

North Park Theological Seminary
SPFM 5202 Spiritual Practices
Spring Semester 2010

Mondays, February 1 - May 3, 3:15 – 5:45pm, Nyvall 25

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Group Formation Leaders: TBA first class session

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

These courses serve two purposes: introduction and integration. The student will be introduced to the foundational motifs, terms, and practices of Christian spiritual formation. These and subsequent courses will provide the occasion for deepening and expanding some of these foundational components by reflective interaction with class material and group process. These courses will seek to integrate the individual and communal elements of spiritual formation, the personal and public character of the Christian life, and classical and contemporary formative practices. It is recommended that these foundational courses be taken before other required and elective spiritual formation courses. One hour each.

This class, Spiritual Practices, focuses on the context for and practice of classical spiritual disciplines and their contemporary forms.

Each two-hour session will include a **presentation**, followed by **small group meetings**.

The **presentation** will focus on a specific practice, often including guided experience of it. The course instructor and various guest speakers from the seminary community will present.

The **small group meetings** are composed of class members and an assigned leader. The group meeting will normally include prayer and personal reflection on the issues raised in the presentation, the assigned readings and your experience of a particular practice. Students receive their group assignments at the first class.

II. OBJECTIVES

When the course is completed you should

- be familiar with a variety of spiritual practices through class presentations, course text, and small group reflection.
- have experimentally engaged in one particular spiritual practice throughout the term.
- have related the issues and practices to personal, communal, and theological issues through listening, self-disclosing, reflecting, discernment, and prayer in a weekly small group.
- have considered which spiritual practices are desirable for your life at this time through the course process and the development of a personal rule of life.

III. REQUIRED READING: There is no book to buy for this course.

1. **Weekly readings** are included in the Class Schedule (Section VI).

They are also posted on Blackboard under 'ASSIGNMENTS'.

The books from which the readings are taken are on reserve in the library.

2. **Reading as needed** to assist you in engaging in your chosen practice (Section VII).

IV. ASSIGNMENTS

1. Attend and participate in all class sessions and group meetings.

This is especially important in a pass/fail course with experiential content.

2. Read weekly assignments prior to the relevant class session.

3. Choose a specific Spiritual Practice in which to engage throughout the term.

Wk. 3, Feb. 15 – DUE: COMMITMENT FORM to your group leader for your chosen practice. Choose a practice from the recommended list (Section VII). You are encouraged to use this opportunity to engage in a practice which is not already your custom or with which you are not very familiar.

Wk. 7, Mar. 22 – DUE: 1-p. REFLECTION PAPER on your experience with your chosen practice to date and how it is affecting your life. Describe any difficulties and how you are dealing with them. Include a statement on what you read regarding your practice and how it contributed to your experience.

Wk. 12, April 26 – DUE: 2-p. REFLECTION PAPER summarizing your experience of your chosen practice. Include thoughts about whether you will continue with this practice or not and why.

V. GRADING: PASS / FAIL

Completion of all above assignments will result in a grade of PASS.

Due to the nature of this course, you are expected to be present and prompt for all presentations and small group meetings.

Absences are strongly discouraged, but if unavoidable, should be excused in advance by your group leader. If you have more than one absence, you must contact Mary Miller, mmiller@northpark.edu, as well as your group leader. A make-up assignment of a 1-page reflection paper on the weekly reading will be assigned and must be emailed to your group members and your group leader before the next session.

Normally students with more than 2 absences will be asked to retake the course. This is not license to miss class or group twice.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact (773) 244-5619. Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. If needed, appointments can be relocated.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to revision depending on course and class needs.)

Reading Assignments are on Blackboard and are on reserve in the library.

† Seasons of the Church Year are marked by †. The colors may vary but those shown are typical.

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† **EPIPHANY: 1/16/10 – 2/16/10**

Transfiguration of Jesus: 2/14/10

(following **ADVENT: 11/29/09 – 12/20/09** and **CHRISTMAS: 12/25/09 - 1/5/09**)

Week 1, 2/1: Responding to God’s Love, I

Presenter: Pam Hubbard

Week 2, 2/8: Responding to God’s Love, II

Presenter: Pam Hubbard

Week 3, 2/15: Daily Office

Jones, ch. 11

Presenter: Brent Laytham

[DUE: Commitment Form]

† **LENT: 2/17/10 – 4/3/10**

Ash Wednesday: 2/17/10

Week 4, 2/22: Sabbath

Jones, ch. 17

Presenter: Ryan Johnson

Week 5, 3/1: Spiritual Classics

Demarest, ch. 9

Presenter: Pam Hubbard

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BREAK ... 3/8-12 ... NO CLASS

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Week 6, 3/15: Silence / Centering Prayer

Jones, ch. 3 and 6

Presenter: Grace Nelson

Week 7, 3/22: Lectio Divina / Prayer of Active Imagination

Barry, ch 6 / Thompson, pp. 22-27

Presenter: Ellen Kogstad

[DUE: Reflection Paper #1]

