

THEO7373, Foundations of Worship Arts

Thursday, 6.30-9.00 PM

Spring 2012

North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois

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Course description

Humanity is created in the image of God. A part of what this means is that the creativity and imagination that God uses in creation is common to our nature and being. We will examine many ways that people have sought to celebrate the Holy God, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, through expressions of the arts in worship. Topics we will explore include the visual arts, the environment for worship, movement and postures for worship and liturgy, world music, and the use of multi-media resources (for example, using video and film in worship). We will develop criteria for guiding us as we select expressions and explore practical ways of incorporating artistic offerings in worship.

Course Expectations

What you can expect of me:

1. Respect and dignity in relation to your presence and questions. This includes my being prepared for each class session, beginning and ending class on time, and responding to your inquiries in a respectful and timely manner.
2. Interaction, participation, and direction in the on-going discussions that will occur over the course of the semester. Our course will not be lecture oriented, although there may be some days when more information is presented than on others. We will be using a model for education that is more collaborative than uni-directional. I believe we will learn more by interacting with the material together, reflecting critically on our sources in relation to our own life experiences. I will try to model this method of learning and attempt to provide avenues for you to share your insights throughout our semester.
3. Timely feedback on and fair assessment of your assignments. I will inform you of progress on the assessment of your work and provide comments as necessary to explain my perspective.
4. Occasional mistakes as I negotiate the many names, faces, and facets of teaching required at this level of education. Please help me to recognize when I make mistakes and I will correct them as soon as possible.
5. My energy and excitement as we engage in studying and experiencing faith and life issues. I enjoy teaching this material very much and will seek to allow that enthusiasm to enrich our learning environment.

What I expect of you:

1. Respect and dignity from each student in class attendance and participation. I expect each of you to be on time for each class (tardies and absences will be discussed below) and to be prepared for our investigations together. The usual academic rule of thumb is that two hours of homework is to be accomplished for each hour of classroom time. Please let me know if your workload for our class falls below or beyond this guideline.
2. On-time completion and submission of original class work. Assignments need to be submitted by the deadlines posted in the syllabus (please check with other course schedules to coordinate your large projects for the semester). In addition, your work needs to be original, your own thought and articulation, in continuity with the dishonesty/plagiarism policy of North Park Theological Seminary.
3. Your honest questions when you do not understand the material or the instructions.
Please let me know when something is unclear.
4. Your willingness to engage in material that you may find stretching and challenging.

Course goals

1. Explore and articulate an understanding of aesthetic theory relevant to Christian worship
2. Develop a biblical and theological understanding for sanctioning the presence and use of the arts in worship
3. Participate in various artistic expressions, building sensitivity to the creative act and role of the artist
4. Determination of appropriate guidelines for governing the inclusion of the arts in worship events
5. Comprehension of multiple ways in which various artistic expressions could be mobilized for substantial theological reflection and worship in faith communities

Required texts

Begbie, Jeremy, ed. *Beholding the Glory: Incarnation Through the Arts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000.

Jensen, Robin M. *The Substance of Things Seen: Art, Faith, and the Christian Community*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004.

Schultze, Quentin J. *High-Tech Worship? Using Presentational Technologies Wisely*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.

Sullivan, Michael. *Windows into the Soul: Art as Spiritual Expression*. Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2006.

Taylor, W. David O., ed. *For the Beauty of the Church: Casting a Vision for the Arts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010.

[Supplemental readings will also be required.]

Course Assignments

1. Reflection questions for readings: questions will be distributed to accompany the class readings for much of the course. Our questions are meant to encourage conversations about the readings for each class session. You are required to respond to the questions in writing (type-written, twelve point font, standard margins, on 8.5 by 11 inch paper; with proper spelling and grammar). Final grade for this assignment will be based upon the number of submissions and quality of your responses. The responses must be completed before our class meetings on the day on which we discuss a particular topic in order to ensure the participation of everyone in our conversations.

Please keep each set of responses to no more than two pages. These responses will be collected in class on the first day of each discussion of a new topic. They will be evaluated as inferior (check-minus ✓-), adequate (check ✓), or superior (check-plus ✓+). The reflection questions will be accepted for two business days beyond the due date, but will be assessed a penalty for each day that each submission is late.

2. Spiritual formation visual art assignment: Each student will be required to share **two artistic expressions** that were achieved through use of the guided exercises in the text, *Windows into the Soul*. Each student will accomplish two visual art expressions from among the following: Windows one, two, four, six, seven, eight, nine, or ten. Each student will have artifacts from the two exercises to share with the class. Please also write a two-page reflection paper for each expression, responding to the “Soul Questions” posed near the end of each exercise (you may choose the questions to which you respond in developing your reflection). Be sure to include how you felt about accomplishing this project and something of what you learned from the experience. The student will share these expressions and their reflections with the class on 09 February 2012. Each student will be expected to share the significance of this work to you and its impact on you.

Date due: the beginning of the class on 09 February 2012.

