

# Vital Worship in the 21st Century

with Dr. Marcía McFee



FT- 8217 Vital Worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (online)  
Syllabus for San Francisco Theological Seminary  
Fall 2017

*(see syllabus for times—generally Thursday mornings, although not every week)*

# Course Overview

Friends, welcome and thank you for becoming a part of this course through San Francisco Theological Seminary. I believe you have registered for this course because you are truly interested in learning more about worship and the ways in which meaningful and memorable worship can energize Christians for their work of discipleship and deepen their personal and corporate spiritual journeys.



Worship is my passion and I look forward to sharing this journey with you. I truly believe liturgy is what it literally means—the “work of the people” and that includes considering who learns and teaches and empowers the people in the history and theology of worship. My motto has always been:

“if liturgy literally means ‘the work of the people,’  
let’s put the people to work!”

Worship is the portal through which visitors find a spiritual home, members grow to greater discipleship and the whole congregation is inspired to “go and do likewise” in the world. The need is great for vital worship at the epicenter of congregational life. This course will explore the depths of spirituality, excellence of practice in sensory-rich communication and intentional preparation needed by leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century church for worship that revitalizes congregations.

I believe the mission of worship is to build up the Body of Christ for its work in the world through encounter with the Holy Living One. Let’s begin our journey of finding out what that means theologically, theoretically and practically!

-- Dr. Marcia McFee

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# Materials

## Required Reading:

Ruth C. Duck, *Worship for the Whole People of God: Vital Worship for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* Westminster John Knox, 2013.

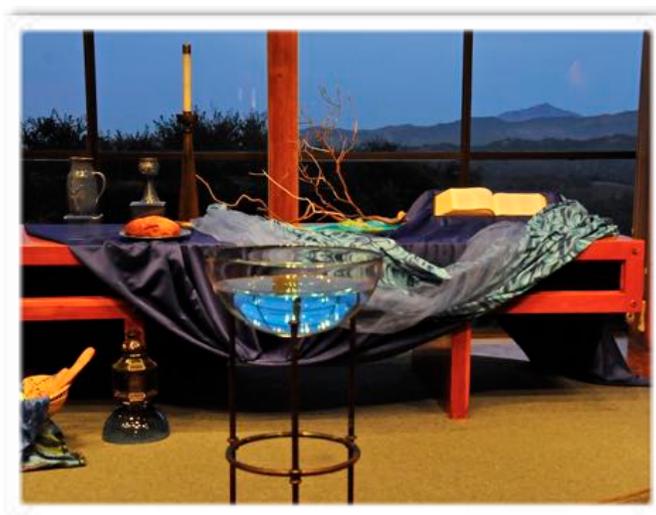
Kimberly Bracken Long, *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Marcia McFee, *Think Like a Filmmaker: Sensory-Rich Worship for Unforgettable Messages*. Trokay Press, 2016.

Laurence Hull Stookey, *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*. Abingdon Press, 1996.

James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship*. Abingdon Press, 1993.

Denominational Worship Books and liturgical theologians appropriate to each student's tradition—to be approved in the first 2 weeks of the course



## The Worship Design Studio (Required)

You will receive instructions about signing on to the Worship Design Studio for the duration of our course. Some of the assignments are housed at this site. It also contains many supporting materials that you may want to use during the course. **Video to get familiar with the**

**website:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsyDpqxY\\_dE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsyDpqxY_dE)

# Assignments & Grading

## Preparation for class

Students will prepare a worksheet recording short reflections about each reading. These must be posted in Moodle *before the start of each listed date on the syllabus (even if we are not meeting “in person” that particular week)*. This is in lieu of quizzes—let’s have great conversations in class by being prepared to discuss the material!

- 1) *Name at least three main points that you believe to be important for further consideration, research or practice*
- 2) *What insights did you gain?*
- 3) *What questions do you have?*

## Presentations

Each student will sign up for at least one presentation of reading material during the semester (the number of presentations will depend on the number of enrolled students in the online course). These presentations will be based primarily on research in the Stookey and White required texts listed above. These will be no more than 15 minutes in length with 10 minutes of class discussion based on a provocative question posed by the presenter.

