

Tentative Syllabus
January 2015
Leadership, Liturgy and Learning: Embodied Ritual
RALS 4300
Berkeley Immersion

Students will be sent a revised syllabus and preparatory reading packet by midDecember.

The Rev. Michelle Favreault, Assistant Professor of Liberal Religious Education and Liturgy
MFavreault@sksm.edu

Phone: (510) 549-4722

Office Hours: By appointment

Minimum 6 -- Limit: 12

Location: Fireside Room

Time: Monday-Friday, January 11-16, with hours as noted

I. Description:

In this 3-credit course, we will explore the design, experience and leadership of multigenerational worship and ritual in for congregational contexts, emphasizing the role of liturgist as leader of faith formation in religious community. Texts, field trips, video and story will be drawn from the work of artists, performers, clergy and thinkers who guide our work in the study and creation of transformational ritual and liturgical forms. There will be dancing, there will be poems, there will be food, there will be song, there will be art-making and picture taking.

II. Course Aims and Learning Objectives:

Aims

Each session will include reflection, study and preparations for participation in communal spiritual leadership roles. The class will take on leadership for daily community rituals and develop skills as leaders of embodied spiritual practices.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand the history and intentions of various liturgical forms and increase in their confidence and ability to lead congregations through familiar and new rites;
- Be able to adapt written material from a variety of sources with attention to the integrity of the original and the issues of appropriation and fair use;
- Increase an understanding of the promotion/communication aspects of building a worship/ritual program within community life;
- Understand the practical aspects of leadership development, team building, volunteer support and recruitment.

III. Format and Procedures:

Sessions will typically weave three strands of experience:

1. Reflecting on experiences as participants in worship/ritual;
2. Discussion of theological and historical themes in leadership;

3. Involvement in planning vespers/chapel/seasonal celebrations as ritual leader, speaker or participants and/or spiritual care practices for worship leaders

IV. Assumptions

With a context of Unitarian Universalist congregational settings and the practicalities of the SKSM community, we will seek to be a leadership laboratory. Students who seek to follow vocations as (ordained/professional) religious leaders the chance to speak, design, manage, reflect and evaluate the arts of worship, the power and authority of the leader and the will dialogue/creative interchange of the community in building a worship/ritual experience.

V. Course Requirements:

1. Daily class attendance and participation in exercises, conversation and assignments

2. Course readings:

(a) Required text to read in advance:

Worship That Works: Theory and Practice for Unitarian Universalists

Wayne B. Arnason, Kathleen Rolenz

Publisher: Skinner House Books

ISBN: 1558965262 Edition: Paperback; 2007-10-26

Price: \$16.00

The Power of Stories: A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Congregations

Jacqueline Lewis

Publisher: Abingdon Press

ISBN: 0687650690

Price: \$16.99

(b) Suggested texts – these are good resources to have – please note we will have copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey* available in our classroom:

Singing the Living Tradition Hymnal: Pew Edition

ISBN: 9781558962606

Publisher: UUA

Publication Date: 3/1/94

\$28

Singing the Journey: Supplement to Singing the Living Tradition

ISBN: 9781558964990

Publisher: UUA

Publication Date: 6/13/05

\$18

The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship

JG Davies (2005 edition)

Publisher: Westminster John Knox Press

ISBN: 0664212700

Price: \$50 (*other editions are fine, and there are many outlets selling new and used copies at significantly lower prices*)

(c) Required web resources:

- Leading Congregations in Worship: A Guide
<http://www.uua.org/worship/theory/leadingcongregations/index.shtml>
- Ted Talks:
 1. Body language: Amy Cuddy
http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are.html
 2. Creativity and Technology: John Maeda
http://www.ted.com/talks/john_maeda_how_art_technology_and_design_inform_creative_leaders.html

(d) Supplemental readings/handouts:

Including: SKSM Chapel Leaders Guide (Ritual Arts Collective)

“How About Worshipping Together” (chapter 13) *Today’s Children and Yesterday’s Heritage*
http://img.uua.org/mfc/Fahs_Todays_Children.pdf

3. Assignments

(a) Prepare an embodied “creation story” to share in class during the Monday afternoon session.

You are invited to draw from the stories, narratives and tales from around the world and across time, or to tap into your mythic imagination. Your story can introduce us to any creation, and you are encouraged to use the wholeness of your being in the telling over 2-5 minutes.