3. Congregational guidelines for the inclusion of art in the life of the church. Over the course of time, individuals within a congregation will want to share artistic expressions (visual, textual, musical, dramatic, etc.) with the larger faith community. It is particularly helpful if a church has some basic guidelines available by which to guide the invitation to create, introduce and receive such offerings. Each student will **develop a set of guidelines** that could be used to facilitate such a process. Be sure to address the following in your guidelines:

- A rationale for including artistic expressions in the life of the church
- An invitation to produce creative, biblically and theologically grounded expressions
- A process by which offerings will be examined
- Criteria for evaluating various expressions
- Form(s) of appreciation to be extended to the artist (include references to commissioned works of art as well as expressions offered on a voluntary basis)

Your guidelines may be organized in an outline form for submission. Keep in mind your particular faith tradition and its ordinary organizational structure as you develop your guidelines. Articulate the individuals who will be responsible for implementing these guidelines and be accountable for the offerings that are shared in community.

Date due: Thursday, 19 April 2012.

4. Worship and the arts theological research and reflection paper: an eight to ten page paper (type-written, double-spaced, twelve point font, standard margins, pages numbered, on 8.5 by 11 inch paper; proper spelling and grammar count for the grade) will be prepared by each student in an effort to produce a coherent theology of worship and the arts. Each paper is to address the following questions:

- What forms of art are evident in our worship events today (you may reflect upon your own Christian community if you wish or broaden your reflection to include other churches as well)?
- What biblical texts pertain to the inclusion/exclusion of artistic expressions in relation to worship? Does the bible suggest any cautions or limitations on using the arts in relation to worship?
- What is the role (or potential role) of the artist in relation to the church? Does the social nature of the human person and the social nature of the church impact the work of the individual artist as they seek to serve the church? How does this reality impact the creative process of the artist?
- How has the church made use of the arts in worship in the past (please provide concrete examples of both artists and their artifacts)?
- How can the arts help to inform people in worship theologically (for example, come to a fuller understanding of the nature and character of God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the nature of the Church, the nature of the world, interpretations of Scripture, applications of Scripture, etc.)? Please provide several concrete examples of how theological understandings can be enhanced by particular expressions or objects. What relationship do concepts such as beauty and truth have in relation to theological understandings/interpretations of artifacts used in worship?
- How does the fact that different people have different perceptions of art offerings impact the use of the arts in communal worship (for example, different people might be bored, horrified, or enraptured by particular expressions/objects depending on their aesthetic sensibilities and varying levels of risk engagement)? What are the potential risks inherent in using art forms of any kind in communal worship? Please explain.
- What practical ways may be pursued for including artistic expressions in our corporate worship activities today? How might you begin to initiate the inclusion of various art forms in worship in a church setting (be specific)?

Please use at least six print sources outside of our textbooks in doing the research for this paper (some of the articles we read for the course may be included in this list). Many bibliographies will be circulated in class to gain additional sources for reflection. Use footnotes as needed and generate a complete bibliography for the paper (title page and bibliographies do not count against the length of the paper). Share particular insights you have gleaned from our class conversations and your own personal experiences of participating in these expressions in worship, as possible.

Students will be required to submit a substantial outline of their paper by 29 March 2012 (NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED). The outline should include major headings in the paper and significant points that will be mentioned under each heading. Biblical references and footnotes of important insights should be included as appropriate. A preliminary, annotated **bibliography** (include one or two sentences about what is important from each work for the writing of your paper) needs to accompany the outline also. This mid-semester check will help to ensure that each student is making progress in comprehending the course material and adequately working toward the completion of this significant assignment. The outline will be worth approximately ONE FIFTH of the overall value of the assignment (20% of total). The final paper will be due at the beginning of class on Thursday, 03 May 2012.

5. Creative arts project: for the end of class, a final project of artistic expression appropriate for a worship event will be shared with the class. **Examples** of projects would include:

- Visual art work (two or three dimensional—drawing, painting, computer generated image, collage, ceramic vessels for worship, sculpture, etc.)
- Environment for worship (drawings and/or model of a proposed environment for a particular worship celebration)
- Movement for worship (choreographed hymn, chorus, prayer, biblical text, etc., either as a performance piece or for congregational celebration)
- Multi-media project (two to three minute video production, Power-point presentation set to music, etc.)
- Worship event featuring World Music (complete outline of a worship event that would include multi-cultural musical and liturgical offerings—sung and instrumental as appropriate)
- Dramatic presentation (such as, a three to five minute dramatic presentation of a passage of scripture or faith concept)

Other forms of artistic expression are acceptable; please discuss your idea with the instructor.

Students may work with another classmate on the final project if they so desire, but a single grade will apply to both (all) parties equally. The final project idea must be determined by the student by 22 March 2012, and approved by the instructor. If collaborating, you might consider working with those who have a different creative approach, learning style or artistic method; this may be challenging, but brings a valuable depth of practical experience.

Evaluation of the project will be based on evidence of preparation, appropriateness for communal worship, expression of creativity and risk (credit given for work in a new or unfamiliar medium), and presentation in class. Students working together will receive the same credit each for a single project.

All final projects will be evaluated as inferior (7/20 points), satisfactory (15/20 points), or superior (20/20 points).

