

## **SYLLABUS, Summer 2007**

MB Biblical Seminary  
PM 630, Spiritual Formation, Two Credit Hours  
Jim Holm, Instructor  
452-1717  
[jimholm@mbseminary.edu](mailto:jimholm@mbseminary.edu)

This course will meet Monday through Friday, June 11-22, from 8:30 to 11:30 AM daily.

### **Course Description**

The 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**

#### **June 11.**

Introduction to spiritual formation  
 Entering the Eternal Life Now  
 How Can We Learn from Jesus?  
 Discipline of journaling  
 Disciplines of solitude and silence  
*Reading (Note: It is expected that all reading assignments due for a day will be completed before class begins that day.) Willard, Prelude and Chapter One; Wolpert, Chapter One.*

#### **June 12.**

Introducing the Sermon on the Mount  
 What is Moral Fulfillment?  
*Lectio Divina, The Discipline of Study*  
*Reading: Willard, Chapter Two; Wolpert, Chapter Two.*

#### **June 13.**

What is Moral Fulfillment? (conclusion)  
 The Jesus Prayer  
 Disciplines of Worship and Celebration  
*Reading: Willard, Chapters Three & Four; Wolpert, Chapter Three*

#### **June 14.**

Christ Plays in Creation  
 Practicing Apophatic Prayer  
 Disciplines of fasting, frugality and secrecy  
*Reading: Peterson, pages 1-130*

**June 15.**

A Community of Love and Prayer  
 The Prayer of Examen.  
 Disciplines of Chastity and Sacrifice.  
*Reading: Willard, Chapter Five; Wolpert, Chapter Four.*

**June 18.**

The Earthly Society of Jesus  
 Christ Plays in History  
 Creativity Prayer  
*Reading: Peterson, pages 131-222*

**June 19.**

The class will meet at the Mountain View Shelter at Woodward Park in North Fresno.  
 Praying in nature.  
 Labyrinth prayer.  
 Celebration of the Eucharist  
*Reading: Willard, Chapters Six & Seven; Wolpert, Chapter Five.*

**June 20.**

A Curriculum for Christlikeness.  
 Body prayer  
 Disciplines of Fellowship, Service, Confession, Submission.  
*Reading: Willard, Chapters Eight & Nine; Wolpert, Chapters Six & Seven.*

**June 21.**

The future of the human race.  
 Christ Plays in Community.  
 Understanding the Sabbath.  
*Reading: Willard, Chapters Ten & Eleven; Wolpert, Chapters Eight & Nine.*

**June 22.**

Final summations.  
 Understanding the cycle of spiritual growth.  
 Prayer while walking.  
*Reading: Willard, Chapters Twelve and Postlude; Wolpert, Chapters Ten through Twelve.*

## Daily Schedule

Daily the class will follow approximately this schedule:

- 8:30-8:45, Guided Meditation (Students arriving late may be asked to wait until this is completed)
- 8:45-9:30, Class Lecture
- 9:30-10:00, Small Group Discussion on daily readings
- 10:00-10:20, Break
- 10:20-11:30, Prayer practices and spiritual disciplines, practice and reflection

(Note: on June 14, 18, and 21, the small group discussion time will be lengthened to give students time to reflect on and interact with the Peterson readings. On June 19, the entire class session will be held at Woodward Park and the regular schedule will not be followed.)

## 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. All students will be required to keep a spiritual journal, reflecting on their daily spiritual experiences, written every day of the class. Guidelines for journaling will be given at the first class session. The journal may be handwritten or typed, and is due every morning of the class at 8:30 AM, including June 19. The minimum length of the journal should be one page..
3. Write a spiritual biography reflecting formative experiences of your life. Trace early influences, significant persons and defining moments, recounting the outer facts as well as reflecting on any inner meaning. 4-6 pages double spaced. **Due August 1, 2007 by 5:00 PM.**
4. In each class session, time will be given for students to discuss in small groups the daily readings. All students are expected to be prepared to participate in these discussions. Some days the entire class may serve as one small group. Questions that students should be prepared to answer about each daily reading include the following:
  - a. In several sentences, state the core message of this reading.
  - b. Explain in some detail what you found particularly insightful, illuminating, or stimulating to your thinking.
  - c. What troubled you, raised questions for you, or created reservations in you?
  - d. If I take this author seriously, the implications for my life are:
  - e. If I do not take this author seriously, the implications for my life are:
  - f. As a result of this reading, I have decided to:

5. In addition to the class texts, the student is required to read an additional 500 pages from a bibliography distributed by the instructor on the first day of class. For each book read, the student will submit a two-page report stating the author and title of the book, along with the number of pages read, and answering the following questions:
  - a. In several sentences, state the core message of this reading.
  - b. Explain in some detail what you found particularly insightful, illuminating, or stimulating to your thinking.
  - c. What troubled you, raised questions for you, or created reservations in you?
  - d. If I take this author seriously, the implications for my life are:
  - e. If I do not take this author seriously, the implications for my life are:
  - f. As a result of this reading, I have decided to:

These reports are all due **August 1, 2007 at 5:00 PM.**
6. 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 understanding or definition of spiritual formation?
  - b. Explain how the scriptures formulate your understanding of formation?
  - c. What “rule of life”, or practice of spirituality are you currently following? What benefits and struggles have you experienced in this process?
  - d. How might spirituality and formation affect your future 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
  - 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 **August 1, 2007** at 5:00 PM in the seminary office. This paper should not be emailed but handed in as hard copy.
7. Students desiring or needing extra credit may memorize a significant portion of scripture and recite it to the instructor. The instructor and the student will determine an appropriate text, a due date and a time to hear the text.

## 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 in small group discussions	15%
---	-----

Biography and journaling	25%
Reviews of additional reading	25%
Integrative paper	35%

All work submitted after the due date will be reduced in grade.

Work submitted with excessive spelling or grammatical errors will be reduced in grade.

The student will have the option to rewrite and resubmit.

### **Academic Policies**

Seminary academic policies are described on the website at [www.mbseminary.edu/policies](http://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 enveloped 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.