TS5108 Theology of Worship

3 credits. Prerequisites: none.

² On Campus, Saskatoon 'A' Livestream ■ Video on Demand





October 6-10, 2025 Module Monday to Friday, 9am-noon and 1-4pm SK Dale B. H. Dirksen, DWS dale@daledirksen.com

Note: There is an assignment that is due at 9AM on the first day of class.

Course Goals

Course Description

This course explores a theological understanding of worship as it relates to Christian practice over the past two millennia. Current worship trends in churches will be evaluated in light of this theological and historical perspective.

Relationship to Horizon's Mission

This course will help students identify a biblical theology of worship. It will also empower ministers with competency for leading and participating in corporate worship that is beneficial to the church. Dialoguing with current trajectories in worship will help students discern how corporate and personal practice can engage with God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – as subject and object.

Course Competencies and Learning Outcomes

To demonstrate competency in *Biblical and Theological Literacy & Contextual Awareness*, students will:

- 1. Articulate a biblical theology of worship.
 - Assessment: Class Participation, Major Project
- 2. Evaluate corporate worship considering biblical teaching and historical practices.
 - Assessment: Class Participation, Reflection on Different Church Traditions, Post-Course Reading
- 3. Assess the work of prominent scholars in worship studies.
 - Assessment: Pre-Course Assignment, Class Participation, Post-Course Reading
- 4. Analyze the theological tensions present in worship.
 - Assessment: Class Participation, Reflection on Different Church Traditions, Major Project
- 5. Apply a theology of worship to a practical setting.
 - Assessment: Pre-Course Assignment, Class Participation, Major Project

Course Work

Course Textbooks

Peterson, David. *Engaging With God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-0830826971.

DTL: https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/50235037.

Either one of White or Drury below (choice must be new material for the student):

White, James F. A Brief History of Christian Worship. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993. ISBN: 978-0687034147.

 $\textbf{DTL:}\ \underline{https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/26586341}.$

Drury, Keith. *The Wonder of Worship: Why We Worship The Way We Do.* Marion, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2020. ISBN: 9781632573889.

DTL: https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/609878050.

*Note: either the 2005 or 2020 version of Drury are acceptable.

**While students have the benefit of accessing their textbooks online through the <u>Digital Theological Library</u>, they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library.

Recommended Resources

Carson, D.A., ed., Worship By The Book. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

Dawn, Marva J. Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.

Drury, Keith. *The Wonder of Worship: Why We Worship The Way We Do.* Marion, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2002.

- Frame, John M. Worship In Spirit And Truth. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1996.
- Hill, Andrew E. Enter His Courts With Praise: Old Testament Worship for the New Testament Church. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker, 1993.
- Howard, Thomas. Evangelical Is Not Enough: Worship Of God In Liturgy And Sacrament. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1984.
- Keifert, Patrick R. Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992.
- Long, Thomas G. *Beyond The Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2001.
- Plantinga, Cornelius J. and Sue A. Rozeboom. *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking about Christian Worship Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003.
- Saliers, Don E. Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994.
- Smith, James K. A. Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Webber, Robert E. Worship Is A Verb: Eight Principles for Transforming Worship. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992.
- _____. Ancient Future Faith; Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999.
- Witvleit, John. Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows Into Christian Practice. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003.

Course Assignments and Activities

1. Pre-Course Assignment (20%).

Read the Peterson textbook <u>prior</u> to the class. Write a two-to-three-page response/summary (700 to 1,000 words). This should include your sense of the strengths and weaknesses of this book and how this book might relate to your own worship practice. Please include references to material in the book. A minimum of 10 footnotes to a diversity of sections in the book and a bibliography are expected (see Format Guide for requirements). It should be evident from your response that you have the book in its entirety.

- Related learning outcome: #3, #5.
- Assignment length: 2-3 pages (700-1000 words).
- **Due date**: October 6, 2025 at 9am.