## Worship Theology Paper

**Due:** October 25. Submit by email. 5 pm deadline.

**What:** 10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font, one inch margins

**Grading:** Based on quality of **research, analysis and reflection (in equal parts)**.

Using class readings and at least one additional resource for each section, write a paper in three sections:

- I. Theology of worship
- II. Theology of the table
- III. Theology of the font

Utilize scholarly methods and academic rigor in your research and analysis. Reflection about one’s own developing theology should reflect engagement with the authors and reflect knowledge of one’s own tradition.

## Visitation Report

**Due:** Anytime between October 25 and November 29

**What:** 5 pages

**Grading:** Based on reading, learnings from class discussion, observation and personal reflection. This is both an academic and a practical-reflective exercise. See guidelines in separate handout given the first day of class and posted in Moodle

## Final Project

**Due:** December 5

**What:** Worship Series Design including 1) Inspiration Page; 2) Frame Synopses for entire series; 3) Description of Thread Items; 4) First Sunday Script *and* Guide; 5) 5-7 page Commentary that connects the design concepts learned in class with your design

**Grading:** Based on completeness of the project, demonstration of design concepts in practice, and presentation to the class (includes embodiment of one piece of the script)

## Grade Distribution

Preparation, Participation & Presentations	25%
Worship Theology Paper	25%
Visitation Report	25%
Final Project	25%

## Course Schedule

This online course will require more observations of previously-recorded video teaching than you have experienced in the classroom setting and will take more self-time management and discipline on your part. The assignments have been assigned to particular dates and even when we are not meeting in person for discussion on a given week, you will be required to have your written reflections posted about those materials to Moodle on the date listed in the syllabus anyway. This will ensure that you do not get behind in your study of the materials. If you have a problem maintaining this rhythm, please contact Dr. McFee immediately.

There are three class sessions that are not scheduled for the Thursday time slot of 9-1pm Pacific. In our first meetings, we will talk about these dates to make sure these anomalies will work for those enrolled:

Nov 10 - Due to Dr. McFee's leadership at the National Council of Churches

Nov 20 - Thanksgiving week (*we will determine what alternative date/time works for the whole class*)

Dec 12 - If it works out, I'd like for online students to join classroom via video conference to share final project presentations with each other

# Course Schedule

- September 7 **(Online live class session 10:30am - 1p)**  
Overview: before class, watch “Interactive Tour of 3000 Years of Worship History–Only the Highlights”  
Introduction to Liturgical Time and Ritual Studies; Moving through the Syllabus
- September 14 **(Reboot Week #1 session only - live webinar 9am Pacific or watch recording and also review the following materials: )**  
*Theology:* What is worship? What is the mission of worship?  
**Duck 1-56**  
**Your denominational sources** - be prepared to talk about it  
*History:* Advent/Christmas: watch **Planning Retreat** footage (link on Moodle)  
and refer to materials:  
<http://worshipdesignstudio.com/wdsHome/files/adventchristmasyearb.pdf>  
*Ritual Studies:* Symbol Theory; Embodied Nature of Worship  
**Long Ch 2**  
**Article on Symbols** (posted to Moodle)
- September 21 **(Reboot Week #2 session live webinar 9am Pacific + online class session 10:30am - 1pm Pacific)**  
*Practices*  
Leadership  
**Long Ch 3**  
**Advent Series Idea** [come with a worship series title, we will complete the rest in class time]  
Writing Synopses; Anchor, Frames and Threads  
**TLAF (Think Like a Filmmaker) Ch 1**  
Visual and Media Arts  
**TLAF Ch 3 & 6**
- September 28 **(Reboot Week #3 session only - live webinar 9am Pacific or watch recording and also review the following materials: )**  
*Theology:* Eucharist  
**Duck 141-155; 183-204**  
**Your denominational sources** - be prepared to talk about it  
*History:* Eucharist [student presentation \_\_\_\_\_]  
Epiphany: watch **Planning Retreat** footage (link on Moodle)  
and refer to materials:  
<http://worshipdesignstudio.com/wdsHome/files/epiphanyplusyearb.pdf>  
*Ritual Studies:* Formation and Ritual Mastery  
**Article on Formation** (posted to Moodle)

