

McMaster Divinity College Course Syllabus
DPT – 5XW5
MDiv/MTS – MS 3XW3 (Specializations: CW/CC/PS)

WORSHIP IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

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SPRING TERM 2020

This course is now revised and offered fully online.

It will take place over the four weeks of May 2020.

All enrolled students: Please give permission to use your email address in class correspondence to facilitate our course communications.

Theologically-reflective persons—musicians, worship leaders, artists, pastors, scholars, or laypersons—are invited to come together for this one-month online course to consider historical practices, issues, new contextual challenges, and relevant approaches for a Christian church at worship in a changing landscape, including a pandemic-laden landscape. What should faithful Christian worship look like now? Should it mirror current models or not? Although North America has never been “Christian,” significant changes in its attitudes towards Christianity have been a wakeup call to believers in this context. Yet the church at worship has thrived in cultures where Christianity is not welcome or is simply one of many faiths. In this course, we will explore historical memory, hospitality, the arts, and whether a theology of worship needs to adapt to new cultures and eras in order to face real contemporary challenges. Assignments in this course have the flexibility to challenge and address wide-ranging interests, whether in the arts, theology, history, biblical studies, cultural contexts, or issues of pastoral care.

Learning Outcomes:

Knowing: By the end of this course, including reading and assignments, you should be able to

- critically analyze the practice of worship in a/your local church;
- identify where a/your church at worship is positioned historically and how its theology of worship influences its capacity for adaptability to new cultural contexts; and
- be able to evaluate what contributions could make a positive difference to a/your church.

Doing: By the end of this course, including reading and assignments, you should be able to

- design and implement ways of worshipping together that are biblically faithful, theologically sound, historically resonant, culturally relevant, and/or artistically generative; and
- research and develop your own theology of worship that is relevant for your context and faithfully aligned with Scripture, theology, history, and culture.

Being: By the end of this course, including reading and assignments, you should find that you

- engage in worship with a greater awareness of God’s welcome to each of us and with a deeper capacity for welcoming others into worship, whatever the medium; and
- are more attuned to the creative ways of God himself as we worship him.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1 - Monday, May 4

“The Wisdom of Historical Memory for Our Worship”

Read: Porter, “Historical Journey of Theological Reflection on Christian Worship.”

Post an “Intro Video” (1-2 minutes) on the Intro Videos Padlet

Weekly Collaborative Padlet 1:

“The Wisdom of Historical Memory for P-C* Worship”

Notes: Weekly course material is available through Avenue to Learn.
Weekly padlets are available to enrolled students through a distributed link.
*“P-C” may be adapted to your context: post/pre/anti-Christian, Covid-19, etc.

Week 2 – Monday, May 11

“Movements of Hospitality in Worship”

Read: Kreider and Kreider, *Worship and Mission*.

Weekly Collaborative Padlet 2:

“Movements of Hospitality in P-C Worship”

Week 3 – Monday, May 18

“What Does a Theology of Worship Look Like Now?”

Read: Your choice of Theology of Worship book/articles.
The instructor may also post material to read.

Weekly Collaborative Padlet 3:

“Leading Worship in a P-C World”

Week 4 – Monday, May 25

“The Arts and Worship”

Read: Your choice of Arts and Worship book/articles.
The instructor may also post material to read.

Weekly Collaborative Padlet 4:

“The Arts and P-C Worship”

Three Assignments

Note: *Consider taking a thoughtful risk in at least one assignment. This does not guarantee a high mark, but almost always results in valuable learning and deeply-engaging assignments.*

1. Three Voices. Paper or Project. Bring together three unlikely voices in a paper or project that explores worship challenges and opportunities for the twenty-first century (from cultural, philosophical, theological, historical, artistic, pastoral, or other perspectives).

Papers: DPT word count: **4000**. MTS/MDiv word count: **2000**.

Projects must be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Include a 700–1000-word reflection on the completed project and what you learned in the process of creating it.

Note: If possible, do this assignment in advance of the course and submit it on the first day. This will prepare you to contribute uniquely to our class—and take pressure off the final assignment.

DPT Students: Consider this assignment in light of your practice.

MDiv/MTS students: Align a major assignment with your specialization. Include a paragraph that indicates how this assignment contributes to it.

Marks: 25%

Due: If possible: Monday, May 4. Latest date: Monday, May 18, by midnight.

2. Collaborative Weekly Padlets. Each week there will be a collaborative Padlet (collage-format) for contributions (written text and any relevant media) and responses that will correspond with the material for that week. Once you have enrolled in the course, you are welcome to ask for the URL that will give you access to a test padlet to work on. The designation of “P-C” can be adapted to your context: post/pre/anti-Christian, Covid-19, etc.

POST 1–3 of your own items per week, plus **RESPOND to at least 4** other posts per week.

Week 1 Collaborative Padlet: The Wisdom of Historical Memory for P-C Worship

Week 2 Collaborative Padlet: Movements of Hospitality in P-C Worship.

Week 3 Collaborative Padlet: Leading Worship in a P-C World.