2. Class Participation (10%).

Students are expected to be fully present and contributing for the entire week of class. Students will also participate in a practicum during the week. This will require some work outside of class on Wednesday late afternoon and evening.

• Related learning outcomes: #1-5.

Post-Course Assignments

3. Post-Course Reading (10%).

For Drury or White: In a three-page reflection paper, discuss your current home church in light of the historical influences you see in the book you chose. Make sure to include all the components of the book in your paper. References should be pervasive and evident of all major sections of the book. Please use footnotes and a bibliography. It should be evident from your response that you have the book in its entirety. Please read White or Drury prior to your church visits.

In addition, read 300 pages of reading from the "**Recommended Sources**" list in this syllabus (above). This reading should be new material for you and should be reflected in the Major Project (below). In the bibliography for your major paper, please indicate which pages were read from each source (example below).

Howard, Thomas. Evangelical Is Not Enough: Worship Of God In Liturgy And Sacrament. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1984. (I read pages 34-74 for a total of 40 pages)

At the end of the bibliography, include a grand total for all pages. This reading should inform your Major Project (below).

- Related learning outcomes: #2, #3, #5.
- **Assignment length:** 3 pages + bibliography in major paper.
- **Due date:** November 14, 2025 (with the Major Project below).

4. Major Project (40%).

Each student will complete a major project for this course. The project must include a thesis and reflect substantial research appropriate to graduate level work. *The assignment topic and thesis must be confirmed by the professor by the end of the week of class*. The project will be comprised of the following components:

Part 1: A research paper of 8-10 pages (2,800 to 3,500 words including footnotes) on *one* of the following topics:

- > The tension of the understanding of God's immanence and transcendence in corporate worship
- Revelation and response in corporate worship as related to participation and presentation
- ➤ The tension between the horizontal and the vertical in corporate worship as evidenced in human focus (believer/seeker) and a divine focus
- The value of newness and/or the value of tradition in corporate worship
- The place of form and/or freedom in corporate worship
- ➤ Corporate worship as culturally accessible and/or distinct from culture
- This section of the project will be primarily a research paper interacting initially with *Scripture*, the *key resource list* and *textbooks* in this syllabus, then with the course bibliography and a broader range of sources.

- The focus of the paper will be the corporate worship context or the weekly worship service of the local church it will not primarily deal with individual worship practice, outside of how this relates to the corporate.
- Application of the conclusions of the study must be identified i.e., how will conclusions of the study affect actual worship practice? What might corporate worship look like in light of the study.
- A biblical theology of worship should be clear in the paper.
- Follow the Format Guide for the title page and page numbering. The outline should be in point form, but no page numbers are necessary (in contrast to a typical Table of Contents). Also, include your thesis statement on this page. After these items, include your 8-10 pages of text (2,800 to 3,500 words).
- Please follow this outline for the paper section of the project:
 - o Title page
 - Thesis statement and paper outline 1 page (see above)
 - Definition and theology of worship 2 pages
 - \circ The first aspect of your chosen tension (e.g., the immanence of God) 2 pages
 - o The second aspect of your chosen tension (e.g., the transcendence of God) 2 pages
 - \circ The importance of tension between the two aspects -1-2 pages
 - \circ Conclusion and application -1-2 pages

Part 2: Appendix. A practical application of the theoretical component of the project will be included as an appendix. This second part of the project will be substantial and reflect a ministry application of the work done. It is the intention that this could be immediately applied to the student's current ministry context. **Some examples** of how this section could be structured are as follows:

- A series (2-3) of sermons on the topic chosen detailed outlines (2-3) pages each of these sermons are acceptable
- A series of Sunday school lessons (3-5) on the topic chosen detailed teaching outlines are acceptable this could be for adults or children
- An artistic response i.e., a painting or sculpture in response to the study, a musical composition/recording in response to the project (submission of photographs or audio by email is acceptable), a dramatic play illustrating the tension chosen, a short story responding to the study, etc.
- Other: please confirm with the professor in advance regarding other possibilities for this section of the assignment
- Written appendices are included as part of the project after the paper and before the bibliography.
- Please use footnotes for necessary referencing, <u>not</u> endnotes or parenthetical references.
- This part of the assignment can be single spaced or another type format that is appropriate for the work.

