

UNIVERSITY OF DUBUQUE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
MN616D: The Use of the Psalms in Christian Worship
Wednesday 2:00-4:00 PM; Spring 2010

Instructor: Timothy M. Slemmons
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2 Credits; Letter grade or Pass/Fail

Prerequisites: MN401/501 Foundations of Christian Worship

Course Description

This course explores the full breadth of the psalms in their various genres and functions; the history of their liturgical use in ancient Israel, and in the early, medieval, Reformation and modern eras; and the practical possibilities for using the psalms more broadly and effectively in worship today, including preaching the psalms.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are (1) to gain greater fluency in the language of the psalms; (2) to explore the full complement of psalms as a summary of the whole of human life (Athanasius); (3) to develop an appreciation for the rich history of psalmody in worship; and (4) to investigate options for using the psalms in worship and preaching, expand existing repertoires, and identify practical resources for congregations.

M.Div. Curricular Objectives

In order to serve the one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and prepare women and men for faithful, compassionate, and effective pastoral ministry, this course contributes to the following curricular goals of the M.Div. program, in that it will enable students to:

- nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives
- be formed by, live in, and minister out of scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the church
- interpret the Christian Scriptures through faithful exegesis and in light of the Christian tradition
- preach the Word of God with faithfulness and clarity
- lead worship and administer the sacraments with theological integrity and to the glory of God
- educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church
- provide pastoral care for individuals and congregations in daily life and moment of transition and crisis
- integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry

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The Ministry Division seeks to help students develop a capacity to comprehend theories for the practice of ministry, a capacity to develop skills necessary for pastoral tasks, and the capacity to integrate these two. In this way, students begin to devise and articulate a pastoral theology. This course contributes to the following goals in the Ministry Division:

1. to provide knowledge and experiences of the worship and prayer of the people of God.
2. to provide knowledge of, and significant practice in, the ministry of proclamation.
3. to provide skills and capabilities in the discipling, evangelistic, pastoral and governance dimensions of the church's task.
4. to help future pastors develop sensitivity to the contexts in which they are leading congregations.

Requirements/Evaluation

- Faithful and conscientious class attendance [NB: two absences will be allowed before a reduction in grade will be assessed] (5%)
- Active and respectful participation in class discussions (5%)
- Mid-term quiz on the content of the Psalms (20%)
- Timely completion of all written assignments:
 - + A paper on the individual psalms of lament, evaluating their suitability for liturgical use in public worship (25%)
 - + A collection of worship elements based on the psalms for use either in the Sundays after Epiphany, or when preaching *lectio continua* through a specific book of the Bible (25%)
 - + A sermon based on a selected psalm (20%)

Grading Scale: See *UDTS, 2007-2009 Catalog*; pp. 57-59.

Bibliography

Required Texts:

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984)

William Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993)

J. Clinton McCann, Jr., and James C. Howell, *Preaching the Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001)

John D. Witvliet, *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship: A Brief Introduction & Guide to Resources* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007)

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Recommended Texts:

Sally A. Brown, Patrick D. Miller, eds., *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005)

Michael Morgan, *Psalter for Christian Worship* (Louisville: Witherspoon Press, 1999)

The Psalter: Psalms and Canticles for Singing (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993)

Technological Requirements:

Electronic Submission of Work: All work will be submitted electronically, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. See additional instructions below, under “Course Administration” information on page seven.

Electronic Communication: Students are expected to check their UD e-mail accounts regularly for course updates and University announcements. Instructions for forwarding e-mail from a dbq.edu account can be found at the Technology Services link on the UD Web page.

Electronic Devices: Cell phones, pagers, iPods, PDAs and all other electronic devices not medically necessary will be turned off during class time unless permission is given by the instructor.

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The Psalms in Israel's worship (Mowinckel, Holladay)

The genres and the functions of the Psalms (Westermann, Brueggemann)

The Psalms in the worship of the early church (

The monastic/Benedictine/plainsong (Gregorian) use of the psalter

The metrical psalms in the Reformed tradition (Marot and Burgeois, Calvin, Sterhold and Hopkins, Old)

Psalm tones/collects

Preaching the psalms (McCann/Howell)

Also Bonhoeffer,