

ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS
PTH 510: SPIRITUAL FORMATION
Fall Semester 2008 – 1 credit hour

Thursdays: 1:00 – 2:20pm

Instructor: Vange Thiessen, MA, DMIN, RCC, AAMFT Approved Supervisor

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to facilitate increased awareness and understanding of the historical developments of Christian spirituality from the early New Testament church to the current time period. The interplay between humanness and spirituality and its impact on personal and relational formation will be explored. Opportunities will be provided to examine experiences, attitudes, beliefs and practices that influence spiritual formation and impact personal, interpersonal and community life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Recognizing the importance of Christian spirituality and maturity for personal life as well as for developing a holistic approach to care and counselling, this course seeks to introduce the student to the dynamics and disciplines of spiritual development based on the principles of Biblical teaching and Christian faith.

1. To review the history of Christian spirituality.
2. To present biblical principles of Christian spirituality which reflect love of God, self, others and of all the created world.
3. To integrate the essence of being human with spiritual formation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Trace the development and interconnectedness of spiritual practices throughout the history of Christianity.
2. Assess the messages and impact of current media and literature resources on spiritual formation.
3. Cultivate self-observational skills which facilitate personal awareness of one's inner spiritual life.
4. Experiment with time-specific spiritual disciplines and exercises in order to develop personal practices which enhance spiritual development.
5. Integrate aspects of individual and communal spirituality with attachment and systemic family theory.
6. Design spiritual exercises for corporate-communal participation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Holt, Bradley P. Thirsty for God; A Brief History of Christian Spirituality. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

Vanier, Jean. Becoming Human. New York: Paulist Press, 1998.

COURSE EVALUATION

1. Participation/Opening Exercise_____	10
2. Journaling Assignment _____	15
3. Book OR Movie Review_____	20
4. Group Interaction/Spiritual Direction/Retreat_____	25
5. Final Reflection Paper/Interview_____	30
Total _____	100

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Attendance and participation** is expected in all classes. Please complete required readings prior to class, be prepared to journal on a weekly basis, participate in exercises, and contribute to in-class discussions.
2. **Opening Exercise:** Pair up with another member of the class and prepare an **8-10 minute** presentation for an opening exercise in class. **See sign-up sheet.**
3. **Journaling:** Using the questions at the end of each chapter in Holt as a guide, journal your own personal reflections.
Note: Journal reflections are due mid-term, October 16, and on the last day of class, November 20, 2008.
4. **Readings:** You will be expected to complete assigned readings for each week. In addition, submit a 2-3 page **Book Review** from the suggested reading list or request permission to choose a book of your own preference. Provide a summary of the key ideas in the book and a personalized response/application of the material.
OR
Instead of the book review, you may choose to do a 2-3 page **Movie Review** of 2 movies from the list provided. Identify, compare and contrast the spiritual themes in the movies and critique/discuss the impact of the movies from your personal perspective.
DUE: Mid-semester, October 16, 2008
5. **Small Group Interaction:** Students will meet in process groups for a minimum of 6 times during the semester, 60-75 minutes per session. Please form your own groups of 2-4 people with whom you will interact during this semester. Using the class content and readings as a foundation for discussion, engage in dialogue, prayer and discovery of God's presence in your on-going spiritual formation.
OR
Spiritual Direction: The student will meet with a spiritual director for minimum of 4 sessions. Names of spiritual directors will be provided for your consideration and choice.
OR
Retreat: Students will participate in a group or personal retreat that focuses on

silence, reflection and spiritual formation. NOTE: If you choose a personal retreat, the plan should be discussed with the instructor before your retreat time.

Submit a brief summary, 3-4 pages, of your experience and reflections.

DUE: November 27, 2008.

6. **Final Reflections:** In a **4-5 page paper**, please reflect on your personal growth during the course of this semester.

OR

Together with 2-3 classmates, arrange an **oral interview** with your instructor. Hand in a **1-page summary** of your responses.

Base your reflections on the following:

- a) New understandings of Christian spirituality and spiritual formation.
- b) Relationship between our human experience and spiritual formation.
- c) How your personal spirituality interfaces with ministry, service and practice.
- d) Impact of spiritual practices, individual and corporate.
- e) Most helpful or significant learning in this course.

DUE: December 04, 2008

CLASS SCHEDULE:

NOTE: First class begins THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2008

Class # 01 - SPIRITUALITY & CHRISTIANITY

- **Opening:** Vange
- **Introduction; Review of Syllabus**
- **Ideas and Expectations of Journaling.**

Class # 02 - SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- **Opening:** Vange
- **Readings:** Holt, Ch. 1 & 2.
- **Spiritual practice p. 18, 19 & 31:** Meditation, silent sitting and walking; identify your current physical care practices; write about past contributions to your spiritual formation.

Class # 03 - BEGINNINGS

- **Opening:**
- **Readings:** Holt, Ch. 3 & 4.
- **Spiritual practice p. 42-46, 75-77:** Communal reading of scripture, worship and celebration of the Eucharist; fasting; write down your dreams.

Class #04 - THE EUROPEAN ERA

- **Opening:**
- **Readings:** Holt, Ch. 5 & 6.
- **Spiritual practice p. 96-97, 113-114:** The Jesus Prayer, use of icons, the daily examen, write about your vocation.

Class # 05 - THE MODERN ERA

- **Opening:**

- **Readings: Holt, Ch. 7.**
- **Spiritual practice p. 134-136:** Bible study, attend a religious service of a different denomination/nature/faith, sing and listen to music.

Class # 06 - THE WEST SINCE 1900

- **Opening:**
 - **Readings: Holt, Ch. 8.**
 - **Spiritual practice p. 177-179:** Centering prayer, meditative exercise/yoga/tai chi, social justice action, environmental conservation.
- DUE: Journal; book OR movie review.**

Class # 07 - NON-WESTERN WORLD

- **Opening:**
- **Readings: Holt, Ch. 9 & 10.**
- **Spiritual practice p. 200-201:** Meet with someone from another cultural background, internet research of spirituality in another country, discuss your ideas of liberation theology and its impact of power and gender.

NOTE: October 30 – NO CLASS

Class # 08 - UNDERSTANDING OUR HUMANITY

- **Opening:**
- **Readings: Vanier, Ch. 1 & 2.**

Class # 09 - EMBRACING OUR HUMANITY

- **Opening:**
- **Readings: Vanier, Ch. 3 & 4.**

Class # 10 – FORGIVENESS

- **Opening Celebration: ALL**
- **Readings: Vanier, Ch. 5**

DUE: November 27, 2008 – Journal and Experiential Assignment Reflections

DUE: December 04, 2008 – Final Reflection Paper OR Interview

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used.

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 6th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>. CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/academics/research/ethics/> Those needing additional clarification may contact Dr. Bruce Guenther. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.