

# ENG 299H/MUH 299H: Introduction to Hymnody

January 2009

Class Location: Blackman 232  
Class Time: 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. M - F

Instructors: Dr. Laura Feitzinger Brown Dr. Leon W. Couch III  
Offices: Carmichael 305-H Blackman 207  
Phone: x9115 x9007  
Email: [laura.brown@converse.edu](mailto:laura.brown@converse.edu) [leon.couch@converse.edu](mailto:leon.couch@converse.edu)  
[laurafeitzingerbrown@gmail.com](mailto:laurafeitzingerbrown@gmail.com) [ProfCouch@gmail.com](mailto:ProfCouch@gmail.com)

Office hours: Brown: 10 – 11 a.m. M W F and by appointment; Couch TBA  
Course webpage: [http://Teaching.ProfCouch.us/Winter2009/Winter2009\\_MUH299H.html](http://Teaching.ProfCouch.us/Winter2009/Winter2009_MUH299H.html)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In his poem "A True Hymn" the seventeenth-century English poet George Herbert wrote about agonizing over the challenges of combining poetry and music to come together in a way acceptable to a perfect God. Recognizing the true difficulty of the hymn-writer's task, we will cover the basics of combining music, poetry, and theology in hymns. Then we will survey the roots of hymnody in the Western church and some highlights of religious poetry in English, with specific focus on examples from the Anglo-Saxon, medieval, early modern, and contemporary periods. The final project will involve crafting a hymn with another student for public performance.

## OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the term, students should better be able to do the following:

- Understand hymns as interdisciplinary works of art.
- Use a hymnal and resources within the hymnology field.
- Collaborate on writing a hymn (poetry writing, tune crafting, word setting, etc.)
- Understand the general categories, purposes, and traditions of hymns. This grasp should include an ability to perform rudimentary poetic, social, and musical analysis.
- Analyze a hymn (hymn meter, end rhyme, melodic structure, word setting, etc.)
- Possess an introductory knowledge on how to use hymns in group settings.
- Know a few famous hymn tunes and texts.
- Recognize some well-known religious poems in English and their relationship to hymnody.

## REQUIREMENTS:

1. Active class participation, including e-mail pre-class posts to the public course discussion folder, in-class writing and speaking
2. Homework (readings and small assignments)
3. 2 short paperettes
4. Exercise on Psalm 100 or Psalm 23
5. Final creative project with a classmate: creating a hymn
6. Quizzes

## GRADING:

Homework, pre-class questions on public course discussion folder 15%  
Quizzes 20%  
2 short paperettes 20%  
Exercise on Psalm 100 or Psalm 23 15%  
(5% tune, 10% textual adaptation)  
Final creative project 30%  
(5% hymn text due 1/16, 5% hymn tune due 1/22; 20% final hymn due 1/26)

A range: 90-100 B range: 80-89 C range: 70-79 D range: 60-69 F: < 60

Borderline cases will be determined by attendance, participation, and weekly grades.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Eskew, Harry, and Hugh T. McElrath. *Sing with Understanding*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Nashville, Tenn.: Street Press, 1995.
- A mainline hymnal of your choice. We recommend the Methodist Hymnal 1988 or the Episcopal Hymnal 1982.
- Poems and articles on reserve at Mickel Library; please photocopy and bring to class.

## ATTENDANCE, TARDINESS, AND PARTICIPATION:

- We expect you to come to each class having done the listening and reading thoughtfully and being ready to respond to what you have read or heard.
- Attendance is mandatory. You may claim an excused absence only for pre-approved university functions, documented family emergencies, officially-recognized religious observances, or sicknesses verified by a medical doctor or clinic. You should write us an email prior to any absence and make arrangements with fellow students to review missed material beforehand.
- You are allowed only two unexcused absences with prior notification. Further absences may lower your entire grade. In addition, you may receive a zero for any in-class assignments, quizzes, or tests.
- Tardiness is disruptive to your classmates' learning and irritating to instructors. Please be considerate. Consistent or excessive lateness will be counted as unexcused absences and will prompt unannounced quizzes to permanently remedy the issue.
- Cellphones and pagers should be turned off during class unless you alert us ahead of time to an emergency situation.

