

## SYLLABUS, Spring 2008

MB Biblical Seminary  
 PM 630, Spiritual Formation, Two Credit Hours  
 Jim Holm, Instructor  
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This course will meet on the following Tuesday mornings, beginning at 8:30 a.m. The length of the course each day is noted following the date.

January 29 (3hr) February 5 (2hr) February 12 (3hr) February 19 (2hr) February 26 (3 hr) March 18 (2hr)		March 25 (3hr) April 1 (2hr) April 8 (3hr) April 15 (2hr) April 29 (2hr) May 13 (3hr)
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### 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 which 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.

### Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be addressed and should be enhanced through this course. These are taken from the seminary's description of anticipated student outcomes.

**1. Demonstrate commitment to live as a disciple of Jesus in Christian community**

- 1.1 Practice spiritual disciplines that promote maturing authentic discipleship
  - 1.1.1 Practice such personal spiritual disciplines as journaling, daily prayer, Bible reading, silence, solitude, fasting
  - 1.1.2 Demonstrate balance in time management, giving evidence of appropriate boundaries of work, study, family and friends, play
- 1.2 Demonstrate self-awareness that promotes maturing, authentic humanity
  - 1.2.1 Establish habits of physical and emotional self-care
  - 1.2.3 Practice integrity and ethical behavior in personal and professional relationships

**4. Practice leadership skills in Pastoral Ministry**

- 4.1 Proclaim the gospel message through words and deeds with the purpose of leading all people to faith in Jesus Christ and into a relationship with the church
  - 4.1.1 Declare God's love for all people in biblically faithful and culturally appropriate expressions of words and deeds, inviting those outside the church to respond in faith to God's love in Christ and to join the local church.
  - 4.1.3 Encourage members of the congregation to live Christianly where they work, live and play so that the church scattered proclaims the gospel message in word and deed

**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**

**January 29.**

- Introduction to Spiritual Formation
- Entering the Eternal Life Now
- Disciplines of journaling, solitude, silence

*Reading (Note: it is expected that all reading assignments for a day will be completed before class begins on that day). Willard, Prelude, Chap One; Wolpert, Chap One and Seven.*

**February 5.**

How can we learn from Jesus?  
 The Jesus Prayer  
 Peterson, Christ Plays in Creation  
*Reading: Peterson, pages 1-130; Wolpert, Chap Three*

**February 12**

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

**February 19**

What is Moral fulfillment (continued?)  
 Disciplines of Worship and Celebration  
 Peterson, Christ Plays in History  
*Reading: Peterson, pages 131-222.*

**February 26**

Heavenly Investments  
 Apophatic Prayer  
 Disciplines of fasting, frugality, and secrecy  
*Reading: Willard, Chap Three; Wolpert, Chap Four.*

**March 18**

Peterson, Christ Plays in Community  
 The Prayer of Examen  
*Reading: Peterson, pages 223-34; Wolpert, Chap Five.*

**March 25**

A Community of Love and Prayer  
 Disciplines of Chastity and Sacrifice  
*Reading: Willard, Chap Four & Five.*

**April 1**

The Earthly Society of Jesus  
 Creativity Prayer  
*Reading: Willard, Chap Six; Wolpert, Chap Six.*

**April 8**

*Note: The class will meet at a local park in Fresno.*  
 Praying in nature.  
 Labyrinth prayer.  
 Celebration of the Eucharist  
*Reading: Willard, Chap Seven; Wolpert, Chaps Nine & Ten.*

**April 15**

A Curriculum for Christlikeness

*Reading: Willard, Chaps Eight & Nine..*

**April 22**

The Future of the Human Race

Body Prayer

Disciplines of Fellowship, Service, Confession, Submission

*Reading: Willard, Chaps Ten & Eleven; Wolpert, Chap Eight.*

**April 29**

Understanding Sabbath

Understanding the Spiritual Growth Cycle

Final summations.

Prayer while walking.

*Reading: Willard, Chaps Twelve, Thirteen & Postlude; Wolpert, Chaps Eleven & Twelve.*

**Daily Schedule**

Guided Meditation (Students arriving late may be asked to wait until this is completed)

Class Lecture

Small Group Discussion on daily readings

Prayer practices and spiritual disciplines, practice and reflection

**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 spiritual experiences, due every class session. Guidelines for journaling will be given at the first class session. The journal may be handwritten or typed, as long as it is legible.
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 February 26, 2008 by 5:00 PM.**
4. In class sessions, time will be given for students to discuss the daily readings. All students are expected to be prepared to participate in these discussions. 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. Any books requested for this additional reading that are not on the bibliography must have specific permission from the instructor or they will not be counted toward the total. For each book read, the student will submit a two-three page report stating the author and title of the book, along with the number of pages read, and containing the following: Describe the central idea or thesis of the book and interact with it in a meaningful way, using the following sentences as guidelines. **State the idea.** Analyze it. Is it tenable? Does it make sense? Can it be proved? Is it biblical? **Critique it.** What is missing in that thesis? What should have been covered or considered but was not? **Apply it.** If you believe and act on what that author describes, what difference will it make in your life? Your family? Your ministry?
- These reports are due **April 1, 2008 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. 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 **May 8, 2008** at 5:00 PM in the seminary office. 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 in small group discussions	15%
Biography and journaling	20%

Reviews of additional reading	30%
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**

Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, accommodation for disabilities, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to the professor or consult the Registrar.

Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.

## **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.