

Indiana Wesleyan University  
John Wesley Honors College  
**Theology Honors Research Tutorial**  
**Rhythm and Ethics**

### **Course Description**

Although we are rarely aware of it, rhythm acts as a conductor for all sorts of human relationships. Rhythm communicates emotion and holds large groups of people together through practices like dance, ritual, or protest. It forms our experience of space-time, which determines how we view and relate to the world at large. It is the channel of communication between mind and body. Illness and health can be distinguished on the basis of rhythm. Particular rhythms encourage certain ways of being in and perceiving the world. Habits, both virtuous and vicious, can be thought of as rhythms. As such, rhythm is arguably an important dimension of any approach to ethics concerned with formation, including Christian ethics. Understanding how certain rhythms encourage certain dispositions and behaviors and discourage others is an ingredient in constructing arguments about which routines, institutions, practices, and habits should be proposed by a Christian ethics. Yet this ingredient has not yet been analyzed.

While this research tutorial gives students an opportunity to explore this topic, it is also an opportunity for students to learn and practice the research skills that they will need for their senior projects, graduate school, or other professional contexts. Much of the focus will therefore be on the development and analysis of these skills, with the material functioning as an opportunity for practice. The material is organized into four modules: rhythm in the Christian's relationship to God, one's self, others, and the world at large. Groups of students will be responsible for one of these modules, during which they will practice skills like identifying useful information within a larger body of information, developing goals for their research, devising strategies to reach those goals, and evaluating their effectiveness. The module will also serve as the general topic for students' final research projects, which they will write individually but disseminate as a group according to one of theology's avenues of research dissemination.

### **Course Outcomes and Goals**

By participating in and completing the course requirements, students should achieve the following course outcomes and demonstrate growth in the following course goals –

#### ***Course Outcomes***

Students should be able to:

1. Articulate the process of theological research from surveying a field to dissemination of research.
2. Situate the topic of rhythm within academic discourse on Christian ethics.
3. Identify, navigate and query the relevant literature pertaining to one's relationship to God, self, world, or other.

#### ***Course Goals***

Students should develop:

1. Skills of both skimming and patient and careful reading, conceptual analysis, and theological imagination.
2. Written and oral communication skills.

3. The capacity to analyze and evaluate their approach to various research tasks, and to adjust as necessary.
4. An appreciation for the significance of rhythm for their own relationships with God, world, self, and others.

### Required Texts

Two of the following texts, as per the instructor's directions:

Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*

Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*

Martin Munro, *Different Drummers: Race and Rhythm in the Americas*

Emma O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future: The Experience of Time in Jewish and Christian Liturgy*

### Course Requirements

1. **Class module creation and execution.** Students will form groups around one of the four modules of the course and prepare readings and discussions for that module (four 45-minute blocks of time) together. Through this process, they will learn research skills like identifying useful information within larger bodies of text, making decisions about what they want a text to accomplish, and asking questions that move them towards a research goal.
  - Step 1: Proposed topic and readings (group grade)
  - Step 2: Module proposal (submit together with revised topic/readings) (group grade)
    - a. Draft
    - b. With Revisions
  - Step 3: Delivery (four sessions) (group grade)
  - Step 4: Peer-assessment feedback (2x) (individual grade)
2. **Book Review:** Students will write one review of a text assigned to one of the three modules other than that which the student is constructing. More information to follow.
  - Extra credit: Peer-review feedback on book reviews from students' own module.
3. **Fieldtrip presentation:** The class will be travelling to the Rhythm Discovery Center, where students will have the opportunity to use the museum to do research on the way in which rhythm has functioned in a particular society's culture and communication. Students will give an informal 5-10-minute presentation after the fieldtrip, during dinner.
4. **Participation:** More information TBD.
5. **Research Process Journal:** Students will write journal entries reflecting on their research process at several points throughout the course. In particular, students will write a reflection after each individual activity, group meeting, and class section (at least 8) related to the construction of their module. More information to follow.

6. **Final research project:** Students will research for and write their final research project independently, but will choose a way in which their projects will be disseminated/presented as a group, including peer-editing. More information TBD
- Proposal
  - Annotated Bibliography
  - Outline
  - Draft
  - Revisions
  - Dissemination

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## Course Outline

<b>Week 1</b>	Syllabus and Introductions  Syllabus and Introductions
<b>Week 2</b>	What is rhythm? <b>READING SELECTIONS DUE</b>  <b>Reading:</b> James Bunn, <i>Wave Forms</i> , Introduction
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Amittai Aviram, “The Meaning of Rhythm”  <b>MODULE PROPOSAL DUE</b>
<b>Week 4</b>	Module 1: Rhythm and Relationship to God  Module 1: Rhythm and Relationship to God
<b>Week 5</b>	Module 1: Rhythm and Relationship to God (Second half of class: Research Skill Introduction: The Book Review)  Module 1: Rhythm and Relationship to God
<b>Week 6</b>	Module 2: Rhythm and Relationship to Ourselves <b>REMEMBERING THE FUTURE BOOK REVIEW DUE</b> (Second half of class: Research Skill Introduction: Peer Review)  <b>Dr. Eikelboom at Conference</b>

<b>Week 7</b>	Module 2: Rhythm and Relationship to Ourselves (Second half of class: Research Skill Introduction: Research questions)  <b>Fall Break – No Class</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	Module 2: Rhythm and Relationship to Ourselves  Module 2: Rhythm and Relationship to Ourselves
<b>Week 9</b>	Interview: Virtue in Real Time project (bring questions for guest) <b>BLACK SUNBOOK REVIEW DUE</b>  Fieldtrip
<b>Week 10</b>	Module 3: Rhythm and Relationship to Others (Second half of class: Research skill introduction: Constructing an argument)  Module 3: Rhythm and Relationship to Others
<b>Week 11</b>	Module 3: Rhythm and Relationship to Others  Module 3: Rhythm and Relationship to Others
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Dr. Eikelboom at Conference</b> <b>DIFFERENT DRUMMERS BOOK REVIEW DUE</b>  <b>Thanksgiving Break – No Class</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	Module 4: Rhythm and Relationship to the World (Second half of class: Research skill introduction: Editing your own writing)  Module 4: Rhythm and Relationship to the World
<b>Week 14</b>	Module 4: Rhythm and Relationship to the World  Module 4: Rhythm and Relationship to the World <b>FINAL PROJECT REVISIONS DUE</b>
<b>Final</b>	<b>FINAL PROJECT DISSEMINATION DUE</b> <b>NON-REPRESENTATIONAL THEORY BOOK REVIEW DUE</b>