**Frequent absences, tardiness, or lack of participation will lower your final grade.**

## STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES:

If you would like to request academic accommodations, you must contact the Director of Academic Support at 577-2028 (x2028 on campus).

### THE HONOR CODE:

Converse has an Honor Code, and we turn in those who fail to abide by it. You are responsible to understand the Honor Code, to report those who break it, to tell the truth, and to do your own work. Breaking the Honor Code may lead to suspension or expulsion.

### CREATIVE PROJECT:

During the term, in pairs you will draft and polish a hymn text and its musical setting for performance in a public concert at Converse. The public performance will be held on Thursday evening, January 29, at 7:30 p.m. in Daniel Recital Hall.

### SYMPOSIUM EVENTS:

Through grants from the Nisbet Honors Program, the Humanities Council South Carolina, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, this course will culminate in a large public symposium January 28-31 on Singin' Billy Walker and hymns in the American South. **You are required to attend the Wednesday evening and Thursday evening events.** We encourage you, your friends, and your family to attend the others if your schedule permits:

- Wed. 1/28, 7:30 p.m., Daniel Recital Hall: A Panel Discussion on Walker's Legacy
- Thurs. 1/29, 7:30 p.m., Daniel Recital Hall: Concert of Hymns (YOUR hymns, Walker)
- Sat. 1/31, 10 a.m. – 12 noon, Blackman: Workshops.  
(Requires advance registration.)
- Sat. 1/31, 7:30 p.m., Twichell Auditorium: A Bicentennial Tribute to Singin' Billy Walker.

### PAPERETTE SUBMISSION:

- Double-space both the draft you bring to class and your final draft.
- Submit your papers in a folder, with drafts and notes on one side and the final draft on the other side. Please staple your final draft and include a cover sheet (title page).
- **Do not put your name on your paper.** Please place *only the last four digits of your social security number* on your cover sheet. Please also put on your cover sheet our names, paperette title, and the course number (MUH/ENG 299H). This practice helps us grade your work anonymously and thus more fairly.

### LATE WORK:

Late work loses one letter grade per calendar day late. Work is late if it is not submitted when class begins (or as otherwise indicated in the syllabus).

### PCQ (PRE-CLASS QUESTIONS): Directions for using our public folder

You will need a Converse login to do this part of the course. If you are not sure what yours is, please IMMEDIATELY check with Campus Technology (our tech people) in the basement of Carnegie Hall (where you usually pay tuition bills). Their hours are 9 to 5.

To get to our folder, scroll down in your folder list on Outlook to the Public Folders. Click on the "plus" sign (+) to the left of Public Folders. Then click on the "+" sign to the left of All Discussion Folders. Then click on the "+" sign to the left of Course Discussion Groups. You will find ENG/MUH 299H listed, and when you click on that link, you will see prompts I've posted for our class. **If you see no prompt by 6 p.m. the night before your response is due, presume you should send a comment or question about the next day's reading.**

To post your own response, make sure the ENG/MUH 299H folder is selected, and look for the "New" button right under "File" in the top left corner of your Outlook window. Click the "New" button, and you will see a new window in which to write (or paste) your response. When you hit "Post," you've posted it.

To receive credit, please post your brief responses to the questions **by 8 a.m.** on the days assigned so that we can find a few minutes free to read them before class. We look forward to learning from your ideas.

### TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

(The instructors may change these dates if needed.)

#### Timeline Abbreviations Key:

RR = reserve reading. You are expected to photocopy and read these materials BEFORE class on the days indicated. Please bring a copy of these materials to class.

SWU = *Sing with Understanding*. As with RR, read the items on a given day BEFORE class.

Q = Announced quiz on readings. Unless otherwise indicated, quizzes cover not only material assigned for that day but also material read or taught in previous classes. There may be an occasional pop quiz, but most will be announced.

PCQ = Pre-class questions on our course discussion folder.

