

## **STMM 561 CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER**

Summer Quarter, 2013

July 22– July 26

**Instructor:** Alexandra Kovats, csjp, Ph.D.

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to **introduce** students to some of the important themes in contemporary Christian spirituality and to a variety of approaches to prayer. Students will apply these themes to reflect upon and articulate their personal spirituality. They will also be invited to explore the theological and pastoral implications of these different approaches to prayer and spirituality. Keeping a reflection journal is strongly recommended for this course as a means of gaining insight and growth into one's spiritual journey. Class sessions will include lecture, prayer experiences, reflective times, music and discussion.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To become familiar with the key elements of contemporary Christian spirituality and how these themes find expression in one's personal life.
2. To experience and become familiar with a variety of prayer forms which will enable one to practice those forms which express and enhance one's personal spirituality.
3. To deepen one's process of self-reflection and to be able to articulate one's relationship to the God of one's understanding.
4. To deepen one's appreciation of the sacredness of all life.
5. To reflect on and evaluate the pastoral implications of the different approaches to prayer and Christian spirituality.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Cannato, Judy. (2006) *Radical Amazement*. Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books.

**ISBN: 1-893732-99-1**

Keating, Thomas et al. (2008) *Spirituality, Contemplation and Transformation: Writings on Centering Prayer*. Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books.

**ISBN: 13: 978-1-59056-110-2**

McLaren, Brian. (2011) *Naked Spirituality: A Life with God in 12 Simple Words*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

**ISBN: 978-0-6-185401-9**

Rohr, Richard and friends. ed. (2006) *Contemplation in Action*.

New York, NY: Crossroad. **ISBN: 0-8245-2388-1**

Vennard, Jane E. (2003) *Embracing the World: Praying for Justice and Peace*.  
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. **ISBN: 0-7879-5887-5**  
**(this book is back on a “print on demand” basis!)**

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

Bass, Dorothy C. ed. (1997) *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. **ISBN: 0-7879-3883-1**

Faulkner, Mary. (2011) *Women’s Spirituality: Power and Grace*.  
New York, NY: Penguin.

Rohr, Richard and Joseph Martos. (2005) *From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony’s Messenger  
**ISBN: 0-86716-740-8**

Ulanov, Ann and Barry. (1982) *Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer*.  
Atlanta: John Knox Press. **ISBN: 0-8042-1134-5**

In preparation for Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> afternoon class session, please read the following articles/resources that explore insights about women’s spirituality, men’s spirituality, African American, Hispanic, Asian American and GLBT spiritualities. You are expected to familiarize yourself with these different spiritualities and be able to discuss them in class. The articles can be found on the Internet as of now. If you can’t find these and have other articles/resources you are welcome to substitute them and share pertinent bibliographical information in class. Two of the books among the recommended texts pertain to gender and spirituality (Faulkner and Rohr) as well.

### **WEB RESOURCES FOR VARIOUS SPIRITUALITIES**

#### **Women’s Spirituality**

Search: “articles on women’s spirituality

Girard, Phoebe. “The Aging Spirit: A Woman-to-Woman Journey Toward Aging and Spirituality.” *Aging Today*. Volume XXVII, #4 (July-August 2006)

<http://www.can-nm.org/Agingtodayreprint.pdf>

Other authors: Elizabeth Johnson, Kathleen Fischer, Joan Chittister, etc.

#### **Men’s Spirituality**

Search: “articles on male spirituality” or “articles on masculine spirituality”

Rohr, Richard. “Masculine Spirituality” *Praying: Spirituality for Everyday Living*.  
September-October, 1988.

[www.malespirituality.org/masculine\\_spirituality.htm](http://www.malespirituality.org/masculine_spirituality.htm)

Muesse, Mark W. *Men at Midlife: Male Spirituality and the Second Half of Life*. (2004)

[www.explorefaith.org/lifelines/men\\_midlife.html](http://www.explorefaith.org/lifelines/men_midlife.html)

Other authors: Keith Drury, John Nelson, Matthew Fox, Thomas Hart

### **Hispanic Spirituality**

Search: "articles on Hispanic spirituality"

Rodriguez, Jeanette, "Mestiza Spirituality: Community, Ritual and Justice"

*Theological Studies*, June 2004

<http://www.ts.mu.edu/readers/content/pdf/65/65.2/65.2.4.pdf>

Garcia, Alberto. "Christian Spirituality in Light of the US Hispanic Experience."

