Course Objective
Worship, our response to God’s divine revelation, is biblically mandated and historically celebrated. Those responsible for leading others in matters of spiritual formation and biblical exegesis must grasp for themselves a thorough understanding of the theology of worship studies (focusing on purposeful worship, not power, politics and personal taste in worship).

The objective of this course will be to examine the biblical, historical and theological foundations of worship. We will then practically apply what we learn to our individual contexts and ministries so as to strengthen and encourage spiritual formation within our communities and ourselves.

Course Outline
1. Biblical, Historical and Theological
   Worship is biblically mandated and clearly outlined in the Scriptures. We will look at how the biblical traditions in worship and the last 2,000+ years of Christian worship affect our worship today. We will look beyond structure and tradition, and examine how our worship affects our theology and doctrine, and what we communicate to our congregations as a result.

2. Formational and Pastoral
   We were made to be continuously worshiping something. What is it? Is it really God? How can we lead congregations in worship to recognize this, while working against compartmentalizing their faith? How we worship directly affects our individual spiritual lives and our relationship with God. Pastors must carefully consider all elements of worship from music to transitioning sentences, to sacraments, to baptism rituals, to attire, to prayer, to Scripture reading, to exchanging the peace; how do these affect the congregation? Do they play into a consumerist mentality? Are the people coming to be fed, to be entertained? Are they coming out of guilt? Are they coming to socialize? Does the worship provide an environment that clearly celebrates the revelation of who God is and who we are as his people? We will spend time discussing the cycle of worship and relationship with the Lord and how pastors can lead in freedom and not fear of pleasing people.

3. Practical and Educational
   Now recognizing the importance of worship words and the shape of worship, how can pastors implement all they’ve learned? We will look at practical ways to educate staff members including the music minister, youth directors and all ministries as to how to lead from right-side-up worship. A main discussion will include an overview of resources available for use in a variety of contexts.

Course Requirements
1. In-class Participation.......................................................................................................................... 10%
   Every student is expected to contribute to creating a community space that encourages intellectual and spiritual growth, academic integrity, and humility. Our class members come from a wide array of backgrounds and serve God and the church with a variety of gifts and experiences. This diversity results in multiple perspectives that inform and enrich the classroom experience. Please extend an open mind and a hospitable spirit to all of those voices.

2. Worship Reflection/Online interaction (3).................................................................(10%, 10%, 10%) 30%
   Following each intensive weekend, students will be asked to observe two church services online (apart from their own context; a list of potential services will be provided). They will be given specific prompts and asked to reflect on how the churches address certain themes and/or issues.
These reflections will be posted online and students will be asked to respond to two other classmates by a given date.

3. **Biblical/Historical Reflection**  ........................................................................................................ 15%
   Students will be given a selection of topics, asked to choose one, and to then write a brief essay (approximately 1,500-2,000 words) on how that topic influences worship today.

4. **Ministry Action Plan** .......................................................................................................................... 10%
   In class, students will be given case studies. Based on their case study, students will complete a ministry action plan, including short- and long-term goals for one year in the given worship ministry, details of events and special services as well as how they think this will impact their given ministry (approximately 1,000 words).

5. **Children’s Book: Theology of Worship** .............................................................................................. (10%, 20%) 30%
   Each student will be asked to write a children’s book on worship (300 words or less, aimed at elementary students), explaining why we participate in worship. Along with this submission, they will include an essay outlining their theology of worship, incorporating biblical and historical foundations, and how this influenced the crafting of their children’s book. A key component of the essay will be how they understand the theology of worship to be spiritually forming (approximately 1,800-2,250 words, not including book).

6. **Reading log** ......................................................................................................................................... 5%
   Students will submit a reading log, reporting page numbers completed and a statement verifying the log.

**Required Texts (to be read in this order)**

**Group A (read completely before 2nd weekend): Biblical, Historical, Theological**

**Group B (read completely before 3rd weekend): Formational, Pastoral**

**Group C (to be discussed during 3rd weekend): Practical, Educational**
   These texts are not required but are excellent, practical resources that will aid whomever is responsible for planning worship. They will be discussed at length and are available in the library.

This course aligns with and incorporates all six articles of the Gordon-Conwell Mission and Purpose statement. This syllabus is subject to change. Changes, if any, will be announced in class or sent via email. Students will be held responsible for all changes. Plagiarism has serious academic, ethical and legal consequences. Intentional or unintentional failure to use appropriate documentation in papers, examinations, oral presentations, or other academic work will result in academic penalty.
# Grading Rubric for Essays: Worship Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focus &amp; Sequencing</td>
<td>The assertion is not articulated appropriately throughout the paper.</td>
<td>The assertion is articulated appropriately throughout the paper but the material is not logically presented.</td>
<td>Most material is logically organized and the assertion is articulated appropriately. Transitions were included in most sections.</td>
<td>All material is logically organized and the assertion is articulated well. Transitions were clear throughout and the sequencing was helpful to the reader.</td>
<td>All material is carefully sequenced to provide strong and insightful discussion. Transitions were clear and purposeful throughout.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Sources</td>
<td>The paper does not draw from adequate sources.</td>
<td>The paper refers to appropriate sources, but the references do not adequately support the arguments.</td>
<td>The paper makes clear use of source material in support of the foundational argument.</td>
<td>The paper skillfully references and interprets source material in a way that is integral to the foundational argument.</td>
<td>The paper skillfully references and interprets source material, showing critical thinking, original thought and full application in a way that is integral to the foundational argument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Writing</td>
<td>The paper reflects serious deficiencies in scholarly writing skills such as creativity, style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
<td>The paper reflects notable deficiencies in some aspects of scholarly writing. Writing may be informal in tone, awkward or unclear.</td>
<td>The paper reflects competence in the arts of scholarly writing. Writing has minimal unclear passages and overall the errors do not detract from the paper.</td>
<td>The paper reflects mastery of many of the arts of scholarly writing. Writing is easy to follow.</td>
<td>The paper reflects mastery of the arts of scholarly writing. Writing is streamlined, easy to follow and is engaging.</td>
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<td>Turabian</td>
<td>References, formatting and citation errors detract significantly from the paper.</td>
<td>References, formatting and citation errors detract from the paper.</td>
<td>Minimal references, formatting and citation errors are apparent.</td>
<td>Formatting errors were not found in references or citations.</td>
<td>Formatting errors were not found.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusions (final paper only)</td>
<td>Does not review key conclusions. Does not discuss the impact of worship on spiritual formation.</td>
<td>Provides minimal review of key conclusions. Does not discuss the impact of worship on spiritual formation.</td>
<td>Review of key conclusions is included. Minimal inclusion of reading material is present. An implication for the impact of worship on spiritual formation is suggested.</td>
<td>Includes a review of key conclusions as they align with the required reading. One or more implications for the impact of worship on spiritual formation are discussed.</td>
<td>Strong review of key conclusions as they align with the required reading. Multiple implications for the impact of worship on spiritual formation are discussed.</td>
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