Class presentations of these creative projects will be scheduled for sharing in class on 26 April 2012. A sign-up sheet will be circulated to establish the order of presenting for each student.

Preparation for Class and Evaluation of Student Work

Classroom correspondence: ALL classroom correspondence with the instructor will be accomplished via our UNIVERSITY e-mail accounts. Please check your university e-mail account frequently.

Attendance at each class session is expected. Attendance is defined as being present in class for the entire class period. You may be absent from no more than one class session (equivalent to one week of class meetings) during the semester without a valid excuse. All excused absences must be in writing and handed to the professor in person (no telephone calls or e-mailed notes). After one unexcused absence there will be half a letter grade reduction from the final, overall class grade for each unexcused absence.

On-time attendance is expected. On time is defined as arriving at the beginning of our class time. Those who arrive more than seven minutes after class begins will be marked “tardy” for the class. Three “tardies” will be the equivalent of a class absence and will be calculated into the overall attendance pattern accordingly.

The reading of materials before each class meeting is expected. In order to make the best possible use of our class time for conversation, we will need to be prepared to discuss the material for the day before class. Come to class prepared to ask questions which occurred during your readings. Class participation will be factored into the student’s final grade.

Use of laptop computers, cell phones, and electronic devices (such as I-Pods) for entertainment or non-class work is prohibited during our class meeting times. If you take class notes using your laptop computer, you will be required to display or turn in a copy of your notes upon demand of the instructor to verify your need of this device. Students are to remain engaged in classroom learning and discussions throughout each class period.

Submission of classroom assignments will occur by e-mailing documents to the instructor or bringing the material to class in hard-copy form (by the beginning of class). Inability to submit assignments due to printer issues, time management, or other excuses will constitute a late submission. Weekly reflection questions will be due on the day on which the topic is to be discussed. Other assignments will be due on the due dates assigned to them in the syllabus. No “make-up” or extra credit work is available in this course. See the policy below for “late work.”

Your work will be graded according to the effort and quality of your written and oral contributions. Evidence of depth in resource consultation, critical reflection, and pastoral application will be necessary in order to receive a passing grade on any assignment. Assessments of proper grammar, logic, and creativity will be factors in the evaluation of your work.

In general, here are my expectations for grading:

- “A” is reserved for exceptional work (far above and beyond the requested);
- “B” is assigned to work that is very good, yielding more than was asked;
- “C” is assigned to work that is adequate or that meets the minimum criteria requested of the assignment;
- “D” is inferior work, work that does not meet the necessary minimum requirements;
- “F” is assigned to work that is woefully inadequate in multiple ways.

The relative value of assignments in relation to the final course grade is as follows:

Reflection questions and class participation 17%

Spiritual formation visual arts projects 13%

Congregational guidelines for the arts in the church 17%

Theological research/reflection paper 33% (*the outline with bibliography is one fifth of this*)

Final creative project 20.0%

The grading scale to be used for determining a final course grade is according to the current North Park Theological Seminary Student Academic handbook.

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism policy. Honesty is expected on all assignments and examinations in our class throughout the semester. We will conform to the academic dishonesty and plagiarism policy adopted by North Park Theological Seminary. Please take time to read this policy and comply with its mandates, for each student will be held accountable for their personal behavior.

Late work policy. Any assignment that is not ready for submission in accordance with the expectations listed above will be considered “late.” The guided questions will be accepted for two business days beyond the due date as described above. The Psalms assignment may be turned in up to three days late as described above. The visual art assignment may not be submitted as late work at all. Extensions for time with respect to the submission of classroom assignments will require verifiable, appropriate circumstances. Each student’s circumstances will be evaluated by the instructor on a case-by-case basis. All petitions for extensions must be in writing stating the specifics of the petition for additional time and must be approved by at least one day BEFORE the deadline for the assignment.

“Incomplete” course grade assignments. We will conform to the policy established in the North Park Theological Seminary Student Academic handbook.

Class schedule with reading assignments and guided questions

19 January 2012 Introduction to the course - Aesthetic considerations

26 January Introduction to the Arts in Worship - The Biblical Roots of the Arts in Worship

09 February Sharing two visual art work assignments from "Windows into the Soul" in class

16 February Developing a Theology of the Arts for Worship

23 February Words as an Artistic Expression in Worship

01 March Popular and World Music in Worship

08 March The Visual Arts and Worship

15 March Reading Week

(No Class)

22 March The Environment for Worship

Final project idea for creative arts project due in class tonight

29 March The Dramatic Arts and Worship

Substantial outline for theological research/reflection paper due at the beginning of class tonight.

05 April Liturgical Movement

12 April Technology, Worship, and the Arts

19 April Incorporating the Arts into the Life of the Church

Congregational guidelines assignment will be due by class time.

26 April Liturgical Art Form Presentations **Student Creative Arts projects will be shared tonight**

READ: Taylor, ed., For the Beauty of the Church, pp. 83-192

03 May Final class meeting; sharing insights and materials from research/reflection paper

Theology and the arts research/reflection paper will be due by class time.

Note: Our class syllabus is open to revision by the instructor as necessary.