G212 Worship & the Arts

3 credits. Prerequisites: none.

Livestream Video on Demand

January 11 – April 16, 2027
Winter Semester
Monday's, 6pm – 9pm ET
(5pm – 8pm SK, switches to 4pm – 7pm SK mid-semester)

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Commenting on the Psalms, Bono (lead singer of Irish rock band, U2) once observed that "The only way we can approach God is, if we're honest, through metaphor, through symbol. So art becomes essential, not decorative..."[1]

Course Goals

Course Description

This course will provide students with an introduction to historical and biblical approaches to the arts in worship, along with a framework for cultivating creative expressions in the local church. Students will consider how the arts can serve the Church in community and spiritual formation while revitalizing the mission of the Church.

Relationship to Horizon and MCS's Missions

To prepare leaders for ministry, this course helps students consider how the arts can support Christian formation and communicate the Gospel through creative and culturally relevant engagement.

Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes

To demonstrate competency in *Ministry Development,* students will:

1. Identify major biblical and historical perspectives surrounding the arts in worship and their subsequent adaptations in various church contexts.
    - *Assessment:* Reflection Paper
2. Analyze the arts' (musical, visual, architectural, poetic, videographic, etc.) unique advantages and limitations for fostering spiritual formation and practices.
    - *Assessment:* Church Field Report Analysis

[1] John Thompson (2016, April 26). "When Bono met Eugene Peterson. . . " *Think Christian*. Retrieved March 2, 2023. https://thinkchristian.net/when-bono-met-eugene-peterson.

3. Create a philosophy of worship that incorporates the arts and resonates with one's own strengths and community expression.
    - *Assessment:* Reflection Paper
4. Develop pathways to encourage artistic engagement in the local church.
    - *Assessment:* Reading Response; Paper & Presentation.

Course Work

Required Readings

Taylor, W. David O. *Glimpses of the New Creation: Worship and the Formative Power of the Arts.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. ISBN: 978-0802876096 DTL

**While students have the benefit of accessing many of their textbooks online through the Digital Theological Library, 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.

Course Assignments and Activities

1. *Church Field Report Analysis* – 25%
Students will analyze a worship service, its engagement of the arts, evaluate it, and integrate class content with what they have experienced. To complete this assignment, students will attend a worship service at a church of their choice (preferably one of the church's main gatherings, e.g., Sunday morning). Students will record what they experienced in their visit by taking into account (but not restricted to):

- the worship space - (building facilities [auditorium], furniture, lighting, visual art [if any])
- media - (video used, if any)
- sound - (instruments used, vocalist(s), volume level)
- the worship experience - (congregational participation)
- preaching - (sermon style & content)
- prayer(s) - (who led and at what part(s) of the service?)
- altar ministry - (if any)
- hospitality - (food/beverage & fellowship time)

In your report and analysis (written or video), respond to the following reflection questions:

1) What stood out to you about this congregation's worship?
2) What would your assessment be of their arts engagement in worship?
3) If you had a chance to sit down with the lead pastor, what would you want to know about this church's approach(es) to art forms and expressions within a worship service?
4) If you had a chance to get to know the congregation more and they wanted to consult you on taking some steps towards incorporating more artistic expressions, what would you suggest?

- Related learning outcome: #2.
- **Assignment length:**
    - If written, 1200 words, about 4 pages *OR*
    - If a video, 10 minutes + 1 pages of notes in an outline
- **Due date:** February 10, 2027, by 8pm ET.

2. *Reading Response* – 25%

Read the course textbook and write your own response to it. Summarize and critique at least five of your favourite chapters. Explain how you might apply this textbook's material to your own ministry context. State on the title page whether you have read the textbook in its entirety or not. Cite page numbers in footnotes throughout your response.

- Related learning outcome: #4.
- **Assignment length:** 900 words, 3 pages.
- **Due date:** February 19, 2027, by 8pm ET.

3. *Paper & Presentation* – 25%

Create or choose two pieces of artwork that would highlight the power of prayer as part of an overall Sunday service (such as International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church), or a specific prayer service. In your paper, answer the following questions:

1) Why did you create/choose these particular pieces of art?
2) What do their forms uniquely reveal about the topic?
3) In what ways might you utilize them within a service (as part of a sermon, or during congregational singing, in quiet reflection, or while entering the building, etc.)?
4) How would these pieces enhance the church's worship and engage the congregation?
5) Do these creative pieces reference any particular Scripture, and if so, how do they align one's imagination with the passage?
6) Do they highlight a particular current event or Global Church experience that one's local church can be made aware of?
7) In what ways might these artworks be limited in its messaging?
8) When and how would they need further explanation or elaboration?

Additionally, in 5 – 10 minutes, present your key findings to the class and be ready to respond to a few questions from fellow students. If you find it helpful, you can distribute material with a short description of the artwork to participating students.

