# Course Description
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**Course Number: MN 306W**

**Course Title: Living Liturgies for Resistance and Renewal in Church and Society**

**Name of Instructor: Jan Schnell**

**Semester and Year:** Spring 2026

Requirement fulfilled,
who may register, final years usually; if MDiv, must have had MN 106 (unless transferring in or Lutheran year); if MA or MADM can take course
indicate if limited:
Number of hours, 3
grading option: cr/ncr

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The course aims to accompany students in developing questions, principles and practices that will assist congregations to be vital, faithful, and missional worshiping communities in the North American context today. Baptismal promises and covenant call Christians time and again into worship practices. Baptismal waters are not stagnant waters. In light of baptismal vocations, religious leaders notice deep needs of the assembly and the world, resist those practices that defy God by devaluing humans and/or creation and obscuring hope in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and walk with assemblies into the Spirit's ongoing and life-giving renewal. Incorporating liturgical imagination of a future for worshiping assemblies in conversation with historic traditions, confessional commitments, emerging cultural realities, and a missional ecclesiology, students show their learning through preparation and enactment of the rites such as ordination, funeral, Easter Vigil, and marriage and the intersection of these rites with personal experience, cultural practices, and social forces. Grounded in the practice of baptism and baptismal identity in relation to the way the community of the church ritually marks life's significant passages, students compose a theologically and biblically grounded liturgy for the life of the world. Lecture, presentation, liturgical leadership, research, book discussion, and group dialogue will shape this course.

The course is intended for those who have had some significant experience of ministry in a congregational setting.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- to consider the practice of baptism as a principal passage of the Christian life and the foundation in baptismal identity crucial to the ritual practice in Christian communities of catechumenate, confession and forgiveness, ministry to the sick and dying, burial, and marriage.
- to understand that the reformation call for ongoing renewal requires resistance to practices that defy God by devaluing humans and/or creation and obscuring hope in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- to explore some rites provided for these services and occasions in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *ELW: Pastoral Care* and *ELW: Occasional Services for the Assembly*
- to discern, imagine and compose a liturgy called for by the life of the church, attending to the liturgical, theological, and pastoral issues related to these rites and their conduct.

### *Pastoral Practices*

The course aims to address the following Wartburg Seminary pastoral practices:

- practice of Missio Dei in word and sacrament
- practice of complex analysis
- practice of biblical and theological wisdom
- practice of pastoral concern
- practice of curiosity

**PROCEDURE:**

Lecture, presentation, liturgical leadership, research, book discussion, group dialogue

**EVALUATION:**

**Cr/ncr**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Required

### Books and Articles

**One of the following (your choice):**

| | |
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| A Womanist Theology of Worship: Liturgy, Justice, and Communal Righteousness | Lisa Alen |
| The Holy Spirit in the Christian Life: The Spirit's Work for, in, and through Us | Cheryl Peterson |
| Corpse Care: Ethics for Tending the Dead | Cody J. Sanders |
| No Greater Jewel: Thinking about Baptism with Luther | Kirsi Stjerna |
| Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community, And Surviving to Adulthood | Patrick Reyes |
| For the Life of the World: Theology that Makes a Difference | Miroslav Volf |

**Articles**

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|---|---|
| Forms of Speech, Religion, and Social Resistance | Carvalhaes, Cláudio |
| Active Patience in the Lives and Proclamation of Moses and Martin Luther King, Jr. | Schnell, Jan |
| Resources for the LGBTQIA+ Community | ELCA |
| Video: Faithful Anti-Racism and the Christian Life | Edmondson and Witvliet |
| Video: Healthy Leadership in Anxious Times | Bolsinger, McCreary, Taylor and Smith |
| Video: Worship, Cultural Difference, and a Kingdom Vision for Life Together | Gilliard, Lerner, Wardell, Bailey, Higgings, Charles |
| Video: Virtual Worship | Begbie, Tai, Weaver, and Witvliet |
| Trauma-Informed Congregations and Worship: Being Made Whole | Huyser-Honig, Joan |
| "The Reformation and Liturgical Reform: An Ecumenical Perspective." | Lathrop, Gordon. |

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|---|---|
| Gritsch Memorial Lecture (2017). | |
| Reflection on Indigenous People and the ELCA. At ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2022. (Approx. 13 min.) | Retamoza, Manuel |
| 2 articles of your choice from January 2023 issue on Eucharist and online worship in *Currents in Theology and Mission*. | |
| "Liturgies and the Reformation" in Cambridge Companion to Christian Liturgy | Jan Schnell |
| "Liturgical Assembly as Locus of Mission," in Inside Out, 1-21. | Thomas Schattauer |
| "Worship, Liturgy, and Public Witness" in A Companion to Public Theology. Ed. by Sebastian C. H. Kim and Katie Day. Leiden: Brill, 2017. Link to book in DTL: https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/969201375 | Cláudio Carvalhaes |
| Hope of Eternal Life, 17-36, 62-68. http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/lutheran/upload/The-Hope-of-Eternal-Life1.pdf | Allmen and Skilba |

Recommended

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Leaders Desk Edition* (2006).
*Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pew Edition* (2006)
*Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care* (2008).
*Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Occasional Services for the Assembly* (2009).
*Or your denominational worship book (for beyond-Lutheran students)*