

PT645 Spiritual Companions
Ambrose Theological Seminary
Fall 2008

Instructor: Professor Charles Nienkirchen, PhD

Office Hours: T/TH - 9:30 a.m. -12:00

Or by appointment

Class Times: W/6:30-9:00 p.m.

Office: L2069

Office Phone: 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)

Jeannette Bakke, Holy Invitations. (Baker/2000)

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.

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

Sept 17 Course Introduction
 Spiritual Direction in the Third Millennium

Sept 24 The Scriptures, Jesus & Spiritual Direction/Companionship
Reading - The Chicago Call (handout)
 Weiss, 'Jewish Spiritual Direction'

- Oct 1** The 'Christian East' and Spiritual Direction / Companionship
Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Mother Teresa
Reading - Regina Baumer & Michael Plattig, 'The Desert Fathers and Spiritual Direction'
- Oct 8** The "Christian East" ... (continued)
Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / E. Stanley Jones
- Oct 15** The "Christian West" and Spiritual Direction / Companionship
Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Basilea Schlink
Reading - Ambrose, "Duties of the Clergy"
Benedict, "Rule"
Gregory, Rule of Pastoral Care
- Oct 22** The "Christian West" and Spiritual Direction / Companionship (continued)
Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Thomas Merton
- Oct 29** Spiritual Direction and the Reformation
Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Billy Graham
Reading - Luther, Letters
Baxter, The Reformed Pastor
Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress
Winner, 'Leighton Ford: Evangelist to Soul Friend'
- Nov 5** Spiritual Direction and the Reformation ... (continued)
Spiritual Mentors of the 20th century / Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
- Nov 12** 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)
- Nov 19** Qualities of a Good Spiritual Friend
Reading - Peterson, 'Practising and Malpracticing the Presence of God'
(handout)
- Nov 26** Models of Spiritual Direction (handout)
- Dec 3** What goes on in Spiritual Direction?
- Dec 10** The 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).

DUE: Wednesday, October 22nd /2008 (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)

DUE: Wednesday, November 19th /2008 (30% of final grade)

C. **A Reading Report** on the following articles:

1. John Chryssavgis, 'The Spiritual Elder';
2. Gary Fuhr, 'Spiritual Guidance in the Baptist Tradition';
3. Joseph Driskill, 'Spiritual Guidance in a Mainline Protestant Context';
4. Wilkie Au, 'Holistic Discernment';
5. N. Graham Standish, 'Directive Forms of Spiritual Direction';
6. Ann Kline, 'Widening the Lens: The Gift of Group 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 26th /2008 (30% of final grade)

- D. Required syllabus reading (on time), Bakke, Holy Invitations and a 2-page assessment of the value of Demarest's Soulguide in terms of enhancing your understanding of spiritual direction.

DUE: Wednesday, December 10th /2008 (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 15-26/2008. The last day to enter courses without permission and to withdraw from courses and receive tuition refund is September 26/2008;
2. The last day to apply for time extension for course work is December 19/2008;
3. Lectures will not always cover all the text material. Readings from the text provide the context for the lecture.
4. **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.**
5. The title page of **ALL** assignments should include the course name and number, the professor's name, the student's name, student ID number and mailbox number. This is imperative!
6. 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 December 19/2008, a failing grade will be received for the course.
7. **No assignments will be received by electronic transmission.**
8. Minimum standards of writing will be observed in all type-written essay assignments.

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.

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 cted 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”.