- October 5 *(Reboot Week #4 session live webinar 9am Pacific + online class session 10:30am - 1pm Pacific)*  
 Practices  
 Leadership  
     **Long Ch 4**  
**Epiphany “Plus” Series Idea** *[come with a complete worksheet]*  
 Worship Teams  
     **TLAF Ch 2 (43-52; 65-66)**  
 Verbal Arts  
     **TLAF Ch 4**
- October 12 *(Reboot Week #5 session only - live webinar 9am Pacific or watch recording and also review the following materials: )*  
 Theology: Baptism  
     **Duck 157-181**  
     **Your denominational sources** - be prepared to talk about it  
 History: Baptism *[student presentation \_\_\_\_\_]*  
     Lent - watch **Planning Retreat** footage *(link on Moodle)*  
     and refer to materials:  
     <http://worshipdesignstudio.com/wdsHome/files/lentyearb.pdf>  
 Ritual Studies: Neuroscience, Physics and Ritual  
     **Article on Neuroscience** *(posted to Moodle)*
- October 19 *(Reboot Week #6 session live webinar 9am Pacific OPTIONAL + online class session 10:30am - 1pm Pacific)*  
 Practices  
 Leadership  
     **Long Ch 7**  
**Lent Series Idea** *[come with a complete worksheet]*  
 Brainstorming and Resource-Gathering  
     **TLAF Ch 2 (52-65)**  
 Music Arts  
     **TLAF Ch 5**
- October 26 NO CLASS - *Reading Week*  
**\*Worship Theology Paper DUE October 25. Submit by email. 5 pm deadline.**
- November 2 *(No online class session - review the following materials: )*  
 Theology: Prayer and Order of Worship  
     **Duck 67-76; 97-124**  
     **Your denominational sources** - be prepared to talk about it  
 History: Prayer *[student presentation \_\_\_\_\_]*  
     Holy Week: watch **Planning Retreat** footage *(link on Moodle)*  
     and refer to materials:  
     <http://worshipdesignstudio.com/wdsHome/files/holyweekyearb.pdf>  
 Ritual Studies: Pilgrimage  
     **Article on Pilgrimage** *(posted to Moodle)*

- November 10 *(Online class session 9am - 1pm Pacific - held on Friday, Nov 10 due to National Council of Churches event at which Dr. McFee is leading worship)*  
 Practices  
 Leadership  
**Long Ch 5**  
**Holy Week Ideas** *[come with a complete worksheet]*  
 Scripts and Guides  
**TLAF Ch 8 (215-233; 237-243)**  
 Dramatic Arts  
**TLAF Ch 7**
- November 16 *(No online class session - review the following materials: )*  
 Theology: Worship Leadership  
**Duck 62-67**  
**Long Ch 1**  
 History: Presidency *[student presentation \_\_\_\_\_]*  
 Easter/Pentecost: watch **Planning Retreat** footage (link on Moodle)  
*and refer to materials:*  
<http://worshipdesignstudio.com/wdsHome/files/easterpentecostyearb.pdf>  
 Ritual Studies: 15 Maxims of Christian Rituals a la Tom Driver  
**Article by Tom Driver** (posted to Moodle)
- November 20 *(Online class session 9am - 1pm Pacific)*  
 Practices  
 Leadership  
**Long Ch 6**  
**Easter Series Idea** *[come with a complete worksheet]*  
 Cue-to-Cue Rehearsals and Practices of Ritual Leaders  
**WDS**  
<http://worshipdesignstudio.com/wdsHome/files/tipsforcuetocuerehearsal.pdf>  
**TLAF Ch 8 (233-237)**

**\* Video Embodiment** *(parts of it memorized) of communion prayer and baptismal liturgy (if you are on a journey toward ordination; if not, consult with me about what ritual to embody)*

- November 30 *(No online class session - review the following materials: )*  
 Theology: Pastoral Liturgies  
**Duck 205-255**  
 History: Weddings, Funerals  
 Ordinary Time: watch **Planning Retreat** footage (link on Moodle)  
*and refer to materials:*  
<http://worshipdesignstudio.com/wdsHome/files/summerordinarytimeyearb.pdf>  
 Ritual Studies: Rites of Passage  
**Article on Rites of Passage** (posted to Moodle)

**\* Visitation Paper Due**

December 7

*(Online class session 9-11am Pacific)*

The Politics of Change

**TLAF Ch 9**

**Video presentations:**

<https://youtu.be/oU6djgCw8W4>

Prep for Presentations

December 12

*(Online class session 2-5pm Pacific - this is a Tuesday and will be broadcast from the classroom course at SFTS)*

Presentations

**\*Final Project Due**