VOD students will either join the class by livestream or record a video and Upload your video to OneDrive (instructions here) and then submit the link to your professor on Populi. Do not upload a video file directly on Populi. There is no need to share this video publicly. If the video recording option is chosen, the link must be submitted three days before the live presentations (tentatively March 12 or March 19). Make sure to cite any sources used, including any artwork used.

- Related learning outcome: #4.
- **Assignment length:** approximately 900 words (3 pages), plus 5 – 10-minute presentation
- **Due date:** Tentatively March 15 or 22, 2027 (dates will be confirmed in class)

4. *Reflection Paper* – 25%

This paper will summarize your learning experience from the textbook and class material. Reflect on how your perspective has changed (or not) about the integration of arts in the worship service and space. Try and answer the following questions during your writing:

- What has been your experience of art in your local church setting so far in your spiritual journey?
- What art forms have primarily formed your relationship with God and your spiritual disciplines?
- What are three new ideas from this course about artistic expression that have expanded your understanding of worship?
- What theological and biblical support/foundation would you give about the necessity to communicate, contemplate, and celebrate God's eternal character and actions in human history through various art forms in the Church?
- End your paper by writing about your own philosophy of worship and the arts (two pages). Include your own definition of worship, and approaches to congregational engagement within an imagined or real ministry context.

In addition

- Use a conclusion to summarize your thoughts.
- Cite a minimum of 3 scholarly sources.
- Include footnotes and a bibliography.

- Related learning outcomes: #1 and 3.
- **Assignment length:** approximately 1200 – 1500 words, 4 to 5 pages
- **Due date:** April 5, 2027, by 8pm ET.

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is 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 and different* assignment due dates as in-class students.
    - Church Field Report Analysis: due February 10 (unchanged)
    - Reading Response: due February 19 (unchanged)
    - Paper and Presentation: tentatively due March 15 or 22 (if VOD students join the class to present live). Tentatively due March 12 or 19 at 8pm ET (if VOD students submit a link to their presentation)
    - Reflection Paper: April 5 (unchanged)

- By Saturday at 11:59PM each week, VOD students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities from the previous week's class. VOD students will submit a 2–3-minute 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.

- Week1 Lectures and Report due Saturday, January 16 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 2Lectures and Report due Saturday, January 23 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 3 Lectures and Report due Saturday, January 30 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 4 Lectures and Report due Saturday, February 6 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 5 Lectures and Report due Saturday, February 13 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 6 Lectures and Report due Saturday, March 13 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 7 Lectures and Report due Saturday, March 20 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 8 Lectures and Report due Saturday, March 27 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 9 Lectures and Report due Saturday, April 3 by 11:59pm ET
- Week 10 Lectures and Report due Saturday, April 10 by 11:59pm ET

- Students registered to attend by VOD will fulfill the course attendance requirements through their video report submissions. They must submit their VOD reports on time to be registered as present for class.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	**Assignment Weighting**
1. Church Field Report Analysis	11 hrs	Feb 10	25%
2. Reading Response	30 hrs	Feb 19	25%
3. Presentation	8 hrs	TBD, March 15 or 22	25%
4. Reflection Paper	8 hrs	April 5	25%
Total =	90 hrs		

All assignments are due at **8pm ET time**, unless otherwise indicated.

Assessment Rubrics
Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi. Click on the name of the assignment to access each rubric.

Course Outline

Jan 11	Course Intro and Syllabus Overview, Worship and the Arts – Definitions, Influences, Historical Viewpoints
Jan 18	Worship Paradigms – Missional, Spiritual Formation, Dynamic Encounter
Jan 25	Worship and Artistic Expressions in the Bible
Feb 1	Worship and the Musical Arts
Feb 8	Worship and the Visual Arts Worship and the Architectural Arts ***Due Feb 10 – Church Field Report Analysis***

Feb 15	*—No class: Family Day—* ***Due Feb 19 – Reading Response***
Feb 22	*—No class: Reading Week—*
Mar 1	*—No class: Module Week—*
Mar 8	Worship and the Poetic Arts Worship and the Narrative Arts
Mar 15	Worship and the Theatre Arts Worship and the Kinetic Arts ***To be confirmed: due Mar 15 or 22– Presentation***
Mar 22	Worship and Technical Arts ***To be confirmed: due Mar 15 or 22– Presentation***
Mar 29	Worship and the Arts in Multi-Ethnic Contexts (Ethnodoxology introduction) ***Due April 5 – Reflection paper***
Apr 5	Worship and the Arts Engagement in the Local Church Course Evaluation

- Revision week is April 12 – 16, 2027. Students are encouraged to submit revised assignments soon after they receive their marked assignments.
- No assignments will be accepted after the course end date: *April 16, 2027.*

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines
Please see the Horizon & MCS 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 link explains how to submit assignments on Populi.

