

North Park Theological Seminary
SPFM 5202 Spiritual Practices
One Credit
Spring Semester 2012
Monday 1-3 p.m.

Instructor: Ellen Kogstad

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Spiritual Practices introduces students to a variety of practices that are meant to invite the student into a deeper sense of God's presence in their interior lives and in the world around them. The biblical and historical contexts for spiritual practices will be explored and discussed in and out of class sessions. The intent of the course is practical, experiential and formational. Included in the course will be both a teaching component and formation group sessions facilitated by a formation leader.

Each two-hour session will include a **presentation**, followed by **formation groups**. The **presentation** will focus on a specific practice, often including a guided experience. The course instructor and various guest speakers will present. The **formation groups** 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 and your experience of a particular practice. Students receive their group assignments at the first class session.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Become familiar with a variety of spiritual practices used in the Christian tradition.
- Experimentally engage in one or more *new* spiritual practices throughout the term.
- Share experiences of spiritual development through one's personal practice with the members of your formation group.
- Broaden and deepen one's engagement with God through the practice of new prayer forms.
- Begin to develop a rule of life that nurtures your personal life and sustains you in ministry.
- Become prepared to assist others in expanding their prayer experiences through the use of new prayer practices.

III. TEXT: There is no specific text for the course.

4 books that are highly recommended as reference tools are:

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us.

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth.

Tony Jones, The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life.

Marjorie Thompson, Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life.

Books on specific spiritual practices are listed below in the course schedule.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- a. Class attendance and promptness is a normative expectation.
- b. Active participation in one's weekly formation group.
- c. This class is designed to be *experiential*, that is, the spiritual practices are meant to be *practiced*. This can be done in two ways. Either students can choose ONE spiritual practice from the course schedule below and practice it faithfully throughout the semester. OR students can experiment with the weekly practice thereby experiencing a wide variety of prayer forms.
 - (1) Regardless of which option is chosen, students must inform their formation group leader of their choice by the second class session.
 - (2) In addition to faithful practice, 150 pages of reading on one's topic or 150 pages total on several topics is required. A signed statement that you have done the reading is due **May 7**.
 - (3) A reflection paper of 300-400 words is due to the formation group leader on **May 7**. The paper should reference both the readings and personal formation growth (and frustration) from the spiritual practice(s).

V. GRADING is PASS / FAIL

Completion of all above assignments and faithful attendance 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 formation groups. Absences are strongly discouraged. If there is an **emergency** and you must miss class contact your formation leader. If you have more than one absence, you must contact the instructor as well as your formation leader. A make-up assignment of reading and a 1-page reflection paper will be assigned and must be emailed to your formation group members and your formation leader before the following Monday class session. This is not license to miss class or group twice. Normally students with more than 2 absences will need to withdraw and retake the course.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Seminary office, 773-244-6219. For further information please review the following website: www.northpark.edu/Home/index.cfm?northpark=ada.ada_main.