



Birmingham Theological Seminary  
2200 Briarwood Way  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243  
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## **PS1970: Theology of Public Worship Syllabus**

**Semester:** Fall 2025

**Day & Time:** Monday, 5:30 – 7:20 PM

**Professor:** John E. Haines, Th.D.

**Email:** drhainespapers@gmail.com

**Course:** PS1970: Theology of Public Worship

**Room:** A201

**Credits:** 2

**Phone:** 205-612-5199

**Course Description:** This course is an introductory study of Biblical worship and worship leadership. Questions such as: How does the Scripture define worship and worshipers; what are the qualifications of a worship leader; how can a church maintain unity in a time of musical style conflicts; how do pastors and musicians work in harmony; how can pastors and musicians minister in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic situations, while remaining Biblical; what are the basic principles of crafting and leading in any Biblical worship service – will be considered by examining the Scriptures, Church history, source materials and collaborative study and discussion.

### **Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Give a Biblical definition of what true worship is and who true worshipers are.
2. Assess the spiritual call, qualifications, and readiness for worship leadership from a Biblical perspective and articulate those assessments practically.
3. Discuss and articulate the Biblical foundations and historical progression of worship and music and its subsequent diversity in the American Church, arriving at practical, Biblical conclusions for church unity.
4. Discern the difference between Biblical principles and preferences in multi-cultural and ethnic contexts.
5. Know the resources needed to craft and lead several different types of public worship services.
6. Apply basic principles of designing and leading a worship service through practical experience in the classroom.
7. Draft a proposal for a working philosophical plan for their particular church culture that addresses the two or three major needs that they face.

**Required Texts:**

1. Holy Bible (ESV)
2. Bounds, E. M. (1835-1913): *Power Through Prayer*. (Free online PDFs as well as a Kindle version are available)
3. DeYoung, Kevin: *A Theology of Worship* [The Gospel Coalition Website [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org); October, 2015 – *please scroll to the bottom of the article and download the larger version.*]
3. Kauflin, Bob. *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. (ISBN: 13:978-1-58134-824-8 (Kindle version available).

*Kauflin's book will be our primary source for understanding the character and role of the worship director.*

4. Kelly, Douglas F: *Systematic Theology (Volume 3), "The Holy Spirit and the Church"*. Mentor, 2021. (*Either a hard copy or Kindle versions are fine.*)
5. Kelly, Douglas F: "The Puritan Regulative Principle, Lesson 7, Lectures 1 and 2" [RTS Mobile app: go to: RTS Global Greatest Hits; Dr. Douglas Kelly; Ecclesiology and Sacraments;

*Kelly's book and lectures on the Puritan Regulative Principle will be the primary reading sources for establishing our theological foundation for a worship philosophy.*

**Course Requirements and Assessments:**

1. **READING ASSIGNMENTS** **(50% of grade)**  
On the honor system, it is assumed that each student has read the material.
2. **WEEKLY SHORT ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS.** **(25% of grade)**  
A short, weekly essay of approximately 1-2 paragraphs, written so that an 8<sup>th</sup> grader can understand it, is submitted on the topic listed in the class outline.
3. **FINAL PAPER** **(25% of grade)**

**BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:**

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

### **BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy**

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **WEEK 1: 9-8**

##### **Lecture Topic:**

##### **Worship, Worshipers, and Worship**

##### **Leaders Defined**

##### Scripture Reading:

John 17: 20-26

##### Reading Assignment

Kauflin ch. 1-5; Bounds, ch. 1

##### Writing Assignment:

Give a Scriptural definition of a worshipper. (Objective 1)

#### **WEEK 2: 9-15**

##### **Lecture Topic:**

##### **The Priesthood of Christ**

##### Scripture Reading:

1 Cor. 8 and 11; 1 Peter 4:7-11

##### Listening Assignment:

Kelly, Lectures on the Puritan Regulative Principle.

##### Writing Assignment:

How should a church address conflict that arises from music style preferences?  
(Objective 3)

#### **WEEK 3: 9-22**

##### **Lecture Topic:**

##### **Worship According to Scripture II**

##### Scripture Reading:

Nehemiah 12; John 4:23-24

##### Reading Assignment:

Kelly, Systematic III (*Part I: The Gift of the*

*Holy Spirit)*

Writing Assignment:

How should a church regulate its worship service?

(Objectives 4, 5)

**WEEK 4: 9-29**

**Lecture Topic:**

**How Close Does God Get in Worship?**

Scripture Reading:

Psalms 137; Zeph. 3; Acts 13: 2

Reading Assignment:

Kauflin, 28-32

Writing Assignment

How does the Scripture address God's transcendence and immanence in corporate worship?

(Objectives 3,4)

**WEEK 5: 10-6**

**Lecture Topic:**

**The Sacraments**

Scripture Reading:

Ezekiel 8-11; 2 Chronicles 20; 1 Cor. 11;

Reading Assignment

Kelly, Systematic III (*Part II – The Ministry*)

*of the Holy Spirit to the Church*)

Writing Assignment

How can you assess whether or not God's Presence is in a worship service?

(Objectives 3,4)

**WEEK 6: 10-13**

**Lecture Topic:**

**Does God Care About Beauty and Excellence?**

Scripture Reading:

Ex. 26-31; Deut. 12-33; Ezra 8; 2 Tim. 4

Reading Assignment

Kelly, Systematic III (*Part III – Living in the*)

*Holy Spirit*)

Writing Assignment

What is the liturgical focal point of worship in your church? What do you believe Scripture teaches it should be?

