

MUSM 5286/MUAG 4740 SACRED MUSIC IN THE POST-MODERN CONTEXT

FALL 2025

3:00 PM-5:00 PM, MUSIC BUILDING 322

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

Dr. Joshua Taylor

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An exploration of worship and the role of sacred music in the 21st Century Church. Various styles and contexts of worship and arts ministry will be explored through reading, lecture, and projects.

COURSE GOALS:

At the conclusion of the course, students will:

- be able to discuss the role of sacred music in worship in the post-modern church.
- identify the structures of worship across different traditions.
- learn how to select hymns and other appropriate music for congregational worship using the Revised Common Lectionary and other resources.
- learn basic practices for contemporary and supplemental ensembles in the church music ministry.

COURSE TEXTS:

Baker, Jonny (2010). *Curating Worship*. Seabury Books. New York.
ISBN 978-1-59627-137-1 (PAPERBACK)

Bauer, Michael (2013). *Arts Ministry: Nurturing the Creative Life of God's People*. Wb. Eerdmans. Grand Rapids, MI
ISBN 978-0-802-86928-9 (PAPERBACK)

Duck, Ruth (2021). *Worship for the Whole People of God. Second Edition*. Westminster John Knox Press. Louisville, KY.
ISBN 978-06642-6476-5 (PAPERBACK)

Eicher, David, ed. (2013). *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*. Westminster John Knox Press. Louisville, KY.

ISBN 978-0-664-5034-8 (HARDBACK)

Scheer, Greg (2006). *The Art of Worship: A Musician's Guide to Leading Modern Worship*. Baker Books. Grand Rapids, MI.

ISBN 978-0-801-06709-9 (PAPERBACK)

COURSE ACTIVITIES & ASSESSMENTS (100 points total)

Weekly Canvas Discussion Forums (20 points)

Book Abstracts (3 @ 5 points = 15 points)

Mid-Term Presentations: Comprehensive Plan for Worship (20 points)

Report on Chapter from Arts Ministry (10 points)

Final (25 points)

Attendance and Participation in Class (10 points)

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Because this class only meets once a week, every class meeting is essential to your success.

After one unexcused absence, each additional unexcused absence will lower your grade by one letter grade.

LATE WORK:

We will not accept late work in this course. All work turned in after the deadline will receive a grade of zero unless the student has a university-excused absence, and provides documentation with 48 hours of the missed deadline.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) *Mid-Term Presentation: Comprehensive Plan for Worship for sermon series or liturgical season.*

Using assigned texts, select hymns, choral, organ or other music to complement each worship experience. In a 20-minute class presentation be prepared to share/lead the following:

- a. Provide rationale for selecting this particular music including specific text references.
- b. Lead and/or accompany class singing of 2 pieces of music in the presentation
- c. Provide historical commentary on each hymn selected.
- d. A minimum of two hymns must be included in each worship experience.
- e. Prepare a 1-page summary of all selections to share with the class.

Due September 25

- 2) *Report on Chapter from Arts Ministry: Nurturing the Creative Life of God's People.*

A chapter of Bauer's book will be assigned for analysis and presentation to the class. In a 20-minute class presentation summarize the chapter for your classmates. Presentations should include a class handout.

Due October 16

- 3) *Readings.* All assigned chapters are to be read prior the class discussion. Participation in class discussion accounts for 10% of final grade.
- 4) *Final.* This course will have a written final at the end of the semester.
- 5) *Attendance* Perfect attendance is expected since our class meets only once per week.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

- August 21: Course Introductions
Life Together: Our Common Worship- Where We've Been, Where We Are, Where We're Going (part 1)
Setting the Stage: Capturing a vision and attending to details in worship planning
Curating Worship (part 1)
Reading: Scheer Ch. 1 & Ch. 4
- August 28: Life Together: Our Common Worship- Where We've Been, Where We Are, Where We're Going (part 2)
Curating Worship (part 2)
Worship (and music) as Participation of All God's People
Reading: Scheer Ch. 2 & Duck Ch. 4
- September 4: Understanding Worship Structures (cultural differences, denominational resources, etc.)
Beyond the Choir: Contemporary Worship Ensembles (part 1)
Advent, Lent, Ordinary Time! Oh My! Planning for the Church Ensemble (part 1)
Reading: Duck Ch. 5, Ch. 7, Ch. 14
- September 11: Worship Structures (four-fold pattern and other options)
Beyond the Choir: Contemporary Worship Ensembles (part 2)
Blended Worship
Advent, Lent, Ordinary Time! Oh My! Planning for the Church Ensemble (part 2)
Reading: Scheer Ch. 3, Ch. 5, Ch. 6
- September 18: Beyond the Choir: Children and Youth Ensembles (guest lecturer)
Op-Ed: Unconventional Music for an Unconventional Church
Reading: Ferguson "A Musician's Guide to Church Music" (selected chapters)
Provided by instructor.

September 25: Beyond the Choir: Children and Youth Ensembles (part 2)

Assignment Due: Midterm Presentations- Comprehensive Plan for Worship for sermon series or liturgical season

October 2: Repertoire and Resources: Weddings and Funerals
Beyond the Choir: Handbells (possible off-site meeting with handbell workshop)

October 9: Art, Architecture and Christian Worship (part 1)
Taize Music and Worship
Taking it to the Street: Music and Mission (part 1)
Reading: Bauer Ch. 5, Taize introduction (provided by instructor)

October 16: Art, Architecture and Christian Worship (part 2)
Iona Abbey Worship Book and Wild Goose Resources
Assignment Due: Report on Chapter from Arts Ministry: Nurturing the Creative Life of God's People
Reading: Iona Community introduction (provided by instructor)

October 23: Church Music, Media, and Marketing: Music Ministry Public Relations
Repertoire & Resources: Technology and Church Music Ministry
Taking it to the Streets: Music and Mission (Part 2)
Reading: Baker Part I

October 30: Caring for the Community: Music as Pastoral Care

November 6: Vital Worship for the 21st Century- Closing Conversation

November 13: Off-site class at First United Methodist Church Denton

November 20: FINAL

November 27: THANKSGIVING

December 4: No Class – Reading Day

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a

different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

See: [Academic Integrity](#)

LINK: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Link: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at [my.unt.edu](#). All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: [ODA](#)

LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)