



# CS 663 – 1

## Spiritual Companions

Semester: Fall, 2015  
Days: W/6:30-9:30 pm  
Room: A2133

Number of credits: 3

Prerequisite:  
none

Instructor: Professor Charles Nienkirchen  
Email: cnienkirchen@ambrose.edu  
Phone: 403-410-2000 EXT 5905  
Office: L2069  
Office hours: By appointment

### Course Description:

This 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 in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Put succinctly, Christianity is about healing, and spiritual direction is a primary instrument for enabling it. The process is holistic, in which *spiritual* means the integrative formation of body, mind and heart.

Spiritual direction entails appreciation of the Holy Spirit’s wildness, defying lines and margins, coming exceptionally, creatively, distinctively and uniquely to each person.

The rediscovery of spiritual direction as a central resource for the pilgrimage of each Christian brings with it the lament that few able spiritual directors exist with the contemporary church.

W. Paul Jones, *The Art of Spiritual Direction*. (2002).

### Important Dates:

First day of classes: Sept. 9, 2015  
Registration revision period: Sept. 20, 2015  
Last day to request revised examination: Oct. 26, 2015  
Last day to withdraw from course: Nov. 12, 2015  
Last day to apply for time extension for coursework: Nov. 23, 2015  
Last day of classes: Dec. 14, 2015

### Expected Learning Outcomes:

It is the aim of the course that students acquire the following skills:

1. To acquire an understanding of Christian concepts of spiritual direction/companionship from various time periods and traditions;
2. To gain an appreciation for the practice and dynamics of spiritual direction/companionship in a contemporary setting;
3. To receive practical guidance in the seeking out of a relationship of spiritual direction/companionship;

**No final exam**

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## Outline:

**NOTE: No electronic devices of any kind are permitted to be used in the classroom without professorial consent. Failure to comply will have serious consequences and possibly lead to expulsion from the course.**

**Week 1-** Course Introduction

**Week 2-** The Scriptures, Jesus and Spiritual Direction/Companionship

**Week 3-** The 'Christian East' and Spiritual Direction/Companionship/Spiritual Mentors of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century/Mother Teresa

**Week 4-** The 'Christian East'... (cont'd)/Spiritual Mentors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century/E. Stanley Jones

**Week 5-** The 'Christian West and Spiritual Direction/Companionship/Spiritual mentors of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century/Basilea Schlink

**Week 6-** The 'Christian West'... (cont'd)/Spiritual Mentors of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century/Thomas Merton

**Week 7-** Spiritual Direction and the Reformation/Spiritual Mentors of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century /Billy Graham

**Week 8-** Spiritual Direction and the Reformation (cont'd)

**Week 9-** What is Spiritual Direction? What Spiritual Direction Is/Is Not/Spiritual Mentors of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century/ Martin Luther king Jr.

**Week 10-** Nov. 11 /Class cancelled for Remembrance Day

**Week 11-** Models of Spiritual Direction (handout)

**Week 12-** What Goes on in Spiritual Direction? (handout)

**Week 13-** Implications of the Recovery of the Spiritual Direction for the Church

**Week 14-** Spiritual Direction in the Third Millennium/Some Thoughts on 'Evangelicalism' in an Age of Religious/Spiritual Pluralism

## Requirements:

- 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/2-3 pages)
  2. What are your areas of agreement /disagreement with Guenther's concept of spiritual direction? Why? (10 marks/ 2-3 pages)
  3. Identify 3 issues which were raised for you by the book? Think 'within' and 'beyond' the book. (6 marks/1½-2 pages)
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4. What 4 subjects do you want to study further as a result of reading the book? (4 marks/3/4-1 page)

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

**Due: Wednesday, Oct. 21 /2015 (by midnight)(30% of final grade)**

- B. A review/response paper (6-8 pages) on Kyriakos Markides, *The Mountain of Silence* which responds to the following questions :
1. According to the contents of the book, what would be a working definition of the practice of spiritual direction? (Be as succinct and precise as possible!) (4 marks/3/4 page)
  2. What are the distinguishing characteristics of the spirituality of Father Maximos? What issues does it raise for you? (10 marks/2-3 pages)
  3. How would you characterize 'the style' of Father Maximos in his practice of spiritual direction? (Be specific with examples.) (8 marks/2 pages)
  4. How does the kind of spiritual direction described in the book fit with your experience of Christianity? (5 marks/1-1/1/2 pages)
  5. What is your overall evaluation of the book? (3marks/3/4 page)

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

**Due: Wednesday, Nov. 25/ 2015 (by midnight)(30% of final grade)**

- C. A reading report on 6 scholarly, peer reviewed articles of the student's choice on the subject of spiritual direction which includes the following for each article:
1. A complete bibliographical citation;
  2. A summary of the thesis of each article; (1 mark)
  3. A brief discussion of the main themes/ideas developed in each article; (2 marks)
  4. An identification of at least 3 critical issues which require further consideration/study on your part. (2 marks)

**NOTE: if you are in doubt as to whether or not an article you have chosen is eligible for review consult with the professor for approval so as not to run the risk of having the article disqualified when being graded.**

**Due: Wednesday, Dec. 2/ 2015 (by midnight)(30% of final grade)**

- D. A 2-page assessment of the value of Demarest, *Soul Guide* in terms of enhancing your understanding
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of spiritual direction.

**Due: Wednesday, Dec. 9/2015 (by midnight)(10% of final grade)**

**Submission of Assignments:** All assignments must be submitted in hard copy in class or to the professor's office. They are always due by midnight of the due date. Any late assignments which have not been granted an extension must be turned in by the end of the course and will be given the highest possible failing grade provided they have demonstrated an acceptable level of performance, otherwise they will receive a '0'.

**Attendance:** Conscientious attendance is the student's responsibility. Classes should only be missed for emergency reasons. The professor will not bear any responsibility to supply the student with lecture content or handouts for classes missed for non-emergency reasons.

**Evaluation:**

Book Review/Response Paper #1- 30%

Book Review/Response Paper #2- 30%

Reading Report- 30%

Assessment Paper- 10%

**Grade Summary:**

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
A+ (96-100)	
A (91-95)	Excellent
A- (86-90)	
B+ (82- 85)	
B (75-81)	Good
B- (72-74)	
C+ (68-71)	
C (63-67)	Satisfactory
C - (60-62)	

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D+ (56-59)

D (50-55) Minimal Pass

F (<50) Failure

**Note:** Final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are no longer available.

## Textbooks:

Kyriakos Markides, *The Mountain of Silence*. (2002).

Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening*. (1992).

Sue Pickering, *Spiritual Direction*. (2008).

Bruce Demarest, *Soul Guide*. (2003).

## Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**, please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

## Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply

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with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

### **Academic Policies**

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. 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](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

### **Extensions**

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**” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control”.

### **Appeal of Grade**

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

### **Academic Integrity**

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.