacted the content and “deep structure” of worship in your congregation? What has been gained? What has been lost?

(Note: If you are not presently part of a congregation, speak with the professor about an alternate way to do this assignment.)

Summarize your observations and analysis in a 10-page (3000 word) paper and submit it via Moodle no later than Friday, June 4 at 12 noon.

b. Research proposal (5%)

Based on your observations and analysis, identify a topic you would like to explore further on behalf of your worshiping community. Your topic might relate to a specific worship practice (for example, the role of the Gathering, the practice of the Lord’s Supper, the use of scripture, the role of intercessory prayer, the observance of the Christian calendar, the use of silence, specific issues related to worship music, etc.) or a larger issue (for example, the “deep structure” of your service, congregational engagement, God as the Subject of worship, the “story” told in worship, etc.). Try to choose a topic that represents an area of challenge or concern in your worship context.

Write up a 1-page (300 word) proposal which outlines your choice of topic along with a brief rationale. Submit it via Moodle no later than Friday, June 4 at 12 noon.

The class will meet via Zoom in early June (date/time TBD) to share findings and receive feedback on research proposals.

c. Research paper (25%)

Write an 8-page paper (2400 words) which explores the topic identified by you in your approved research proposal. Your paper should include careful theological, biblical and historical study, drawing on required readings and additional research. The bibliography below can help guide you.

d. Practical suggestions (10%)

Based on your research and on your knowledge of your worshiping community, write up a 2-3-page (600-900 word) strategy for how your congregation might successfully engage, strengthen or re-imagine the particular worship practice or principle you have studied.

(If you are not presently part of a congregation, speak with the professor about an alternate way to do this assignment.)

Submit completed research papers and practical suggestions on Moodle no later than Friday, July 16 at 12 noon. The class will meet shortly afterward on Zoom (date and time TBD) to share findings and suggestions.

Note: Although not all these assignments are strictly academic in genre (e.g. reflections, proposals), all assignments should conform to academic standards of formatting and of citing sources (cf. details below).

VI Grade Scale

Equivalency chart of letter grades to numerical and percentage grades.

Letter grade Evaluation	Grade points	Percentage	Subjective
A+	4.5	95-100	Exceptional
A	4	88-94	Excellent
B+	3.5	81-87	Very Good
B	3	74-80	Good
C+	2.5	67-73	Satisfactory
C	2	60-66	Adequate
D	1	50-59	Marginal
F	0	less than 50	Failure

Letter Grade Descriptions:

A+ Exceptional. Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill or great originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

A Excellent. Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a high degree of skill and/or some elements of originality in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

B+ Very Good. Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a fairly high degree of skill in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

B Good. Good level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

C+ Satisfactory. Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

C Adequate. Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with some skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

D Marginal Pass. Slightly better than minimal knowledge of required concepts and/or techniques together with some ability to use them in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

F Failure.

VII Academic Policies and Attendance

Students are expected to be familiar with CMU's academic policies, as published in the *Academic Calendar—Graduate Studies* (online at www.cmu.ca). Sections of particular relevance include "Extensions and Incompletes," "Email Submission of Assignments," "Multiple Submissions of the Same Work," "Attendance in Classes," "Students with Disabilities," "Academic Misconduct," and "Appeals."

The last day for voluntary withdrawal from this spring-summer course without academic penalty is Friday, May 7 before 5 PM.

Academic Writing: All written assignments should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (online at www.cmu.ca/library [click on 'MORE' at the bottom of the page, then look under the heading 'Writing Assistance'] and summarized in Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*, seventh edition, which is available in CMU's bookstore). These resources specify details for formatting (e.g. 1-inch margins, formal fonts in 10- to 12-point font size, double-spacing) and for citing sources.

Excellence in terms of format, spelling, grammar, sentence and paragraph construction, etc. are assumed. Frequent and persistent errors will result in lower assessments. Formal title page, footnotes or endnotes, bibliography, skilled paragraphing, etc. are essential for academic writing. Where the length of an assignment is defined in a range, be aware that 'exceptional' and 'excellent' grades are more likely to be awarded for work that is closer to the maximum length than the minimum (unless the work is especially outstanding).

Attendance: If a student must miss class due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to talk with the professor as soon as possible about missed material. Students who miss 5 hours (i.e. the equivalent of 2 weeks of classes) run the risk of being barred from further class attendance.