*Word and World*, Volume XX, Number 1, 2000

[http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/20-1\\_20th\\_Century/20-1\\_Garcia.pdf](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/20-1_20th_Century/20-1_Garcia.pdf)

### **African American Spirituality**

Search: "articles on African American spirituality"

Davis, Cyprian. "Black Catholic Theology: A Historical Perspective.", *Theological Studies*, Number 61, 2000.

<http://www.ts.mu.edu/readers/content/pdf/61/61.4/61.4.3.pdf>

Addo, Peter Eric Adotey. "Origins of African American Spiritualism. *Chicken Bone: A Journal*. On line.

<http://home.roadrunner.com/~osofo/spirit.htm>

White, Vanessa C. "Authentically Black and Truly Catholic."

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/09/05/white.catholic.black/index.html>

### **Asian Spirituality**

Search: "articles on Asian spirituality"

Senno, Tony. "The Traits of Philippino Spirituality" *Mission, The Xavier Way*, Summer 2000.

[http://www.xaviermissionaries.org/M\\_Life/NewsArchive/AsiaNews/Phi\\_TraitsSpirit.htm](http://www.xaviermissionaries.org/M_Life/NewsArchive/AsiaNews/Phi_TraitsSpirit.htm)

Richards, Kathleen. "Young, Asian American and Christian." *East Bay Express*. April 2, 2008.

<http://www.eastbayexpress.com/eastbay/young-asian-american-and-christian/Content?oid=1089129>

## **GLBTQI Spirituality**

Search: articles on lesbian Christian spirituality” or “articles on gay Christian spirituality”

Wink, Walter. *Biblical Perspectives on Homosexuality* .

<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1265>

Alison, James. *Following the Still Small Voice: Experience, Truth and Argument as Lived by Catholics*. 2003

[www.jamesalison.co.uk/texts/eng02.html](http://www.jamesalison.co.uk/texts/eng02.html)

Crippin, Stephen. *Dancing with the Queen of Sheba*. Sermon. August 29, 2010. <http://www.stpaulseattle.org/sermons/082910.html>

Lesbian, Gay Christians

[www.lqcm.org.uk/resources/](http://www.lqcm.org.uk/resources/)

Other authors: Rev. Patrick Cheng, James Alison

## **TENTATIVE SYLLABUS**

1. July 22 **Introduction to Course: Reflections on Spirituality**  
AM ***Discussion Focus:*** personal spirituality
2. July 22 **Overview of Christian Spirituality**  
PM ***Discussion Focus:***
3. July 23 **Key Themes of Contemporary Christian Spirituality**  
AM ***Discussion Focus:*** *Radical Amazement*
4. July 23 **Spirituality: The Dance of the Mystic**  
PM ***Discussion Focus:*** *Contemplation in Action*
5. July 24 **Spirituality: The Dance of the Prophet**  
AM ***Discussion Focus:*** *Naked Spirituality*
6. July 24 **Spiritualities: Multi-cultural, Gender, Gay/Lesbian**  
PM ***Discussion Focus:*** *On line Resources from Syllabus*
7. July 25 **Prayer: An Overview of Christian Prayer**  
AM ***Discussion Focus:*** *Spirituality, Contemplation and Transformation*

8. July 25 **Prayer: Images of God**  
PM *Discussion Focus:* personal images of God
9. July 26 **Prayer: Embodiment/ Stages and Approaches**  
AM *Discussion Focus:* *Embracing the World*
10. July 26 **Pastoral Implications Regarding Spirituality and**  
PM **Prayer**

## **PRE-COURSE and COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Attend all class sessions.**

### **2. Read all the required texts before class.**

Please read the books with your “head and heart.” Take notes (for yourself) and keep track of questions, resistances, “ahas” and concerns that emerge for you.

