

RTS

O R L A N D O



COURSE SYLLABUS

PT 5300: *Worship*

Dr. Chuck Colson

Fall 2026

PROFESSOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE DATES

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August 28, 2026 (8.30 am – 3 pm)

August 29, 2026 (8.30 am – Noon)

October 2, 2026 (8.30 am – 3 pm)

October 3, 2026 (8.30 am – Noon)

November 13, 2026 (8.30 am – 3 pm)

November 14, 2026 (8.30 am – Noon)

COURSE COMPLETION DATE: December 9, 2026

COURSE OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to provide students with the biblical foundations for worship. This course will convince students that gathered worship is legitimate, necessary, important, and should be conducted biblically in both form and content. In addition, the course will address the crucial matters of music, congregational singing, contextualization, “worship styles,” and more. The goal is to prepare students to be biblical worshippers, to help others be biblical worshippers, and to be effective leaders in worship.

GOALS:

- To understand the theological principles that inform worship services in the Reformed tradition, especially with relation to the Westminster Standards;
- To grasp the dynamics that undergird true spiritual worship;

- To reflect upon the relationship between liturgical order, pastoral leadership, and spiritual worship;
- To engage critically with worship services in evaluation of their form, content, and execution;
- To gain facility in crafting worship services that edify a congregation by ushering them into communion with God through the means of grace.

COURSE DETAILS

1. GRADING SCHEDULE.

Late work will be penalized 1 letter grade per day, unless prior permission for late submission was granted.

The published RTS grading scale is used in this course. See the Catalog, page 53.

2. ATTENDANCE AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS.

Attendance and prepared participation is required. If class is not attended, the student's final grade will be affected. Late assignments are reduced 1 letter grade per day.

3. SPECIAL NEEDS.

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g. tape recorders, special adaptive equipment) is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor before the beginning of the course.

4. ACADEMIC HONESTY (QUOTED AND ADAPTED FROM DR. TIMOTHY PHILLIPS OF WHEATON COLLEGE).

The assignments are designed to extend and deepen your comprehension and appreciation of Christian theology and to increase your facility with theological method. The processes of defining a topic, researching the results of others' studies, critiquing those studies, and organizing your conclusions in a clear and cogent presentation provides valuable skills for your various leadership ministries. The use of sources is an essential step in appropriating the learning of the

Church's tradition in its relationship to cultures to help us understand and faithfully practice Scripture.

Using information obtained from a source without indicating it (whether by footnote, parentheses, or bibliography or some other appropriate reference, depending on the type of assignment) is plagiarism (intellectual thievery and lying). This applies to any information that you gain from someone that is not “common knowledge.” It does not apply only to exact quotations or precise verbal allusions. Altering the wording does not remove the obligation to acknowledge the source.

Cheating is the presentation of someone else’s work, which the student ought to have done personally. This includes submitting answers to test questions derived by some means other than that intended by the instructor. It also includes turning in written assignments composed in whole or in part by someone else.

Cheating or plagiarism results in the immediate failure of the entire course. Further disciplinary action may be taken as well.

5. DISCLAIMER.

This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the learning objectives, instructional format and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may become necessary.

6. SUPPORT:

Canvas allows you to interact with Dr. Colson via the Inbox function.

Canvas also allows for interaction with classmates. You can interact with classmates via the Student to Student forum or Conferences.

See FAQ on the Home Page or at Modules > Course Resources for instructions on various Canvas features.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

READING

Theology is an activity done largely through the process of good reading. Read carefully. Read charitably. Read with others. Read with the expectation that you will learn from others, even when you disagree with their main point. Read even when a text is dense and difficult, for you will learn perseverance and fortitude here. Read that which seems trite and obvious, asking how others might object or criticize. Most importantly, read because God was willing to reveal himself in

written words, and because we can best witness to God's grace with corresponding words. Read because words matter in God's economy of grace.

The following books are required:

Don Carson, ed., *Worship by the Book* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2002), 11-63, 193-248.

Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earney, eds., *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present* (New Growth Press: Greensboro, 2018).

Larry Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1999).

Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reformed according to Scripture* (Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, 2002).

James Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune Grace of God* (IVP: Downers Grove, 1996), 13-67.

