



CS663 Spiritual Companions (3)
Ambrose Seminary
Fall 2012

Instructor: Professor Charles Nienkirchen PhD
Office Hours: W 2:30-5:00/TH – 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Or by appointment
Class Times: W/6:30-9:30 p.m.

Office: L2069
Office Phone: 403 410-2000 Ext 5905
Email: cnienkirchen@ambrose.edu
Location: A2131
Website: www.downancientpaths.com

Required Texts:

Kyriacos Markides, *The Mountain of Silence*. (Doubleday/2001)
Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening*. (Cowley/1992)
Sue Pickering, *Spiritual Direction*. (Canterbury/2008)
Bruce Demarest, *Soulguide*. (NavPress/2003)

Course Description

The course gives consideration to the classical practice of spiritual direction in various Christian traditions from ancient to modern times and the influence of outstanding spiritual mentors of the 20th century. Attention is also given to the nature, objectives and dynamics of spiritual direction as experienced in a practical context.

Course Objectives

- To expose the student to Christian concepts of spiritual direction / companionship from various time periods and traditions;
- To give indepth attention to the practice and dynamics of spiritual direction / companionship in a contemporary setting;
- To offer practical guidance in the seeking out of a relationship of spiritual direction / companionship;
- To reflect on the emphases of some significant spiritual mentors in the 20th century.

Course Schedule

Note: No electronic recording devices of any kind are permitted to be used in the classroom apart from professorial consent.

Week 1 Course Introduction

Week 2 The Scriptures, Jesus & Spiritual Direction/Companionship

Week 3	The 'Christian East' and Spiritual Direction / Companionship Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Mother Teresa
Week 4	The "Christian East" ... (continued) Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / E. Stanley Jones
Week 5	The 'Christian West' and Spiritual Direction / Companionship Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Basilea Schlink
Week 6	The 'Christian West' ... (continued) Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Thomas Merton
Week 7	Spiritual Direction and the Reformation Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Billy Graham
Week 8	Spiritual Direction and the Reformation ... (continued)
Week 9	Discussion / What is Spiritual Direction? What Spiritual Direction Is / Is Not Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Martin Luther King Jr. Reading - 'What is Spiritual Direction?' (handout)
Week 10	Models of Spiritual Direction (handout)
Week 11	What Goes On in Spiritual Direction?
Week 12	Implications of the Recovery of Spiritual Direction for the Church

Course Requirements and Grading

- A. **A review / response paper (6-8 pages)** on Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening* which responds to the following questions:
1. What is Guenther's understanding of 'spiritual direction'? (10 marks)
 2. What are your areas of agreement / disagreement with Guenther's concept of spiritual direction? (10 marks)
 3. What issues were raised for you by the book? Think within and 'beyond the book'. (6 marks)
 4. What do you want to study further as a result of reading the book (4 marks).

The title of this assignment is *Holy Listening: A Book Review/Response*

DUE: Wednesday, October 24/2012 (30% of final grade)

B. **A review / response paper (6-8 pages)** on Kyriacos Markides, *The Mountain of Silence* which responds to the following questions:

1. Based on your reading of the book, construct a working definition of the practice of spiritual direction (be as succinct and precise as possible!) (4 marks)
2. Identify the major distinguishing features of the spirituality of Father Maximos. What issues does it raise for you? (10 marks)
3. How would you characterize the 'style' of Father Maximos in his practice of spiritual direction? Give specific references. (8 marks)
4. How does the kind of spiritual direction described in the book fit with your 'experience' of Christianity? (5 marks)
5. What is your overall evaluation of the book? (3 marks)

The title of this assignment is *The Mountain of Silence: A Book Review/Response*

DUE: Wednesday, November 21/2012 (30% of final grade)

C. **A Reading Report** on 6 scholarly articles of the student's choice on the subject of spiritual direction which includes the following:

1. a summary of the thesis of each article;
2. a brief discussion of the main themes/ideas developed in each article;
3. an identification of at least 3 critical issues which would require further consideration/study on your part.

NOTE: Each article can be reviewed in 1 ½ to 2 pages.

DUE: Wednesday, November 21/2012 (30% of final grade)

D. **Reading Reports:** A 2-page assessment of the value of Demarest's *Soulguide* in terms of enhancing your understanding of spiritual direction and the same for Pickering, *Spiritual Direction*.

DUE: Wednesday, November 28/2012 (10% of final grade)

Grading Schedule

96-100	A+	82-85	B+	68-71	C+	56-59	D+
91-95	A	75-81	B	63-67	C	50-55	D
86-90	A-	72-74	B-	60-62	C-	<50	F

Important Notes:

1. The Registration Revision Period is **September 5-16/2012**. The last day to enter courses without permission and to withdraw from courses and receive tuition refund is **September 16/2012**.
2. The last day to apply for time extension for course work is **November 26/2012**.
3. The last day to withdraw from classes without academic penalty is **November 12/2012**.
4. Lectures will not always cover all the text material. Readings from the text provide the context for the lecture.
5. **All late assignments which have not received an officially approved extension will be granted the highest possible failing grade. Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or a prolonged illness for which you required treatment by a physician. All requests for extensions must be received in writing at least seven days prior to the due date. Factors such as assignments for other courses, computer software difficulties, or computer printer malfunctions are not sufficient grounds for requesting an extension. If an extension has been granted it is your responsibility when submitting the paper to attach a note indicating the date to which the extension was granted and the date on which the paper is actually submitted. Retain for yourself a copy (software or hard copy) of each paper.**
6. The title page of **ALL** assignments should include the title of the assignment, course name and number, the professor's name, the student's name, student ID number and mailbox number. This is imperative!
7. All assignments must be turned in by the last day of classes in order to receive credit for the course. In the event that all work has not been turned in by the end of the course, and a 'time extension' has not been approved by **November 26/2012**, a failing grade will be received for the course.
8. **No assignments will be received by electronic transmission.**
9. Minimum standards of writing will be observed in all typed essay assignments.
10. Final grades will be available on the student portals. Printed grades will no longer be mailed out.
11. **Students are responsible to check their Ambrose e-mail accounts regularly. Emails may be used to notify students of cancelled classes or other important details relating to the course.**
12. **Use of cell phones, recording devices, head phones, and all other non-essential technology is prohibited.**
Lap top computers, when not used exclusively for taking class notes, are often a distraction to classmates and even the individual user. Their use is discouraged. The instructor reserves the right to prohibit electronic devices in the classroom should they prove to be a distraction. If this becomes the case, students should be prepared to take handwritten notes. Laptops used for purposes unrelated to taking lecture notes are prohibited. Violators will be asked to leave the class. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean's Office.
13. **Students are expected to respect the learning environment of the classroom and to exhibit courtesy and civility at all times. Make every attempt to be on time. Keep unnecessary conversation to a minimum, as it is distracting to both the**

instructor and fellow classmates, and often deleterious to a student's performance in class.

Additional Information

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as are stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar.

Plagiarism is a serious offence and carries with it serious penalties.

Personal information, that is, information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information, contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension". Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination times must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control".