(Objectives 3,4)

*WEEK 7: No Class (National Missions and Fall Break)*

**WEEK 8: 10-27**

**Lecture Topic:**

**Principles vs. Preferences**

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 6: 1-8; Romans 12

Reading Assignment:  
Writing Assignment

Kauflin, ch. 6-17

What are three indispensable traits and three indispensable gifts of a worship leader?  
(Objectives 1, 2)

**WEEK 9: 11-3**

**Lecture Topic:  
and Unity of the Body**

**Worship Leadership, Submission**

Scripture Reading:  
Reading Assignment  
Writing Assignment:

Exodus 20; Lev. 10; Acts 5:1-11  
Kauflin, ch 18-27

Why is submission to leadership important in worship leading?  
(Objectives 2,4)

**WEEK 10: 11-10**

**Lecture Topic:  
Hymnody**

**An Historical Overview of Psalmody &**

Scripture Reading:  
Reading Assignment:

1 Chronicles 25; Acts 2; Rev. 5  
DeYoung, Theology of Worship

Assignment:  
(Objectives 5,6,7)

Work on Final Project

**WEEK 11: 11-17**

**Lecture Topic:  
Philosophy of Worship**

**Putting it All Together – A Working**

Reading Assignment  
Scripture Reading  
Assignment:  
(Objectives 5,6,7)

Re-read or catch-up on reading  
Hebrews 7-11  
Work on Final Project

**WEEK 12: 11-24**

**Lecture Topic:  
Philosophy of Worship**

**Putting it All Together – A Working**

Reading Assignment  
Scripture Reading  
Assignment:  
(Objectives 5,6,7)

Re-read or catch-up on reading  
Hebrews 12  
Work on Final Project

**WEEK 13: 12-1****Lecture Topic:  
Philosophy of Worship**

Reading Assignment

Scripture Reading

Assignment:

(Objectives 5,6,7)

**Putting it All Together – A Working**

Re-read or catch-up on reading

John 16-17

Work on Final Project

**WEEK 13: 12-8****Forum for Questions****WEEK 14: 12-15****No class. Papers due by midnight.****Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

**Class Policies and Procedures:**

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3-point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

**Video Conference Policies and Procedures:**

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

**Course Bibliography / Extended Bibliography**

Carson, D.A., ed. *Worship by the Book*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

Chapell, Bryan. *Christ Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice*. Grand

- Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Davis, Josh and Nikki Lerner. *Worship Together: In your Church as in Heaven*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Congregational Singing in the Early Church*. Symposium, "Ascending Voice", Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA: Everett Ferguson, June 5, 2007.
- Frame, John. *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practices of Biblical Worship*. P&R Publishing, 1996.
- Getty, Keith and Kristyn. *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017.
- Gibson, Jonathan and Mark Earngey. *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2018.
- Hicks, Zachary M. *The Worship Pastor*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Hustad, Donald P. *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal*. Carol Stream, Ill: Hope Publishing Company, 1993.
- Johnson, Terry L. *Reformed Worship: Worship that is According to Scripture*. Durham, 2015.
- Kauflin, Bob. *True Worshipers: Seeking What Matters to God*. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2015.
- Labberton, Mark. *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God's Call to Justice*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2007.
- Old, Hughes Oliphant: *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Millar, Patrick. *The Story of the Church's Song*. Edited by James Rawlings Sydnor. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962.
- Rayburn, Robert G. *O Come, Let Us Worship*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980.
- Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith: Part Four – The Church*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.
- Reynolds, William J. and Milburn Price, David W. Music. *A Survey of Christian Hymnody*. 5th. Carol Stream, Illinois: Hope Publishing Company, 2010.
- Schaff, Philip. *The Early Church Fathers*. Logos. Christian Literature Company, 1886.
- Westermeyer, Paul. *Te Deum: The Church and Music*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998.

Wilson-Dickson, Andrew. *The Story of Christian Music*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.  
Zondervan. *The NIV Study Bible*. Edited by Kenneth Barker. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985.

**GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**

<b>A to A-</b>	<b>B to B-</b>	<b>C to C-</b>	<b>D to D-</b>
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors



Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>

## BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

**1: this outcome is not covered in this class**

**2: this outcome is only touched on in this class**

**3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material**

**4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)**

**5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)**

1. Scripture: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
2. Reformed Theology: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. Wisdom: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. Discipleship: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. Communication: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. Worldview: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. Leadership: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rationale (one sentence)
Scripture	5	Scripture is foundational for defining worship and worshippers.
Reformed Theology	5	Reformed Theology is the lens through which we will discuss worship.
Local Church	4	Students are required to propose a working philosophical place for their particular church culture.
Wisdom	4	Students are required to discern the difference between Biblical principles and preferences in multi-cultural and ethnic contexts. Students will also apply basic principles of designing and leading a worship service.
Discipleship	4	This course will grow the students understanding of the ordinary means of grace experienced in public/corporate worship.
Communication	4	Students will grow in the communicative skill of leading in public/corporate worship.
Worldview	3	Students will grow in their understanding of how Scripture and the Reformed view of worship shape a Christian worldview.
Leadership	4	Students will grow in their knowledge of designing and in the skills of leading in public worship.