

**OSTS Lecture, Winter 2025, 1st Term
January 6th to February 3rd**

Course H ***Preference and Power in Congregational Song (Zoom Class)***

Lecturer Anneli Thiessen

Descriptor

Why do we feel such strong reactions to new kinds of music? Is all congregational music suitable for church? Who gets to decide which music is “best”? Participants will explore cultural bias, canonization processes, and questions of race, gender, and class in order to nuance what are often contentious debates about congregational song. (53 words)

Outline

Week 1: Evaluating church music traditions

Week 2: On hymnals and canon building

Week 3: Hymnody and colonization

Week 4: Complicating the worship wars

Week 5: Towards new ways of worshiping

Bibliography

Week 1: C. Michael Hawn, *New Songs of Celebration Render: Congregational Song in the Twenty-First Century*, Har/Com edition (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2015).
Chapter 1.

Judith Becker, “Is Western Art Music Superior?”, *The Musical Quarterly* LXXII,
no. 3 (1986): 341–59.

Week 2: Katie Graber and Anneli Loep Thiessen, “Publishing Privileges the Published: An Analysis of Gender, Class, and Race in the Hymnological Feedback Loop,”
Religions (Basel, Switzerland) 14, no. 10 (2023): 1273.

Week 3: Becca Whitla, "The Empire Sings," in *Liberation, (De)Coloniality, and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird*, ed. Becca Whitla, *New Approaches to Religion and Power* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 79–125.

Week 4: April Stace Vega, "Musical Genre and Liturgical Spirituality," *Worship* 87, no. 5 (2013): 445–63.

Week 5: Constance Cherry, "Blended Worship: What It Is, What It Isn't," *Reformed Worship*, 2000, <https://www.reformedworship.org/article/march-2000/blended-worship-what-it-what-it-isnt>.

Bio:

Anneli Loepp Thiessen is a PhD candidate in the Interdisciplinary Music Research program at the University of Ottawa, where her dissertation examines women's experiences as songwriters and worship leaders in the contemporary worship music industry. She is published in several academic journals, including *The Hymn*, *Journal of Contemporary Ministry*, *Religions*, and *Worship*. Anneli was a committee member for the 2020 Mennonite hymnal *Voices Together*, and is co-director of Anabaptist Worship Network.