Week 4 Collaborative Padlet: The Arts and P-C Worship.

Submit a final reflection on something you learned through this process (750–1000 words).

Marks: 40%

Due: Posts due weekly by Wednesday 5:00 p.m. **Responses** due weekly by Friday 5:00 p.m.

Final Padlet finishes on Friday, May 29. **Final Reflection** due by Friday, June 5, 5:00 p.m.

3. Nimble Theology of Worship. Paper or Project. Develop a thoughtful theology of worship—whether comprehensive or with a special focus—that is nimble enough to adapt to a culture that has no (or limited) frame of reference for Christian worship. Your theology of worship must be biblically faithful and theologically sound but should have an adaptive flexibility that does not require faithful worship to look exactly like your church’s tradition or format. Choose either a formal paper or a project. Use your selected theology of worship book/articles as a frame of reference, but also interact with Kreider and Kreider, *Worship and Mission*.

Papers: DPT word count: **6000**. MTS/MDiv word count: **4000**.

Projects must be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Projects include a 700–1000-word reflection on the completed project and what you learned in the process of creating it.

DPT Students: Consider this assignment in light of your practice.

MDiv/MTS students: Align a major assignment with your specialization. Include a paragraph that indicates how this assignment contributes to it.

Marks: 35%

Due: Monday, June 15, 2020, by midnight.

DPT students should expect to write approximately 10,000–12,000 words per course. Use at least 12–15 academic resources in formal papers (including academic papers from scholarly journals). DPT students are expected to research, write, and discuss at the doctoral level in all their assignments and participation in the course. Note that with a fully online format for this course, you may have to be more creative and diligent at online searches for good material. Academic papers are welcome as bibliographical sources for academic papers. Many of these are available through your McMaster library account. Please see this new resource posted on our MDC website for help on how to do these kinds of searches: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Quick-Guide-to-Library-Resources.pdf>.

MDiv/MTS students should expect to write approximately 6,000–7,000 words per course. Use at least 10–12 academic resources in formal papers (including academic papers from scholarly journals). MDiv/MTS students are expected to research, write, and discuss at the master’s level in all their assignments and participation in the course. Note that with a fully online format for this course, you may have to be more creative and diligent at online searches for good material. Academic papers are welcome as bibliographical sources for academic papers. Many of these are available through your McMaster library account. Please see this new resource posted on our MDC website for help on how to do these kinds of searches: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Quick-Guide-to-Library-Resources.pdf>.

Required Textbooks and Other Works

Kreider, Alan, and Eleanor Kreider. *Worship and Mission after Christendom*. Harrison, VA, and Kitchener, ON: Herald, 2011. Read this book with an open mind to how these authors have envisioned a way forward in the 21st century and how their insights and vision provide an impetus for formulating your own insights and vision for worship for the current and coming era. If possible, read this book prior to the beginning of the course. **Please note** that Bernice Quek at ReadOn books has copies of this book available for sale (\$20.00 CDN plus tax) and will ship them to you free of charge. Contact her at: books@readon.ca. Please support her work for MDC by buying this book through her.

(chapter) Porter, Wendy J. “A Historical Journey of Theological Reflection on Christian Worship.” In *Rediscovering Worship: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Wendy J. Porter, 176–231. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015. The whole of this book is an excellent resource for you for this course, surveying various Old Testament and New Testament perspectives on worship in chapters by Daniel Block, Paul Evans, Mark Boda, Stanley Porter, Cindy Westfall, and Grant Osborne. The concluding chapter, however, is required reading and should be done prior to the first online day. This book can be purchased through Bernice Quek (see above entry). The chapter can be made available on request.

(optional) Stringer, Martin D. *A Sociological History of Christian Worship*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Explore this insightful journey through the history of Christian worship with a view to how it gives us a framework for insights now.

(your selection) Theology of Worship Book(s) or Articles – Your Choice

Choose at least one theology of worship book—or significant article—to consult in developing your own theology of worship. You may choose one that represents your church tradition, or one that sits well outside that tradition, or one that highlights specific elements that you wish to explore (e.g. a focus on the arts, or the Lord’s supper, or a theology of disability, etc.). Some fairly complete theologies of worship are included in the bibliography below (e.g. Peterson, *Engaging with God*, a biblical theology; Wainwright, *Doxology*, a systematic theology) but there are other choices, so do your own search for those that are relevant for you. Please contact me about your selection(s).

Selected Bibliography

Note: This bibliography includes a wide range of specialist, generalist, and practical resources. Any item here could inspire a productive search for other books and articles that are of interest. **However**, in light of current restrictions on physical library access, remember that all MDC students have access to many academic articles, chapters, and some e-books through your own McMaster library account, so *be creative and diligent* in searching out high-quality electronic sources by topic or author. Many are available for you to download (e.g. the article by Swinton below), but you may have to try several avenues. As noted above, please check out this new resource posted on our MDC website for help on how to do these kinds of searches: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Quick-Guide-to-Library-Resources.pdf>.