Westminster Directory for the Public Worship of God

The following books are not required but are good resources to be aware of:

Trinity Hymnal (Great Commission Publications: Philadelphia, 1990).

The Hymnal 1982

Worship Resource Book

Book of Common Worship (1946)

Book of Common Worship (1993)

Book of Common Prayer (1662)

Book of Common Prayer (1979)

Bard Thompson, ed., *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1961).

Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1953), 7-36.

Mark Dever and Sinclair Ferguson, eds., *The Westminster Directory of Public Worship* (Christian Heritage: Fearn, 2008).

Hughes Oliphant Old, *Leading in Prayer: A Workbook for Worship* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1995).

Terry Johnson, ed., *Leading in Worship* (The Covenant Foundation: Oakridge, 1996).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS (10%)

Students will complete assigned readings and answer the reflection question assigned on Canvas. Successful answers integrate relevant readings, personal experience, lecture materials, and Scripture.

PARTICIPATION (5%)

Attendance in class is expected. Please contact me if you will be forced to miss class for unforeseeable reasons. During class, students are expected to participate by attentively listening, and contributing to discussions. Throughout the course, students will be required to construct various liturgical components and sequences. The completion of these assignments will be part of the participation grade. Students will also be required to memorize *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Questions 88-91 and 98-107 as part of this grade.

PSALM ANATOMIES (20%)

The Psalms are the prayer book of the Bible that provides a full diet of private and corporate prayers to God. To lead worship effectively, liturgists benefit from learning to inhabit the spirituality of the Psalms. This assignment is designed to introduce you to the Psalms and, hopefully, guide you into a lifelong engagement. Students will choose one psalm per assignment from the options below and compose a brief. Each brief will have two paragraphs: (1) provide a *tight* summary that captures the contents and traces the contours of the psalm and (2) reflect on the spiritual dynamics at play within the contents and contours of each psalm to consider what that psalm offers to a theology of Christian worship or to an element within a worship service. The length for each brief is 400-500 words; students need to consult and use five sources in the brief. Citations should follow the Chicago Manual of Style (no bibliography required at the end for these assignments).

Anatomy One: Psalm 25, 32, 38, 51, 73, 130, or 143

Anatomy Two: Psalm 9, 29, 30, 40, 80, 85, 107, or 138

Anatomy Three: Psalm 47, 92, 95, 96, 98, 103, 111, 145, or 148

EVALUATION OF SERVICES (20%)

Outline and critically interact with three assigned services viewed online during class. While this is dangerous, it is also extremely helpful for the pedagogical process. Each evaluation will have three sections: (1) outline the Order of Worship and provide short notes to capture each element, (2) analyze the content and coherence of the service, and (3) evaluate the liturgical execution of the ministers. Please include strengths and weaknesses of the service. Since these services are being viewed online, students will *not* include congregational participation in their evaluation. Also, the evaluation is *not* based on the video production values.

DRAFT LITURGIES (20%)

Students will draft three complete orders of worship, selecting and arranging all elements in accord with the principles taught in the course.

FINAL: ORDERS OF WORSHIP (25%)

The final project for the course will involve the construction of one full-length Sunday service which will reflect your theological convictions and liturgical preferences (a service with communion). Excellent grades will be given to those who demonstrate a theological orientation and creativity in accord with the principles taught in this course.

- The draft is to be exhaustive, including every word to be spoken or sung in the service with the exceptions of the sermon and congregational announcements. All transitions, instructions, lyrics, hymns, prayers, benedictions, etc. should be included—it is a FULL manuscript. Students may incorporate material from worship sourcebooks for different elements of the service; however, please indicate the source in a footnote.
- Identify the passage and intended focus of the sermon.
- Include a longer congregational prayer in each service that is written out (500-750 words). Write the prayer with real prayer requests arising from the local church you currently attend and any other petitions you desire to incorporate.
- Write a brief introduction to the service (no more than 250 words) that outlines your goals for the service. Through the course of the service, offer a running commentary in the footnotes that explains how each element contributes to your overall philosophy of worship and the goal of the service.
- If desired, you may indicate the location of the particular Sunday within the church calendar (i.e. Easter Sunday, First Sunday in Advent, Trinity Sunday).