(b) work as part of a team to prepare one of the daily class rituals based on a selected text

Team 1 –Tuesday – Daily Prayer – 9:00-9:45 am
King James Bible (Cambridge Ed.)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Team 2 –Wednesday – Daily Prayer – Wednesday 3:45-4:30

Text from Mark Morrison-Reed

Let Me Die Laughing

We are all dying,
our lives always moving toward completion.

We need to learn to live with death,
and to understand that death is not the worst of all events.

We need to fear not death, but life—empty lives, loveless lives

lives that do not build
upon the gifts that each of us has been given, lives that are like living deaths,
lives which we never take the time
to savor and appreciate,
lives in which we never pause to breathe deeply.

What we need to fear is not death,
but squandering the lives we have been miraculously given.

So let me die laughing, savoring one of life's crazy moments. Let me die holding the hand of one I love, and recalling that I tried to love and was loved in return. Let me die remembering that life has been good, and that I did what I could.

But today, just remind me that I am dying so that I can live, savor, and love with all my heart

Team 3 – Thursday – Daily Prayer – Thursday – 1-1:45pm
Text: From “Gilead” by Marilynne Robinson p21-23

Now, this might seem like a trivial thing to mention, considering the gravity of the subject, but I truly don't feel it is. We were very pious children from pious households in a fairly pious town, and this affected our behavior considerable. Once, we baptized a litter of cats.

They were dusty little barn cats just steady on their legs, the kind of waifish creatures that live their anonymous lives keeping the mice down and have no interest in humans at all, except to avoid them. But the animals all seem to start out sociable, so we were pleased to find new kittens prowling out of whatever cranny their mother tried to hide them in. They were as ready to play as we were.

It occurred to one of the girls to swaddle them up in a doll's dress—there was only one dress which was just as well since the cats could hardly tolerate a moment in it and would have insisted on being unswaddled as soon as they were christened in any case.

I myself moistened their brows, repeating the full Trinitarian formula. Their grim crooked-tailed mother found us baptizing away by the creek and began carrying her babies off by the napes of their necks, one and then another. We lost track of which was which, but we were fairly sure that some of the creatures had been borne away still in the darkness of paganism.

After all these years, I still remember how those warm little brows felt under the palm of my hand. Everyone has petted a cat, but to touch one like that, with the pure intention of blessing it, is a very different thing. It stays in the mind. For years we would wonder what, from a cosmic viewpoint, we had done to them. It still seems to me to be a real question.

There is a reality in blessing . . . It doesn't enhance sacredness, but it acknowledges it, and there is power in that. I have felt it pass through me, so to speak. The sensation of really knowing a creature, I mean really feeling its mysterious life and your mysterious life at the same time.

(c) Research paper or chapel leadership project designed in discussion with instructor

Examples for this assignment include:

1. Taking on leadership for a spring semester Tuesday Chapel service (recruiting/organizing volunteers, writing liturgy, with a reflection conversation or paper to the instructor).
2. Creating a ritual for the SKSM community (recruiting/organizing volunteers, writing liturgy, with a reflection conversation or paper to the instructor).
3. An in depth study of some historic or contemporary aspect of ritual leadership
4. Develop a resource for ritual leaders (at SKSM, in congregation, for online sharing with the world...)

(d) 300-500 word statement of "theology of ritual leadership" due at the first session (Monday morning, 9 am)

For this assignment, you are asked to write about how your tradition/personal experience and religious/spiritual philosophy or theology inform the way you do – or will – practice leadership in ritual/worship.

(e) Keep a visual/poet "six word – one image" journal through the duration of the course, and create a poem in response to the question "What is holy?" for performance at the Wednesday evening session.

This journal can be online or on paper. For the practice you are asked to take a picture/sketch an image/paint a masterpiece/doodle and compose a "six word story" each day (at least once a day). (see more on six word stories here: <http://www.sixwordsonimage.com/>)

Each student will have the option to post twice to the to the SKSM Ritual blog Due to instructor via email by January 30.

(f) Please collect 5-10 "orders of service" or printed programs for sharing during the Wednesday afternoon session. We will use these to explore: how liturgies are described in culture and context; visual impact on community "shaping," and; ways to utilize printed materials to enhance (or distract!) from religious teachings as a faith formation practice.

V. Grading Procedures

It is expected that students will be following the SKSM student handbook guidelines and elect the P/F option. Narrative forms will be completed following the course.

VI. TENTATIVE Course Schedule

This course is designed as a community immersion and attendance at all sessions is required for completion of the 3 credit experience. Please make travel plans accordingly. There will be one required field trip (Wednesday evening) that include additional travel/registration fees. Contact instructor for details. Two optional field trips will be open to students/families/friends.