Extensions
To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Request Extension Form* on the MCS or Horizon website and *before the due date*. Professors reserve the right to deny extensions. Generally, the sooner that a student asks for an extension, the more willing faculty tend to be in granting extensions. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late Assignments
Students are expected to submit work by the assigned or extended due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 calendar days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 calendar days late, penalty of 20%; after 6 calendar days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0 and no opportunity for revision. Any late penalty incurred on a first submission will be applied regardless of if the student chooses to continue learning through the revision process.

Assignment Completion
Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

Competency Assignment Revisions
After each assignment has been marked, students have the opportunity to continue learning in response to feedback they receive on assignments. Students can submit one revision for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward demonstrating competency. Revised assignments may be submitted up to the course end date, although students are encouraged to submit them soon after they receive their marked assignments. Assignments submitted later than one week before the course end date are ineligible for revisions.

Horizon and MCS's College Assessment of Student Work
The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, rather than solely earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment. Once a student's assignment has met all assignment completion requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. The opportunity for revisions exists according to the "Assignment Revisions" policy.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Horizon and MCS Competency Scale</th><th>Descriptor</th><th>Letter Grade</th><th>Grade Point</th><th>U of S Equivalency</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">E</td><td rowspan="3">Exceeding expectations</td><td>Student demonstrated exceptional achievement of the learning outcomes.</td><td>A+</td><td>4.0</td><td>90-100</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Student demonstrated excellent achievement of the learning outcomes.</td><td>A</td><td>4.0</td><td>85-89</td></tr>
<tr><td>A-</td><td>3.7</td><td>80-84</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">M</td><td rowspan="3">Meeting expectations</td><td rowspan="3">Student demonstrated good achievement of the learning outcomes.</td><td>B+</td><td>3.3</td><td>77-79</td></tr>
<tr><td>B</td><td>3.0</td><td>73-76</td></tr>
<tr><td>B-</td><td>2.7</td><td>70-72</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">BTM</td><td rowspan="6">Beginning to meet expectations</td><td rowspan="3">Student demonstrated satisfactory progress in achieving the learning outcomes.</td><td>C+</td><td>2.3</td><td>67-69</td></tr>
<tr><td>C</td><td>2.0</td><td>63-66</td></tr>
<tr><td>C-</td><td>1.7</td><td>60-62</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Student demonstrated minimal progress in achieving the learning outcomes.</td><td>D+</td><td>1.3</td><td>57-59</td></tr>
<tr><td>D</td><td>1.0</td><td>53-56</td></tr>
<tr><td>D-</td><td>0.7</td><td>50-52</td></tr>
<tr><td>NYM</td><td>Not yet meeting expectations</td><td>Student made insufficient progress toward meeting learning outcomes.</td><td>F</td><td>0.0</td><td>0-49</td></tr>
</table>

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 Student Handbook.

Horizon and MCS have 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 Horizon and MCS Student Handbooks.

Accessible Learning Services Information

Horizon and MCS are committed to provide safe and inclusive learning environments which equalize the opportunity for students with disabilities to meet the requirements of the institutions, 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 Accessibility services personnel (at MCS, the Director of Academic Success, Wendy Holmes at wendy.holmes@mcs.edu; at Horizon, the Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Richelle Bekkattla at rbekkattla@horizon.edu). All Academic Accommodations will adhere to the Guiding Principles listed in the Student Handbooks. Students with documented accommodations on file pertaining to accessing course readings in alternate formats are encouraged to contact the librarian for assistance with as much advanced notice as possible.

Class Attendance

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. Students registered to attend on-campus or via livestream must be present for the full duration of a class period to be marked as present for the class. Students registered to attend by VOD must submit their VOD reports on time to be marked as present for class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss up to twenty percent of the total class time (e.g., one day of a module course, two 3-hour classes, etc.) 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 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 and MCS encourage 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 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 (potentially including future online video courses) 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.

Library Support and Research Assistance
Library staff are available to meet with students (online or in person) who need assistance with

- citing sources and identifying credible resources;
- developing research and information literacy skills;
- searching DTL and other library resources.

Bibliography

Begbie, Jeremy, Daniel Train, and W. David O. Taylor. *The Art of New Creation Trajectories in Theology and the Arts*. Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2022.

Begbie, Jeremy, and Steven R. Guthrie. *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2011.

Fujimura, Makoto. *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020.

Hawn, C. Michael. *One Bread, One Body: Exploring Cultural Diversity in Worship*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

Ingalls, Monique Marie, and Amos Yong, eds. *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015.

Krabill, James R., Frank Fortunato, Robin P. Harris, and Brian Schrag. *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2013.

Taylor, W David O. *Glimpses of the New Creation: Worship and the Formative Power of the Arts.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019.

_____. *A Body of Praise: Understanding the Role of our Physical Bodies in Worship*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023.

Packiam, Glenn. *Worship and the World to Come Exploring Christian Hope in Contemporary Worship*. Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2020.