The project grading will be based on the following:

• Thorough research, beginning with Scripture, the Course Textbooks, Recommended Sources, the bibliography in this syllabus and other sources.

- Theology of worship clearly identified in the paper
- Depth of engagement with the chosen topic
- General quality of work (writing, grammar, format, or other relevant quality characteristics)
- Quality of the practical application component
- Related learning outcomes: #1, #4, #5.
- **Assignment length**: 8-10 pages (Part 1) + appendix (Part 2).
- **Due date:** November 14, 2025.

5. Reflection on Different Church Traditions (20%).

After the week of class and reading either Drury or White, visit the primary worship service of three different churches and write a 5-page reflection paper summarizing your visits. This *should not* be about what you liked or disliked in the service. Rather, please discuss the service in light of the following theological tensions:

- Approaching God as immanent and/or transcendent
- Corporate worship as participation and/or presentation
- Corporate worship as outreach (seeker focused) and/or as believer focused
- Corporate worship as edification (people focused) and/or as God focused
- The value of newness and/or the value of tradition in corporate worship
- The place of form and/or freedom in corporate worship
- Corporate worship as culturally accessible and/or distinct from culture

Of the three worship services you visit, one should be liturgical (i.e., Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican) and one charismatic (i.e., evidencing ecstatic gifts of the Holy Spirit). One can be a service at your home church. At least two should be significantly different than the tradition with which you are most familiar. Please interact with related course material in your reflection papers. Please submit all three responses in one paper with one title page and include the date, church name, and location of each service. Make sure this paper is about the specific content of that specific service (e.g., if you believe there is an emphasis on the transcendence of God, what songs/lyrics, prayers, Scripture, sacred actions, etc. specifically caused you to come to this conclusion? Include specific content.). Please read either White or Drury prior to your church visits and reference them in this assignment.

- Related learning outcomes: #2, #4.
- Assignment length: 5 pages.
- **Due date:** November 28, 2025.

Length of papers: Please keep papers to the required length (not longer or shorter) unless other length is approved in advance by the professor. An average word count should be 350 words per page. Please prepare papers according to MCS-Horizon Format Guide and please use 12-point type. Please use footnotes for all assignments.

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is being offered by VOD. Students taking the course through VOD are required to indicate this during their course registration. While VOD

recordings are available for any student who may be absent from class, non-VOD students are expected to attend class live following the class attendance policy.

- For this course, VOD students have the same assignment due dates as in-class students.
- Students will watch the lectures according to the following schedule:
 - o Day 1 Lectures and Report due October 11 at 11:59PM
 - o Day 2 Lectures and Report due October 16 at 11:59PM
 - o Day 3 Lectures and Report due October 22 at 11:59PM
 - o Day 4 Lectures and Report due October 27 at 11:59PM
 - o Day 5 Lectures and Report due October 31 at 11:59PM
- For each day, according to the schedule above, VOD students will submit a 2-3 minute Padlet video report that 1) affirms you have watched the required recording, 2) summarizes one thing you learned that will help you reach the course learning outcomes, and 3) explains at least one question you had after watching the class recording.
- In order to pass the course, VOD students must submit all of their VOD weekly submissions. These submissions are marked are pass/fail based on whether or not they demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the lecture content and in-class activities.
- The Late Assignment and Extension policy applies to all VOD Report submissions.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

1. Pre-Module Assignment	20hrs	9AM, Oct 6	20%
2. Class Participation	30hrs	N/A	10%
3. Post-Course Reading	15hrs	Nov 14	10%
4. Major Project	25hrs	Nov 14	40%
5. Reflection on Different Church Traditions	30hrs	Nov 28	20%
Total =	~120 h	ırs	100%

All assignments are due at 11:59pm *SK time* unless otherwise indicated.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Monday: Syllabus, course epistemology, introduce biblical worship, theological themes,

overview of OT engagement with God, abstract vs. biblical concrete, OT words and

examples, OT worship for the NT church

Tuesday: Overview of NT engagement with God, 20 centuries of worship?