Extensions: The professor has full discretion in granting extensions. Extensions must be requested *before* the due date of an assignment—normally at least one week before the assignment's due date.

Submission of assignments: All assignments submitted after the specified due date and time will be penalized one letter grade for each day late (e.g. from B to C+). No assignments will be accepted or graded if the professor receives them more than five business days after the due date (unless an extension has been granted prior to the due date).

All assignments are to be submitted directly to the Moodle platform as Microsoft Word documents (.docx). Other word-processing formats and PDF's will not be accepted. Assignments will be returned on the same platform.

Communication: Students are welcome to engage the professor outside of class hours. Given the intensive nature of the course and pandemic restrictions, email and phone contact will likely work best. See contact information above.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism and cheating will be treated very seriously, as outlined in the *Academic Calendar* (available online). It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with these published expectations.

Students with Disabilities: CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. The University will seek ways to develop and provide services that support students with disabilities. The Disability Services office coordinates with the Academic Office to provide academic accommodations to eligible students. If you are eligible for these services or have questions about becoming eligible, please contact Sandra Loeppky, Coordinator of Disability Services at sloeppky@cmu.ca or 204-487-3300 ext. 340.

VIII On-Campus Health Guidelines

Being on campus, when it is determined that it is safe to do so: As a general assumption, students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to be on campus according to their regular schedule when they are well and while symptom free, and to not be on campus when they are not well. This means not attending when a person:

- a) Is sick with a cold or flu, or having other COVID-19 like symptoms
- b) Is immuno-compromised or otherwise at health risk
- c) Lives with a child or a family member who is at health risk
- d) Is facing discomfort related to pandemic risks
- e) Learns online given inability to come from another country
- f) Has COVID-19 impacted childcare responsibilities

Students who meet one or more of the criteria listed above and seek exemption from attending classes in person all semester must complete the online studies form available at www.cmu.ca/onlinestudiesform.

Notification Protocol: For purposes of potential contact tracing, students, staff, and faculty are required to submit the online notification form available on the CMU website when they will not be present on campus for class, work, or any other regularly scheduled activity. The form may be found at www.cmu.ca/notificationform.

Self-Screening: To reduce the potential risk of COVID-19 to the community, students, staff, and faculty must complete the Manitoba Health COVID-19 online screening tool daily before they come onto campus or leave their residence room. Recommendations from the shared health screening tool must be followed. The Manitoba Health COVID-19 online screening found at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool>.

IX Select Bibliography

* required textbooks

- Castleman, Robbie F. *Story Shaped Worship: Following Patterns from the Bible and History*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2013. (Optional textbook)
- *Cherry, Constance M. *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. (Required textbook)
- Cherry, Constance M. *The Music Architect: Blueprints for Engaging Worshipers in Song*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.
- *Casper, Mike. *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013. (Required textbook)
- Davis, John Jefferson. *Worship and the Reality of God: An Evangelical Theology of Real Presence*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2010.
- Dearborn, Tim A. and Scott Coil. *Worship at the Next Level: Insight from Contemporary Voices*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.
- Doran, Carol and Thomas H. Troeger. *Trouble at the Table: Gathering the Tribes for Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
- Dyrness, William A. *A Primer on Christian Worship*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009.
- Labberton, Mark. *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God's Call to Justice*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007.
- Long, Kimberley Bracken. *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.
- Long, Thomas G. *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship*. Alban Institute, 2001.
- Mitman, F. Russell. *Worship in the Shape of Scripture*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2001.
- Morgenthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.
- Parry, Robin. *Worshipping Trinity: Coming back to the heart of worship*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2005.
- Pinson, J. Matthew, ed. *Perspectives on Christian Worship: 5 Views*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009.
- Plantinga, Cornelius and Sue Rozeboom. *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking about Christian Worship Today*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.
- Rognlien, Bob. *Experiential Worship: Encountering God with Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength*. Colorado Spring, Colorado: NavPress, 2005.
- Ross, Allen P. *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006.
- Ruth, Lester. *Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020.

- Schmit, Clayton J. *Sent and Gathered: A Worship Manual for the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Smith, James K.A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Ward, Pete. *Liquid Church*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002.
- Webber, Robert E. *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative*. Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2008.
- Yoder, June Alliman, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough. *Preparing Sunday Dinner: A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005.