



BACK TO THE HEART OF WORSHIP

BRES 3413: A Brief History of Christian Psalmody
Dr. Cliff Ganus, D.M.A.

Syllabus

Course Description:

The Christian church inherited the Psalter from the Jewish nation, and for centuries it held an honored place in Christian life and worship. Some Renaissance reformers insisted on congregational singing of the entire Psalter in translations loyal to the original text. Others held more relaxed views. In the last 250 years much of the emphasis in congregational song has shifted from text to music. Some attempts to revive an emphasis on congregational psalmody have had mild success.

Assignments and grading

BOOK REVIEW (35 points)

- Read **A Short History of Congregational Singing** by Cliff Ganus
- Write a 1,500-word, typed book review, relating it to the particular content of the course.
- In your review identify major figures, movements, and categories of congregational song. Make note of how Psalmody was involved.
- How does this history relate to you? Are you familiar with any of the selections mentioned in the book?
- Does any of the book raise questions in your mind or inspire further thought or investigation?

LECTURE NOTES (30 points)

- Take notes on each lecture, noting significant concepts, people, and events
- Highlight or underline information needing further explanation or investigation
- Submit a picture of your handwritten notes or notes on your computer screen

- The submission should be equivalent to at least one full page of handwritten notes. Notes will be graded for content.

CLASS RESPONSE (35 points)

Write a 1000-2000 word response to the class, including this information:

- Explain what it means to versify a Psalm.
- Identify major leaders of the Reformation and describe the role of psalmody in their movement.
- Identify examples of psalmody in traditional hymns (before 1800), in gospel songs, and in current “praise and worship” congregational singing.
- Identify things you learned, things you found interesting, questions that were raised, suggestions that you have, and things that might need further investigation.

Policies

Academic Integrity Policy: Cheating in all its forms is inconsistent with Christian faith and practice and will result in sanctions up to and including dismissal from the class with a failing grade.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted for any assigned work in this class and constitutes a violation of Harding’s Academic Integrity Policy. You will write and sign a statement confirming that all of your submissions have been created by you, without using any AI engine.

Assessment: Harding University, since its charter in 1924, has been strongly committed to providing the best resources and environment for the teaching-learning process. The board, administration, faculty, and staff are wholeheartedly committed to full compliance with all Criteria of Accreditation of the Higher Learning Commission as well as standards of many discipline-specific specialty accrediting agencies. The university values continuous, rigorous assessment at every level for its potential to improve student learning and achievement and for its centrality in fulfilling the stated mission of Harding. Thus, a comprehensive assessment program has been developed that includes both the academic units and the administrative and educational support units. Course-specific student learning outcomes contribute to student achievement of program-specific learning outcomes that support student achievement of holistic university learning outcomes. All academic units design annual assessment plans centered on measuring student achievement of program learning outcomes used to sequentially improve teaching and learning processes. Additionally, a holistic assessment of student achievement of university learning outcomes is coordinated by the university Director of Assessment and Testing used to spur continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Students with Disabilities: It is the policy for Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Therefore, any student with a *documented*

disability condition (e.g. physical, learning, or psychological) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and the Office of Disability Services and Educational Access at the *beginning* of each semester. If the diagnosis of the disability occurs during the academic year, the student must self-identify with the Office of Disability Services and Educational Access *as soon as possible* in order to get academic accommodations in place for the remainder of the semester. The Office of Disability Services and Educational Access is located in Room 239 in the Student Center, telephone, (501) 279-4019.