Spring Term 2018
Short Course Syllabus

Department: Systematic Theology
Course Title: Readings in Liturgical Theology
Course Number: ST 725
Credit Hours: 3
Morning Prayer: 8:30-9:15
Mondays: 9:20-12:00

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Note: This is entirely a preliminary syllabus and may be altered before the course begins.

Course Description

A seminar course in which students will read theological texts that focus on liturgical theology. The course will examine classical writings from the twentieth century as well as some more contemporary texts. The focus of the course will be ecumenical, with texts selected from various Christian traditions.

Textbooks

The following textbooks are required for the course.


What is Liturgical Theology?

In Frank Senn’s book, *Introduction to Christian Liturgy*, he provides a list of “liturgical data”: Sunday as the day of Christian worship; the Sunday liturgy of Word and Meal, texts of the liturgy, principles parts of the liturgy, roles in the liturgical assembly (preacher, presider), etc. One could also add here such things as the liturgical year and the use of a lectionary of biblical texts. Senn suggests that “Deriving meaning from this data is what liturgical theology purports to do. It does not ask, What is the meaning of liturgy or worship? It asks rather, What meanings are conveyed in the texts and actions, and even the ordo of the liturgy?” I would disagree somewhat with Senn by suggesting that liturgical theology does both. Liturgical theology is the systematic theological reflection that addresses the theological meaning of the specific texts, actions, and *ordo* of the liturgy (in agreement with Senn), but also reflects theologically on the general meaning of liturgy or worship.

What Liturgical Theology is not:

At the same time, liturgical theology needs to be distinguished from several other parallel but related disciplines. History of the liturgy or of Christian worship is presupposed in the discussion of liturgical theology, but liturgical theology is not simply history of the liturgy, insofar as it is *theological reflection* on the meaning of liturgical worship. Neither is liturgical theology identical with a theology of the sacraments or orders as they might be discussed in the field of systematic theology because liturgical theology focuses specifically on the theology of worship, and the role that “liturgical data” such as sacraments and ordained clergy play in liturgical worship.

Liturgical theology is largely a discipline that began in the twentieth century with the “liturgical renewal” movement, and perhaps the best way to become acquainted with liturgical theology is to read some of the classic texts that were produced by significant figures in this movement. The primary goal of this course will be to read some of these “classic texts” in a seminar format in order to provide an introduction to liturgical theology. At the same time, a couple of more recent texts will be included in the readings.

The “liturgical renewal movement” was an ecumenical movement that included figures in all of the major Christian churches that practice liturgical worship. Significant figures included Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed theologians. Our representative selection of texts therefore includes figures from different theological traditions: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the student will notice that the assigned textbooks do not include any Anglican authors, although there are several on the “further readings” list. The
primary reason for this is that, although Anglicans have written much about the liturgy, Anglican liturgical writers have tended to focus on either the history of liturgy and the Prayer Book (Dix, Cuming, Bradshaw) or on specific issues in Anglican sacramental theology (Stevenson). In narrowing down the specific readings for this introductory course, the best texts that I was able to find on liturgical theology proper were written by non-Anglicans. Nonetheless, several of the course texts do discuss and interact with Anglicanism (both Anglican Prayer Book worship and Anglican sacramental theology), and students are encouraged to read Anglican writers in addition to the assigned texts in preparing for their seminar presentations, but also in writing their final research paper.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be familiar with numerous texts that focus on liturgical theology. You should have a good grasp of crucial themes in liturgical theology. You should be able to address such questions as What is worship? How does the liturgy relate to other areas of theology? How does liturgy form the life of the church in not only worship, but also theology and ethics?

You should be able to analyze theological arguments, and respond competently to questions about theological issues, both orally and in writing. You should be able to show how the practice of liturgical worship has relevance for contemporary theological concerns.

You should have greater clarity about your own Christian theological convictions.

Course Requirements

Please reading the assigned texts in in advance of the class, so that you can play a part in class discussions.

At the beginning of the course, each student will submit a very short informal paper (no less than three to five and no more than five to ten pages) in which he or she summarizes their present answer to the question “What is worship, and why is it important”? This is not a research paper, but personal reflection. It is required, but will not be graded.

The course will be taught as a seminar. Each class will be divided into two sessions, with a break approximately halfway through the class. The first half of the class will be devoted to the assigned reading from Wainwright. The second half of the course will focus on the other assigned reading. In addition to the assigned readings, individual students will be responsible to lead one of the two seminar sessions on the day’s readings. The student (or students if doing a combined presentation) leading the discussion for the day will be expected to produce a summary of the reading with an analysis and critical evaluation of the argument. Your presentations should summarize the ideas of the reading for the session, comment on what the author says, show where you agree or disagree. Raise two or three questions for discussion at the end. These questions should lead to
class discussion of the implications of the reading. The seminar notes may be in outline form.

Because of the necessity of covering (at least) two presentations each week, presentations must be kept to strict time limits.

Please submit copies of your presentation to the Discussion area in Google Classroom at least one day in advance. (Permanent electronic copies are required for ATS outcomes assessment. Copies not posted electronically will not receive credit.)

The number of seminar presentations will depend on the number of students in the class.

Each student will also prepare a research paper on some specific theological issue raised in one’s study of liturgical theology. The paper would likely focus on the work of one or more of the authors read in the course, but could conceivably examine other works. If desired, the entire focus of the paper could be an expanded version of the initial paper that addressed the questions, but now incorporating the course readings. Note: If the student desires to write the final paper on a figure not read in the course, please consult with the instructor for approval of subject matter.

The final papers should be no less than ten and no more than fifteen to twenty pages in length. (Final papers must be posted to the Edvance360 Drop Box. Permanent electronic copies are required for ATS outcomes assessment. Copies not posted electronically will not receive credit.)

The final paper will be due May 11, the last day permitted by the registrar. Seniors are required to submit final work by April 30.

Course Evaluation

The seminar presentations will constitute 60% of the grade.

The final paper will constitute 30% of the grade.

Class Participation will constitute 10% of the grade.

Grades

The Academic Bulletin assigns the following values to grades:

A  Excellent
B  Good
C  Average
D  Failure
In the liberal arts, there is always a subjective element in grading insofar as grades reflect qualitative work rather than quantitative measures. For theological work, a number of factors enter into grading: competence in understanding and summarizing material; insightful comments; thoughtful argumentation in addition to summarizing and commenting. Generally, the more of these factors that are present, the higher the grade, but other factors will also be taken into account, for example, organizational coherence, narrative flow of argument, lucidity. (Longer is not necessarily better.)