

SYLLABUS

MB Biblical Seminary
PM 630, Spiritual Formation, Two Credit Hours
Jim Holm, Instructor
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Times:

This course will meet on the following Tuesdays, from 8:30 to 11:30 AM

August 29
September 5
September 12
September 19
September 26
October 17
October 31
November 14
November 21
November 28

Course Description

This course will focus on personal and corporate spiritual growth through gaining head knowledge and heart experience. Students will be invited to explore their own spiritual formation as well as experience modes of formation from Christian traditions of spirituality. The Sermon on the Mount will be a primary biblical text. Students will be invited to regular spiritual practice and must be willing to try a variety of spiritual practices. The course seeks to demonstrate the interrelatedness of self-care and ministry. The implication of spiritual formation for the church and for one's ministry will be explored.

Course Objectives

1. To develop an awareness and understanding of spiritual formation.
2. To learn and practice some personal spiritual practices with the intention of integrating those that are beneficial into one's own life.
3. To explore God's movement in one's life and to share aspects of that movement in a community setting.
4. To understand the biblical foundations for life in the Kingdom of God.
5. To reflect on the ways in which these learnings can impact one's ministry.

Related Degree Objectives

Students preparing for pastoral or church related ministry will find the course helpful in understanding a kingdom perspective on the scriptures, developing a theological understanding of spiritual growth, learning soul care, and understanding a strategy for bringing these insights into one's ministry.

Counseling students will understand the importance of personal formation as a key component of preparing for a professional career, and will learn methods of personal growth that could be part of the therapeutic process.

All students will find that the practices of spiritual formation provide growth for their own lives.

Required texts

Peterson, Eugene H. *Christ Plays In Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. Eerdmans, 2005. 353 pages.

Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Nav Press, 2002. 268 pages.

Wolpert, Daniel. *Creating a Life With God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices*. Upper Room Books, 2003. 192 pages.

Course Outline

August 29

Introduction to Spiritual Formation

Entering the Eternal Life Now

How Can We Learn from Jesus?

Reading Assignment (All reading assignments are to be completed before the class session begins): Peterson, pages 1-47, Willard, Prelude and Chapter 1, Wolpert, Chapter 1.

Practicing Solitude

September 5

Introducing the Sermon on the Mount

Reading Assignment: Peterson, pages 49-130, Willard, Chapter 2, Wolpert, Chapter 2. Lectio Divina

September 12

What is Moral Fulfillment? Matthew 5:17-48

The Jesus Prayer

Reading Assignment: Peterson, pages 131-222, Willard, Chapters 3 & 4, Wolpert, Chapter 3.

September 19

Heavenly Investments, Matthew 6

Reading Assignment: Peterson, pages 223-338, Willard, Chapter 5, Wolpert, Chapter 4.
Aphatic prayer

September 26

A Community of Love and Prayer, Matthew 7:1-12

Reading Assignment: Willard, Chapters 6 & 7, Wolpert, Chapter 5.
The Prayer of Examen

October 17

Learning and Practicing Prayer, Part Two.

The Earthly Society of Jesus, Matthew 7:13-29

Cultivating Intimacy with God.

Reading Assignment, Willard, Chapter 8, Wolpert, Chapter 6 and Chapter 12.
Creativity Prayer.

October 31

Introduction to Spiritual Disciplines: their purpose and function

Reading Assignment, Willard, Chapter 9, Wolpert, Chapter 7.

Journaling

November 14

Class will meet in a local park

Exploring prayer using one's whole being

Reading Assignment, Willard, Chapters 10 and 13, Wolpert, Chapter 8.
Using your body in prayer.

November 21

A Curriculum for Christlikeness

Understanding Sabbath

Reading Assignment: Willard, Chapter 11, Wolpert, Chapter 9 & 10.

Prayer while walking.

November 28

The future of the Human Race

Final Summations

Reading Assignment: Willard, Chapter 12 & Postlude, Wolpert, Chapter 11.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance at all sessions, arriving on time, mastering assigned reading and participating actively with colleagues in spiritual practices, reflection and discussion.
2. Keep a spiritual journal, reflecting on your daily spiritual experience. Guidelines for this journal will be given at the first class session. Your reflections can also form the experiential basis of your final integrating paper. Copies of the journals should be handed in on or before **December 1, 2006**.
3. Write a spiritual biography reflecting formative experiences of your life. Trace early influences, significant personas and defining moments, recounting the outer facts as well as reflecting on any inner meaning. 4-6 pages double-spaced. Hand in or email to instructor on or before September 26.
4. Prior to each class session, write a two-page response (single-spaced) to the assigned reading for that week from Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*. Your response should be structured as follows:
 - a. Summary of the core message of that chapter or chapters. The summary comprises one short paragraph.
 - b. Your critical response to the reading, including helpful insights concerning spiritual formation and any reservations you may have. Is there anything you would like to ask the author?
5. Write a final **integrating** paper utilizing required reading, classroom lecture and discussion, spiritual practices, and journaling. Address the following questions in any way you choose (10-12 pages double spaced).
 - a. What is your current understanding of Christian spirituality and formation?
 - b. Relate this current understanding of Christian spirituality to the scriptures, the church and the world.
 - c. What “rule of life”, or embodiment/practice of spirituality have you adopted currently? What benefits and struggles have you experienced in this process?
 - d. How might spirituality and formation affect your future life and ministry?
 - e. At the end of your paper attach a short (1-2 page) written evaluation of yourself and the work you have done in this course. Outline your areas of strength and growth as you experienced them during the course. Indicate what grade you believe you have earned on your class participation, reading and writing.
 - f. You may choose an artistic way to address the questions above, the written text may be shortened accordingly, provided the text covers the points above clearly enough that the link between the artistic medium and the integrative issues can be clearly seen by the reader. The paper is due **December 4th** at 5:00 PM in the seminary office. Papers that arrive later than that will receive a reduction in grade. This paper should not be emailed but handed in as hard copy.

Grading

Meeting the course requirements satisfactorily, as outlined above, will generally result in a grade of “B.” A higher grade will require a higher quality in writing and reflection.

Grading is weighted as follows:

Class attendance/participation	10%
Biography and journaling	25%
Responses to Willard Book	35%
Integrative paper	30%

Academic Policies

Seminary academic policies are described on the website at www.mbseminary.edu/policies. Included are policies on extensions, academic integrity, non-discriminatory language, academic appeals, etc. Students should be familiar and comply with seminary academic policies.

Confidentiality

Students who wish to have their work kept confidential should submit it in an envelope and it will be returned in the same way. Our classroom times will also constitute a covenant community and confidentiality guidelines will be reviewed on the first day of class.

Bibliography

Will be distributed on the first day of class.