#### Week 1: Survey of Religious Poetry and Hymnody to the Medieval Era

M 1/5: Introductions. Caedmon's Hymn, George Herbert's Dilemma. The Challenge of Constructing Hymns. Receive assignment instructions for course.

Tu 1/6: Q. Bring your hymnal to class. SWU 1-48. RR: Levertov's "Caedmon," short selections from Gerard Manley Hopkins, and article on meter and rhyme. Discussion of melody and harmony. Discussion of Psalm Exercise, with emphasis on Part 1.

W 1/7: PCQ. RR: Hildegard of Bingen, "O Ecclesia" and "O Viridissima Virga." Draft of Psalm Exercise, Pt. 1, due. SWU 78-97. Melody and harmony, continued. Video clips on Hildegard's life and work.

Th 1/8: PCQ. **Psalm Exercise, Pt. 1, due when class begins.** Please also bring your own (or borrowed) hymnal to class. SWU 49-77. RR: Late Medieval Lyrics:

“Adam Lay I-bounden”

“I Sing of a Maiden”

“The Rose That Bore Jesus”

“Out of Your Sleep Arise and Wake”

“The Virgin’s Lullaby”

Performances of your melodies for Exercise, Pt. 1, in class. Guest lecture on expressing theology in word and music. Scavenger hunt in your own hymnal.

F 1/9 Q. PCQ. SWU 277-311. RR: Carols, excerpt from Queen Elizabeth I’s *Book of Common Prayer*. Paragraph due on your pair’s plans for the final hymn. In-class work on Psalm Exercise, Part 2. Field trip to Mickel to discuss and use the Oxford English Dictionary for Paperette 1.

#### Week 2 (M 1/12 – F 1/16): Survey of Hymnody during the Protestant Reformation

M 1/12 Q. SWU 98-126. Full draft of Paperette 1 (Hymn Analysis) due. Draft workshop in class. Continue workshop on Psalm Exercise, Part 2.

Tu 1/13 PCQ. **Paperette 1 (Hymn Analysis) due when class begins.** RR: obscure but fun English reformers’ writings on worship.

W 1/14 PCQ. RR: Mary Sidney, Massachusetts Bay Psalm Book, and other metrical psalms. **Psalm Exercise, Part 2 due when class begins.**

Th 1/15 PCQ. RR: Metaphysical religious poetry: John Donne. Workshop on tunes.

F 1/16 Q. RR: Metaphysical religious poetry: George Herbert. Due: draft of hymn text for workshop in class. Discussion of your visit to a worship service outside your religious tradition this weekend (Paperette 2: Ethnographic Analysis).

#### Week 3 (M 1/19 - F 1/23) Survey of Hymnody: British and American traditions.

M 1/19 Q. SWU 127- 177 (British Traditions). RR: Watts, etc. Presentation of your ethnographic analysis to the class. Due: Draft of Paperette 2.

Tu 1/20 PCQ. RR: The Wesleys, etc. Draft of hymn tune due. Workshop in class.

W 1/21 PCQ. SWU 178-237 (American Traditions). RR: Walker and Southern Harmony. **Paperette 2 (ethnographic analysis) due when class begins.** Video clips from *Awake, My Soul* documentary.

Th 1/22 PCQ. RR: Spirituals and African-American 19<sup>th</sup>-century worship music. **Final hymn tune due when class begins.** Workshop time.

F 1/23 Q on week’s readings, classes. Pair work on final versions. Discussion of next week.

#### Week 4 (M 1/26 – F 1/30) Final Survey, Symposium and Performances

M 1/26 **Final hymn (text and tune) due when class begins.** Rehearse everyone’s hymns. Discuss uses of hymns, questions about worship planning in different contexts.

Tu 1/27 Q. SWU 238–276. Continuing discussion of worship planning.

W 1/28 PCQ. RR: Works by panelists. Part of class: meet the panelists. Attend panel tonight.

Th 1/29 PCQ. Rehearsal plans. RR: Contemporary short religious poems.

F 1/30 PCQ. De-brief after concert. Evaluations. Response to guests.