Wednesday: Theological themes, Kiefert, the arts in worship

Thursday: Evaluating current trends in worship, postmodern/post-Christendom implications

for corporate worship, practicum

Friday: Lifestyle worship, Course wrap up

• Assignments will not be accepted after *December 1*, 2025.

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the <u>Horizon</u> & <u>MCS</u> Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines. The length of papers should fall within +/- 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall outside the length guidelines may not be graded. Assignments should be submitted via Populi under *Submissions* (not *Comments*). The resource at this <u>link</u> explains how to submit assignments on Populi.

Late Assignments and Extensions

Please contact the professor well in advance if you would like to request an adjustment to any of your due dates. No extensions will be granted beyond the end of the course unless approval is granted by Horizon's Assistant Academic Dean.

A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 days late, penalty of 20%. After six days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0.

Due dates and extensions for assignments (this is a personal message from the professor)

I don't participate in granting of extensions. In the real world, extensions don't really exist.

There are good (and bad) reasons for things getting done late and that happens to all of us.

My approach to this class is that, in consultation with the Horizon advisor, you will be the one to decide when an assignment cannot be handed in by the deadline. I will assume there may be good reasons but you need to tell me/Horizon advisor what the reasons are in advance. Whether an assignment is late is up to you. Late penalties may be involved for all late assignments. But I will not specifically grant extensions for course work (so please don't ask).

Please let me know if you have any questions about this. (Dale)

Grading

Grade	Percentage	GPA	Descriptor
A+	97-100%	4	Exceptional
A	93-96%	4	Excellent
A-	90-92%	3.7	Excellent
B+	87-89%	3.3	Good
В	83-86%	3.0	Good
B-	80-82%	2.7	Good
C+	77-79%	2.3	Satisfactory
С	73-76%	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	70-72%	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	67-69%	1.3	Minimal Pass
D	63-66%	1.0	Minimal Pass
D-	60-62%	0.7	Minimal Pass
F	<60%	0	Failure

Academic Integrity

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student's and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See here for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the <a href="https://examples.com/students

Horizon has a subscription to software that ensures the originality of academic writing, verifies the proper citation of all sources, and detects AI-generated content. When you submit an assignment, you will automatically receive a summary on Populi that includes your submitted files along with an originality score (a high originality score is positive).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage

In keeping with the Academic Integrity policy above, students must disclose on the title page of all assignments whether or not they have used AI and how they have used it. If the assignment has no title page, the student must disclose this to the instructor by some other means, such as in a comment on Populi. Students are expected to follow the policy for acceptable use of AI that is published in the Student Handbook.

Accessible Learning Services Information

Horizon is committed to provide safe and inclusive learning environments which equalize the opportunity for students with disabilities to meet the requirements of the institution, programs, and courses. The application for Academic Accommodations begins with a student disclosing a medical diagnosis or professionally documented learning disability during the application process. Enrolled students may contact Horizon's Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Richelle Bekkattla at rbekkattla@horizon.edu. All Academic Accommodations will adhere to the Guiding Principles listed in the Student Handbook.

Class Attendance (On Campus or Livestreaming)

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for, either on campus or through livestreaming with their camera on. A student must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss the equivalent of six hours of class (e.g., one day of a module course or two three-hours classes) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Livestreaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via livestream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of full engagement. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise, and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

Use of Technology

Horizon encourages the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material.
 This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the Horizon College and Seminary grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.

Bibliography

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