### **3. Establish or re-affirm a 15 minute daily prayer practice**

at least a month before the course begins.

### **4. Choose one of the texts (either on the required or recommended list) and write a 1000 word (four page, double spaced) typed, reflection paper** about the book addressing the following:

What do you consider to be the main points made by the author in the book?

Include quotes and page numbers where relevant.

Engage in dialogue with ideas from the text including some of your own reflections, experiences and questions.

**Due: first day of class, July 22, 2013.** (or you may choose to send it to me electronically to [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net) on or before July 22<sup>nd</sup>)

### **5. Denominational Interview and Write Up**

Seek out a spiritual and/or pastoral leader in your denomination and interview them about their understanding and experience of spirituality and their spiritual practices.

#### **Suggested questions during the interview:**

What is your understanding and experience of spirituality? What are some images or metaphors that support your understanding and/or your experience of spirituality?

Who are some of the people and authors from your denomination who have significantly shaped your understanding of spirituality?

Name and describe some significant insights and characteristics of your denomination’s approach to spirituality. What do you consider its strengths and its weaknesses?

Name and describe a book written by someone in your denomination that would help someone gain insights about your denomination's approach to spirituality. What people and resources have been important influences on your spirituality and spiritual practices outside of your denomination?

Describe your spiritual practices. How do they influence your life and ministry? What suggestions would you offer for someone who is in the process of establishing a spiritual practice in their lives?

Ask them any other questions that seem important to you in order to better understand their spirituality.

Write up the interview in a 4-5 page paper (typed, double spaced).

**Due: first day of class, July 22, 2013.** (or you may choose to send it to me electronically to [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net) on or before July 22<sup>nd</sup>)

### **6. Integration/reflection paper**

This 3-4 page paper (typed, double spaced) provides you with the opportunity to reflect on how the experience of this course and the readings have clarified and expanded your understanding and experience of prayer and spirituality. You may also choose to comment on insights that challenged and/or surprised you, and articulate where you are in your search of Mystery.

**Due: Last Day of Class**

**7. Please fill out the attached questionnaire and send it to me no later than July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013** You can e-mail it to: [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net) or you can mail it to: Alexandra Kovats, csjp 1104 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112  
Thank you!

### **Grade Distribution**

Interview	20%
Book Reflection	15%
Integration Paper	15%
Class attendance and participation	30%
Assigned reading materials	20%

At the end of the course, students will be asked to reflect on their participation in class and the quality of attention and presence they brought to the various assignments and grade themselves. The instructor will grade the Interview, the Book Reflection and the Integration Paper.

**CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER  
STMM 561**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry/Work:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Denomination:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Program Standing:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(program/year)

- Name the courses/workshops you have taken in the last three years that focus on spirituality and/or prayer.
  
- Name three goals you hope to achieve during this course for yourself.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  
- What fears/concerns do you have about this course?
  
  
- Name **a person** (living or dead) who has had a significant influence on your spiritual life. Describe that influence.
  
  
- Describe your spiritual life and prayer practices.
  
  
- 6. Describe the God of your experience, the God you have come to know. What image and/or name of God is most significant to you at this time in your life?
  
  
- 7. What themes/topics/concerns emerge for you regarding spirituality and/or

prayer in light of your ministry?

8. What situations/processes/activities help you to learn best?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Do you feel called to lead a 15-20 minute prayer experience in class?  
(*This time segment includes a few-minute reflection and/or journaling on the experience as well.*) \_\_\_\_\_  
What form/type of prayer would you use? (e.g. Taize, centering prayer, movement, guided imagery, ritual, etc.) Please describe it.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Do you feel called to create a sacred space in the class that would be a visual reminder of the presence of Mystery and an expression of spirituality?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. Do you feel called to be part of a panel that explores spirituality in relation to gender (male/female) ethnicity, culture and sexual orientation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Further comments/suggestions/information that would help me to respond to your learning needs....

Please fill out and return by **July 12, 2013** to: [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net) or by mail to: **Alexandra Kovats, csjp 1104 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East, Seattle WA 98112**  
**Thank You!**