Early Christian Liturgical Practices  
PW 3273 – Spring 2012  
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary  
Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-2:50 pm  
Room Fellowship Hall  

Instructor: Cláudio Carvalhaes  
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Course Description:  
This course seeks to work with the complexity of the lex orandi, lex credendi and lex agendi (law of prayer, law of belief, and law of agency/ethics). The course will engage Christian liturgical practices and issues from the first to the fourth centuries and help students see how these social-religious-economic-political-cultural practices shaped and informed these early communities. By engaging in these practices, students will be able to see that the liturgical practices of Christian churches today are also social-religious-economic-political-cultural practices that define notions of communities and help shape the world around them.  

Intended Major Student Learning Outcomes:  
At the end of the course, students will be able to:  
1. Demonstrate familiarity with the history of early Christian liturgies.  
2. Connect liturgical practices with social, political, economic, religious and cultural aspects of the first to the third centuries as well as the twenty first century.  
3. Critically evaluate the ways that liturgies are inextricably related to broader issues of culture that help define ideas of society, country and world.  
4. Create and practice a variety of rituals related to the themes developed in this class.  
5. Describe the intricate connections between faith, bodily knowledge, and social structures.  
6. Articulate a possible renewal of the church from liturgical points of view.  

Course Requirements:  
1. Conscientious attendance and participation in discussion/ritual practices are fundamental. Students must come to class prepared with all the readings done and a willingness to participate. Please inform the instructor ahead of time if you have to miss class. Missing more than 2 classes puts you in danger of failing the course. (20%)  
2. Every student will lead two discussions and create a ritual in class in response to one assigned reading during the semester. (20%)  
3. Incorporating in-class learning, the class will prepare two worship services and present them in chapel April 19 (Thursday) and 25 (Wednesday). Preparation will be done in class with the instructor. (20%)  
4. Each student will visit a church different from his/her own and write a 3 page paper using Times New Roman font 12, making connections between the worship
experienced there and larger issues of culture such as social class, economics, gender participation, political aspects, etc. (20%)

4. Each student will write a 6-8 page final paper (double spaced) to be presented during the last day of class, wrapping up the semester and dealing with one theme developed in class, showing how this theme offers challenges, difficulties, and blessings to the church and the world today. The student needs to present a final class/presentation in order to pass this class. (20%)

Academic honesty:
All work you submit in this class is expected to be yours. Any quotation of the words of others must be clearly indicated, and all direct indebtedness must be acknowledged by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of Seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Inclusive Language:
In your writing and in your worship services, avoid language for people that leaves out part of the population or perpetuate stereotypes. Avoid gender specific pronouns when gender is unknown. Gender specific pronouns should be avoided when referring to God unless you are quoting from a theological text or a translation of the Bible that uses them.

* Please turn off cell phones before class begins.
* It is forbidden to use the internet during class.

Required Books


* The bookstore will have all the required books available if you want to buy them. All of the books/videos required and/or recommended are on reserve at the library.

Course Outline  (please note that this syllabus is subject to change)

February 2 - Introduction

February 7 - Origins of Christian Worship


February 9 - Didache


February 14 – Christian Initiation, Ministry and Ordination I


February 16 - Christian Initiation, Ministry and Ordination II

Reading: Johnson, Maxwell E. The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), pp. 1-40

February 21 – Prayer I


February 23 – Prayer II


February 28 – Baptism I

March 1 – Baptism II


March 6 – Eucharist I


March 8 – Eucharist II


March 13 - Arts and Music


March 15 - Healing


March 20-22 – Research and Study Week

March 27 – Kissing


March 29 - Martyrdom, Suffering and Memory

April 3 - Fasting, Passion and Sexuality


April 10 - Women and Storytelling


April 12 – Social Classes and Slavery


April 17 - Economics


April 19 - Fast, Feasts, Seasons and Artifacts


April 24 – Transformation and Bodily Knowledge

April 26 - Funeral


May 1 - Hegeria


* Note that this class will meet at Nelson Hall Rm #119

May 3 – Fourth Century


May 8 – Student Presentation

May 10 – Student Presentation