- Allen, Holly Catterton, and Christine Lawton Ross. *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community, and Worship*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.
- Anderson, Cameron J. *The Faithful Artist: A Vision for Evangelicalism and the Arts*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016.
- Barker, Margaret. *Temple Themes in Christian Worship*. London, UK: T. & T. Clark, 2007.
- Beale, G. K. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.
- Begbie, Jeremy S. *A Peculiar Orthodoxy: Reflections on Theology and the Arts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.
- Begbie, Jeremy S. *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1991.
- Best, Harold M. *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Black, Kathy. *Worship across Cultures: A Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998.
- Blackwell, Albert L. *The Sacred in Music*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999.
- Branson, Mark Lau, and Juan F. Martínez. *Churches, Cultures, and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.
- Brown, Sally A., and Patrick D. Miller, eds. *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Byars, Ronald P. *What Language Shall I Borrow? The Bible and Christian Worship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Carroll, Jackson W., and Wade Clark Roof. *Bridging Divided Worlds: Generational Cultures in Congregations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Castleman, Robbie F. *Story-Shaped Worship: Following Patterns from the Bible and History*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.

- Chandler, Paul-Gordon. *God's Global Mosaic: What We Can Learn from Christians around the World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997, 2000.
- Cianca, Jenn. *Sacred Ritual, Profane Space: The Roman House as Early Christian Meeting Place*. Montreal, PQ: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018.
- Clark, Chap. *Adoptive Church: Creating an Environment Where Emerging Generations Belong*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.
- Cohen, David J., and Michael Parsons, eds. *In Praise of Worship: An Exploration of Text and Practice*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010.
- Dawn, Marva J. *A Royal "Waste" of Time: The Splendor of Worshiping God and Being Church for the World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Dawn, Marva J. *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Day, Juliette, and Benjamin Gordon-Taylor, eds. *The Study of Liturgy and Worship*. Collegeville, MN: Pueblo, 2013.
- Farhadian, Charles E. (ed.). *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practices*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Frame, John M. *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P. & R., 1996.
- Hawn, C. Michael. *Gather into One: Praying and Singing Globally*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Heaney, Maeve Louise. *Music as Theology: What Music Says about the Word*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012.
- Hicks, Zac. *The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.
- Inge, John. *A Christian Theology of Place*. London, UK: Routledge, 2003.
- Kinnaman, David. *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.
- Krabill, James R., ed. *Worship and Mission for the Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*. Littleton, CO: William Carey Library, 2013. (See accompanying manual under Schrag, *Creating Local Arts Together*.)
- Lathrop, Gordon W., and Timothy J. Wengert. *Christian Assembly: Marks of the Church in a Pluralistic Age*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004.
- Long, Kimberly Bracken. *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009.
- Long, Thomas G. *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship*. Durhan, NC: Alban Institute, 2001.
- Myers, Jacob D. *Curating Church: Strategies for Innovative Worship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2018.
- Okholm, Dennis. *Learning Theology through the Church's Worship: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.
- Peterson, David. *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Porter, W. J., ed. *Rediscovering Worship: Past, Present, and Future*. McMaster New Testament Studies. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015.
- Rice, Jesse. *The Church of Facebook: How the Hyperconnected Are Redefining Community*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009.
- Rordorff, Willy. *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church*. London, UK: SCM, 1968.

- Ross, Allen P. *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006.
- Saliers, Don E. *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994.
- Sayers, Dorothy L. *Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World: A Selection of Essays*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969.
- Schrag, Brian. *Creating Local Arts Together: A Manual to Help Communities Reach their Kingdom Goals*. James R. Krabill, ed. Littleton, CO: William Carey Library, 2013. (See the main handbook under Krabill, ed., *Worship and Mission for the Church*.)
- Smith, James K. A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Cultivating Liturgies, 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.
- Smith, James K. A. *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*. Cultural Liturgies, 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013.
- Spinks, Bryan D. *The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture*. Alcuin Club Collections, 85. London, UK: SPCK, 2010.
- Sundberg, Walter. *Worship as Repentance: Lutheran Liturgical Traditions and Catholic Consensus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Swinton, John. "From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability, and Humanness." *Journal of Religion, Disability, and Health* 16.2 (2012) 172–90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15228967.2012.676243>.
- Swoboda, A. J. *Subversive Sabbath: The Surprising Power of Rest in a Nonstop World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2018.
- Tickle, Phyllis. *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.
- Voke, Christopher J. *Creation at Worship: Ecology, Creation, and Christian Worship*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009.
- von Allmen, J.-J. *Worship: Its Theology and Practice*. London, UK: Lutterworth, 1965.
- Wainwright, Geoffrey, and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Wainwright, Geoffrey. *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life: A Systematic Theology*. London, UK: Epworth; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Werner, Eric. *The Sacred Bridge: The Interdependence of Liturgy and Music in Synagogue and Church during the First Millennium*. New York, NY: Da Capo, 1979.
- White, James Emery. *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.
- White, James Emery. *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Willimon, William F. *Worship as Pastoral Care*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1979.

MDC Policies

A. Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, McMaster Divinity College. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca.

B. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>.

C. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

D. Style

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.