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 28-29, 2026

Lecture One: The Purpose of Worship

Lecture Two: Divine Worship

Lecture Three: Principles of Reformed Worship

Lecture Four: Content of Worship—Elements

Assignments Due:

- Reading Due: Hurtado, 1-118; Reflection Question
- Reading Due: Torrance, 13-67; *Worship by the Book*, 11-63; Reflection Question

October 2-3, 2026

Lecture Five: The Order of Worship

Lecture Six: Constructing an Order of Worship: Part 1

Lecture Seven: Constructing an Order of Worship: Part 2

Lecture Eight: Evaluating a Service (Service Evaluation 1 in class)

Assignments Due:

- Reading Due: Old, 1-176; Reflection Questions
- Reading Due: *Worship by the Book*, 193-248.
- Psalm Anatomy 1 and 2

November 13-14, 2026

Lecture Nine: The Context of Worship: Sabbath and Sanctuary

Lecture Ten: Special Services: Funerals and Weddings

Lecture Eleven: Liturgical Excellence and Execution

Assignments Due:

- Psalm Anatomy 3
- Service Evaluation 2-3
- Draft Liturgies 1-2

December 9, 2026

Assignments Due:

- Draft Liturgy 3
- Final Project Due

FURTHER READING

Liturgy Planning Resources (*recommended resources*)

Trinity Hymnal

The Hymnal 1982

Worship Resource Book

Book of Common Worship (1946)

Book of Common Worship (1993)

Book of Common Prayer (1662)

Book of Common Prayer (1979)

Bard Thompson, ed., *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1961).

Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey, eds., *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present* (New Growth Press: Greensboro, 2018).

Mark Dever and Sinclair Ferguson, eds., *The Westminster Directory of Public Worship* (Christian Heritage: Fearn, 2008).

Hughes Oliphant Old, *Leading in Prayer: A Workbook for Worship* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1995).

Terry Johnson, ed., *Leading in Worship* (The Covenant Foundation: Oakridge, 1996).

Select Bibliography

Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

Harold Best, *Music through the Eyes of Faith* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).

Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2002).

Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, eds., *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2019, fourth edition).

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1559*, ed. John McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

Marva Dawn, *A Royal 'Waste' of Time* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

William Edgar, *Taking Note of Music* (London: SPCK, 1986).

Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey, eds., *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past*

- for the Present* (Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2018).
- D. G. Hart and John Muether, *With Reverence and Awe* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002).
- Reggie Kidd, *With One Voice: Discovering Christ's Song in Our Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).
- Andrew McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).
- James Hastings Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968).
- Hughes Oliphant Old, *Themes and Variations for a Christian Doxology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).
- David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1992).
- Robert Rayburn, *O Come, Let Us Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980).
- Allen Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006).
- Philip Ryken, Derek Thomas, Ligon Duncan, eds., *Give Praise to God* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003).
- Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).
- James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009).
- _____, *You Are What You Love* (Brazos: Grand Rapids, 2016).
- Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Westerfield Tucker, eds., *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford: OUP, 2006).
- Robert Webber, *Worship is a Verb: Eight Principles for Transforming Worship* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992).
- James White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).
- Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically* (Oxford: OUP, 2018).

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 02PT5300

Professor: Colson

Campus: Orlando

Date: Fall 2025

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	1. Student demonstrates ability to evaluate and plan coherent worship services in accord with Reformed principles of worship.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	1. Digest spiritual dynamics in the Psalms through writing assignments. 2. Interacts with relevant portions of Scripture and apply to liturgical use.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	1. Student learns Reformed principles of worship from WCF 1.6; 21.1-8 and WSC 88-91, 98-107.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	1. Psalm anatomy assignments designed to cultivate the heart of the liturgist.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	None	
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	1. Emphasis on worship in the vernacular, accessible to the public but true to Reformed principles.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	1. Learn to integrate sermon into worship service to give fuller import to preaching ministry.
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Strong	1. Review of historical liturgies in lectures which are to be incorporated in constructing services.

			2. Evaluation of services. 3. Construction of liturgies.
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Minimal	1. Connect worship to shepherding philosophy and emphasize congregational use of gifts in worship.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	None	