



A M B R O S E

PT662 Prayer Paths to God (3)

Ambrose Theological Seminary
Fall/2009

Instructor: Professor Charles Nienkirchen, Ph.D.

Office Hours: W/ F 9:30-12:00

Or by appointment

Class Times: TH 6:30-9:00 p.m.

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Location: A2133

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Required Texts

Richard Foster, Prayer. (Harper & Row/1992)

The Way of a Pilgrim. (Darton, Longman & Todd/2001)

Martin Luther, A Simple Way to Pray. (Westminster/John Knox/2000)

Christine V. Painter & Lucy Wynkoop, Lectio Divina (Paulist/2008)

Teresa of Avila, The Way of Prayer. (Ave Maria/2008)

Course Description

The course studies the historical theology and practice of Christian prayer through the centuries as it pertains to understanding the role of prayer within the spiritual life. It is taught from an ecumenical perspective and includes a practicum in lectio divina.

Course Objectives

- To survey highlights in the development of the practice and understanding of Christian prayer from the first to the twenty-first centuries;
- To expose the student to prayer 'classics' in the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions;
- To expand the student's awareness of approaches to prayer outside his/her own experience and church tradition;
- To raise the student's consciousness as to the essential role of prayer in living a spiritual life;
- To give guidance in the discipline of praying with Scripture (lectio divina).

Course Schedule

Week 1	Course Introduction
Sep 10	<u>Reading:</u> Foster, pp.1-15
Week 2	Praying With Jesus and the Early Church
Sep 17	<u>Reading:</u> Foster, pp.17-35

- Week 3**
Sep 24 Praying With Jesus and the Early Church (cont'd)
Praying With the Monks
Smith, "The Jogging Monk" (handout)
Reading: Foster, pp.37-56
- Week 4**
Oct 1 Praying With the Monks (cont'd)
Seek the Stillness (video)
Reading: Boers, 'Learning the Ancient Rhythms of Prayer' (handout)
Foster, pp.57-77
- Week 5**
Oct 8 Praying With the Mystics
Reading: Hocken, 'Charismatics and Mystics' (handout)
'What is Mysticism?' (handout)
- Week 6**
Oct 15 Praying With the Mystics (cont'd)
Praying with the Reformers
Reading: Foster, pp.79-103
- Week 7**
Oct 22 Praying With the Reformers (cont'd)
Praying With the Methodists
Reading: Foster, pp.105-142
- Week 8**
Oct 29 Praying With the Methodists (cont'd)
- Week 9**
Nov 5 Praying with Scripture / Lectio Divina
Reading: Foster, pp.143-178
- Week 10**
Nov 12 **NOTE: November 12 Class is Cancelled or perhaps another option to be discussed**
- Week 11**
Nov 19 **Franciscan Retreat Centre / Cochrane / 7-9:15 p.m. / Cost \$20/person**
Note: Arrive by 6:45 p.m.
PRAYER PRACTICUM #1 (Hebrews 11)
Reading: Gill, 'Distractions in Prayer' (handout)
Foster, pp.179-201
- Week 12**
Nov 27 Fr. Benedict Groeschel, 'Praying with Scripture' (video)
PRAYER PRACTICUM #2 (Revelation 1)
Reading: Martin, 'Meditation as God Intended' (handout)
Foster, pp.203-227
- Week 13**
Dec 3 Praying With 19th Century Evangelical Protestants
J. Edwin Orr, 'The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakening' (video)
PRAYER PRACTICUM #3 (Revelation 2)
Reading: Foster, pp. 229-242
- Week 14**
Dec 10 Conclusions re: History of Christian Prayer
Reading: Foster, pp. 243-256

Course Requirements and Grading

- A. Attendance at all prayer-practicum sessions.
- B. A **review/response paper** (6-8 pages) on The Way of a Pilgrim which:
1. Summarizes the contents of the book and explains its relationship to the title (5 marks);
 2. Summarizes the nature of the prayer experience according to the book (10 marks);
 3. Reflects on the potential contributions which the book could make to the student's own experience / practice of prayer (7 marks);
 4. Identifies 5 significant questions which the book raises in the student's mind (5 marks);
 5. Gives an overall impression/evaluation of the book (3 marks).

DUE: Thursday, October 15/2009 (30% of final grade)

- C. A **review/response paper** (6-8 pages) on Martin Luther, A Simple Way to Pray which includes the following:
1. A discussion of the relationship between the title and the contents of the book (5 marks);
 2. A summary of Luther's understanding of the nature and content of the prayer experience (10 marks);
 3. A discussion of Luther's 'prayer techniques' and their relevance to the student's personal prayer journey (10 marks);
 4. An overall evaluation/impression of Luther's treatise (5 marks).

OR

A **review/response paper** (6-8 pages) on Teresa of Avila, The Way of Prayer which includes the following:

1. A brief description of the main characteristics of Teresa's method of prayer (5 marks);
2. An analysis of Teresa's concept of the nature of prayer (10 marks);
3. An identification of 5 significant spiritual insights gained from the book with a reflection on how each insight positively contributes to your spiritual journey (10 marks);
4. An overall assessment of the value of Teresa's treatise for one's understanding of the prayer experience. How does it relate to what you already know about prayer (5 marks)?

DUE: Thursday, November 19/2009 (30% of the final grade)

- D. A **prayer journal**, based on the 3 prayer practicums, which includes the following:
1. A separate entry for each practicum session (make sure the entries are dated);
 2. A record of physical and emotional responses and images/insights/impressions received in each session;
 3. A written prayer based on the assigned Scripture for each practicum;
 4. An overall evaluation of the value of this style of praying for your own spiritual journey and the church, collectively. Discuss strengths and weaknesses.

DUE: Tuesday, December 10/2009 (20% of the final grade)

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

Bockmuehl, 'Should We Kneel to Pray';
Charlesworth, 'Jewish Prayers in the Time of Jesus';
Boers, 'Learning the Ancient Rhythms';
Hocken, 'Charismatics and Mystics';
Gill, 'Distractions in Prayer';

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 require further consideration/study on your part.

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

DUE: Thursday, December 3/2009 (20% of the final grade)

Grading Schedule

Excellent	Very Good / Good	Satisfactory	Minimal Pass
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-	
			Failure
			<50 F

Important Notes:

1. The Registration Revision Period is September 9-18/2009. The last day to enter courses without permission and to withdraw from courses and receive tuition refund is September 18/2009;
2. The last day to apply for time extension for course work is November 20/2009
3. **All students who participate in the field trip to the Franciscan Retreat Centre in Cochrane are responsible for the extra \$20 fee.**
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 course name and number, the professor's name, the student's name, 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 20/2009, 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 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 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".