† **HOLY WEEK: 3/28/10 – 4/3/10**

Palm Sunday: 3/28/10, Maundy Thursday: 4/1/10, Good Friday: 4/2/10,

Holy Saturday: 4/3/10

Week 8, 3/29: Spiritual Friendship / Spiritual Direction

Jones, ch. 10 / Miller, ch. 3-7

Presenter: Neil Taylor

† **EASTER : 4/4/10 – 5/23/10**

Easter Sunday: 4/4/10, Ascension Day: 5/13/10, Pentecost: 5/23/10

Week 9, 4/5: Simplicity

Foster, ch. 6

Presenter: Pam Hubbard

Week 10, 4/12: Fasting

Thompson, ch. 5

Presenter: Marva Watts

Week 11, 4/19: TBD: Class Choice

Week 12, 4/26: Rule of Life

Thompson, ch. 9

Presenter: Pam Hubbard

[DUE: Reflection Paper]

Week 13, 5/3: Worship / Communion

3:30 pm - Meet in groups; 4:30 pm – Meet in chapel

† **ORDINARY TIME:**5/24/10 - 11/27/10

Reformation Day / All Saints Day: 10/31/10

VII. SPIRITUAL PRACTICES LIST:

Choose a practice from the following list to engage in throughout the term.

Practices are listed in the order in which they are presented in class. You are encouraged to choose one that is less familiar to you. Read only as much as you need in order to understand the spirit and method of the practice. The goal is not to read extensively about the practice, but to engage in it.

Readings are posted on Blackboard under ‘ASSIGNMENTS’. The books from which readings are taken are also on reserve in the library. A list of Books Cited is provided following the list.

Use only the web pages listed to meet assignments for this class.

Choose your practice prayerfully, asking God which practice He is drawing you to at this time.

* marks a practice for which you must buy a book

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*** Daily Office**

Set prayers and readings should be read at least twice a day, morning and evening. Feel free to include those who live with you.

Tickle, Phyllis. The Divine Hours: Prayers for Springtime. New York, NY: Doubleday, Random House, 2000.

Anglican Book of Common Prayer OR www.justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp . *If you do the Daily Devotions online, find a quiet place where you can take your time and read out loud.*

Readings: Blackboard, Week 3: Jones, chapter 11

Sabbath

Structure one or much of one day each week so that it is free of the “usual” and becomes a time for rest,,renewal, and consciousness of God.

Readings: Blackboard, Week 4: Jones, chapter 17

*** Spiritual Classics**

Purchase one of the books from “A Short List of Christian Spiritual Classics”, pp. 221-222 in The Sacred Way by Tony Jones. Divide the book into weekly readings. After reading the weekly portion, consider how you can incorporate the concepts/concerns of the author into your daily prayers.

Readings: Blackboard, Week 5: Demarest, chapter 9

Centering Prayer

It is recommended that Centering Prayer be practiced once or twice daily for 20-30 minutes each time.

Readings: Blackboard, Week 6: Jones, chapters 3 and 6

www.contemplativeoutreach.org On Home Page ⇒ 'Centering Prayer' (sidebar)

For comparison of Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina, go to 'Lectio Divina' (sidebar).

Lectio Divina

Three half hour sessions of prayer reading per week would be minimal to become familiar with this practice

Readings: Blackboard, Week 7: Thompson, pp. 22-27

www.contemplativeoutreach.org On Home Page ⇒ 'Lectio Divina' (sidebar), which also includes comparison of Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina..

Prayer of Active Imagination

Set aside ½ hour twice a week for this practice, following guidelines in Barry.

Readings: Blackboard, Week 7: Barry, chapter 6

Spiritual Friendship

Meet with someone you trust for the explicit purpose of becoming more aware of God's presence and activity in and around you through sharing and prayer. Meet with your spiritual friend every two weeks for 1 ½ hours. Follow the procedure as outlined in Miller.

Readings: Blackboard, Week 8: Miller, chapters 3-7

Simplicity

Choose an area of your life and make changes to simplify it. The readings listed here contain specific ideas. Find Scripture passages which encourage you and include them in your prayers.

Readings: Blackboard, Week 9: Foster, chapter 6

Non-Food Fasting

Choose an item/activity from which a fast might be fruitful spiritually. Plan how to spend the time saved in loving God, loving others.

Readings: Blackboard, Week 9: Foster, chapter 6

Food Fasting

FollowThompson's guidelines carefully re: length of fasts, etc. If you have any medical or emotional difficulties that may be affected by fasting,, you should only fast under medical supervision..

Readings: Blackboard, Week 10: Thompson, chapter 5

BOOKS CITED

Survey books of spiritual practices

Demarest, Bruce. Satisfy Your Soul. CO Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999.

Foster, Richard. Celebration of Discipline: The path of Spiritual Growth. San Francisco, CA, Harper and Row: 1978.

Holt, Bradley. Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005.

Jones, Tony. The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.

Thompson, Marjorie, J. Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Books on a specific spiritual practice

Barry, William A. Letting God Come Close: An Approach to the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Chicago, IL: Jesuit Way, 2001.

Miller, Wendy. Learning to Listen: A Guide for Spiritual Friends. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1993.

For **further bibliography** (optional) on specific spiritual practices, see:

1. “Resources” in Jones, The Sacred Way
2. Chapter bibliographies in Holt, Thirsty for God
3. “Selected Annotated Bibliography” in Thompson, Soul Feast