

History Of Hymnody – August 2017 – RTS Atlanta

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Textbooks: “Our Hymn Writers And Their Hymns” by Faith Cook (Evangelical Press 2005) will be our main text. You are also encouraged to purchase the Trinity Hymnal (or similar hymnal from your denominational family) and “Sing With Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology” by Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath

Goal: To help students gain an overview of the history of hymnody and learn better how to use the rich treasury of hymns to enrich worship for today’s church.

Requirements:

- **Attend all class meeting times and participate in class discussions.**
- **Reading assignment:** You must read at least 200 pages in the Faith Cook textbook or intro and chapters 1-11 in Sing With Understanding and turn in a written statement to me telling me how many pages you read. If you are wanting a more general intro to Hymnology, beyond just the history, then I suggest reading Sing With Understanding. If you would like more depth of the history of hymnwriters in the Reformed/Evangelical tradition then I suggest Faith Cook. There are 2 copies of Sing With Understanding on reserve in the library. Julian’s Dictionary is also in the reference section of the library
- **You are also required to read at least 50 hymn texts (preferably ones that you have never read before) from various eras as follows:** Pre-Reformation (10 hymns), 16-17th Centuries (10 hymns – no more than 2 from Luther. These most will likely be German hymns in English translation), 18th century (10 hymns – no more than 2 each from Watts and Wesley), 19th century (15 – by 15 different writers) and 20th century (5 hymns.) You must turn in a list of these hymns arranged by era, listing both the title and the author of the text. (A helpful hint: use the author index of a good hymnal to find dates for a hymnwriter.) Another great resource for this assignment is the 2009 hymnbook “Hymns For Worship” published by Faith Alive and the Calvin Institute of Worship. It is a hymnal arranged chronologically and is on reserve in the library.
- **Paper:** You must complete an 8-10 page paper (double-spaced.) For this paper you should pick one hymn that interests you. I want you to be able to use this hymn to enrich the worship of a congregation by discussing its background and doing a theological exposition of the hymn. Thus, in the paper I would like for you to discuss the origin of the hymn, both the author and the historical context (including any interesting circumstances that help enrich one’s understanding of it), and I would like a verse by verse theological exposition (with application) of the hymn. In the exposition you must discuss any obscure words and be sure that the exposition of the hymn covers at least 1/2 of the paper’s length and that you use at least 6 sources in the production of the paper. [Helpful hint: For obscure words often their use in the King James Version will be a good clue as to their meaning – so use a source such as Strong’s Concordance to help you track down the usage in the King James.] Basically I want the paper to be the kind of thing you could use in introducing the hymn to a congregation to enrich their understanding of it. Do not discuss the tune – just the text, and please try to discover if there are extra verses not generally used or significant word changes from the original that are now in common usage. (Though you do not need to exegete all of the extra verses!) Ideally, I would like permission to post good papers on the Indelible Grace Hymnbook site to benefit the church at large and so those interested in this should pick a hymn that is part of the Indelible Grace Hymnbook online at www.hymnbook.igracemusic.com

- **Alternate Paper:** *I do not recommend this assignment this year because the due date is so early in the semester!* Instead of the hymn exposition paper described above, you may also do a more traditional research paper with a topic to be approved by me. This paper should be 8-12 pages in length (double-spaced) and should include at least 8 sources. Topics may include the life of a hymn writer, characteristics of the hymns of a particular writer or period, a detailed discussion of one of the reasons we still need hymns (with examples), or a study of a theme and how it is handled by various hymn writers and/or hymns. You should have your topic approved by me. Please submit your proposed topic by email (kevinjtwit@gmail.com) – though you are free to call me to discuss it before submitting it formally by email. My cell # is 615 473 5826.

Assignments are due at midnight on October 2nd, 2017. Please email a copy of your paper to me at kevinjtwit@gmail.com Also include an indication of how much of the assigned reading you completed as well as the list of hymns you read as described above.