

Ambrose Seminary
PT 645 Christian Spirituality and Discipleship
Fall Semester 2009
Instructor: Peter Ralph, Th.M., D.Min.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will serve as an introduction to a vast area of study and experience. It will survey the Christian experience of God as a personal and corporate reality. It will endeavour to present various ways in which Christians have described their spiritual life and sought to call such life forth in others. The course is designed to offer a variety of ways in which the student may learn in this field. Experiential learning is encouraged in several ways.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a biblical understanding of Christian spirituality and discipleship.
2. To introduce selected spiritual disciplines as a means of personal and corporate discipleship.
3. To view the development of Christian spirituality in historical context and to understand different expressions of Christian spirituality.
4. To present the Christian life as a process of spiritual enlargement and development in obedience.
5. To provide an opportunity for growth in spirituality and discipleship.

REQUIRED READING

1. Chan, Simon. 2000 *Spiritual Theology*. IVP.

RECOMMENDED READING

1. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*
2. Colson, C. *Loving God*. Harper & Row.
3. Coppedge, A. 1989. *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship*. Zondervan. (out of print)
4. Foster, Richard. 1998. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. HarperSanFrancisco.
5. Houston, J. 1989. *Prayer: The Transforming Friendship*. Lion Books.
6. Huggett, J. 1986. *Listening to God*. Downer's Grove. Intervarsity Press.
7. Mulholland, Robt. 1989. *Invitation to a Journey*. IVP.

8. Smith, Gordon. *Essential Spirituality*. Thomas Nelson.
9. Stevens, P., and M. Green. 1994. *New Testament Spirituality*. Eagle.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Personal Growth Covenant

The student will complete, in consultation with the professor, a covenant of personal growth, designed to include one spiritual discipline as presented in class but not previously practised in the student's experience. The covenant will act as a commitment to intentional activity during the semester, and will be the basis of journaling, reflection and accountability during the course. The covenant is to be designed by and suited to the student, and is intended to extend the limits of their present understanding of spiritual experience.

Due: September 23

10%

2. Course Reflection Paper

Part One

In order to account to the professor for the student's experience in the personal growth covenant, a paper will be prepared by each student as an assessment of the student's participation in the whole class experience. The following questions are a suggested, but not limiting, structure for this assessment:

- 2.1 At the beginning of the semester, where were you in relationship to the spiritual disciplines which you planned in your growth covenant?
- 2.2 How did you prepare (research, spiritual preparation, personal organization, support structure, etc.) for the discipline you chose?
- 2.3 How do you assess your progress in relationship to this discipline thus far?
- 2.4 What strategies do you have for continuing to develop your life of spirituality and discipline?
- 2.5 In what ways has this course benefited you most?
- 2.6 How have other people or factors contributed to your development?
- 2.7 How have you contributed to the spiritual development of others in the course of the semester?

Part Two

Prepare a concise discussion of your own spiritual theology as it has developed to this point. Include your own answer to the three main questions of Spiritual Theology: Who is the God that Christians know through Jesus Christ, and how do they know this God? What is the path of spiritual formation that Christians follow? What are the disciplines of the

spiritual life that help Christians in their formation?

Due: Week of November 23 to 27

40%

3. Book Reflection and Interaction Papers

Students will write one 8-10 page reflection paper for Simon Chan's *Spiritual Theology*. This paper will include a summary of content, critique of the author's approach or argument, but will major on reflection on the impact of the book on the student (i.e. life change? confirmation? other direction? etc.) Don't underestimate the work involved in such reflection and integration in personal terms. Move beyond basic analytical and cognitive interaction with the texts to deeper responses in emotions and motivations of soul and spirit.

Students will also write a reflection paper in response to 300 pages of selected reading in the general area of Spirituality and Discipleship, chosen by the student from the reading list in the syllabus or from other relevant works. Again, summary, critique and personal impact are criteria for this paper.

**Due: October 14 (selected reading)
December 2 (Chan)**

30%

4. Personal Journal

Students will maintain a personal journal of their spiritual pilgrimage throughout the semester which, in addition to accounting for their inner experience, may reflect:

- (1) Their response to the Person of Christ as cultivated through practice of the spiritual disciplines emphasized throughout the course;
- (2) Development of relationships to other members within the Body of Christ including his/her immediate family; and
- (3) His/her involvement in the work of Christ in the world.

A journal, to be helpful, must be private. Students will, however, be required to account for their use of the journal. This may be done by a written account, distinct from but included in the Course Reflection Paper. Students may choose to share their journal or a portion of it with the professor but this is not required.

Due: Week of November 23 to 27 (included in Growth Covenant Reflection Paper)

20%

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Attendance is required at all class sessions.
2. All papers are to be typed in good manuscript form according to Turabian's 5th Edition of *A Manual for Writers*.
3. Late Work. All written work is due by 8:00am. on the morning following the day assigned.

Where work is due within a specified week, due dates will be calculated as closed by 8:00am on the following Monday. Since this policy is liberal, penalties for late work will be as follows. For each 24-hour period late, or part thereof, papers will be penalized one letter grade (e.g. A- to B+). Any exceptions to this must be arranged for in advance with the professor. Where work is assigned on a week-due basis, no extensions of any kind will be granted. Students who wish to submit late work notwithstanding this policy will also hand in, with the late work, a time management assessment which will be available in the professor's office.