

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

### **Spring Quarter 2011**

**Date:** April 2-3, May 13-15, 2011

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

**Phone:** (206) 322 8560

**E-mail:** [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net)

**Room:**

### **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 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 spirituality.
2. To experience and become familiar with a variety of prayer forms that will enable one to practice those forms which express 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 for the sacredness of all life.
5. To reflect on and evaluate the pastoral implications of the different approaches to prayer and spirituality.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- ◆ Ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian Tradition.
- ◆ Knowledge and interaction of religious/spiritual experience and culture in their ecumenical and multicultural dimensions.
- ◆ Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others.
- ◆ Ability to lead from spiritual depth toward practice for justice and wholeness in the world.
- ◆ Ability to articulate one's relationship to with God.
- ◆ Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can enter another's worldview.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Cannato, Judy. (2006) *Radical Amazement*. Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books.
- Keating, Thomas. (2007) *Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Rohr, Richard and friends. ed. (2006) *Contemplation in Action*. New York, NY: Crossroad.
- Vennard, Jane E. (2003) *Embracing the World: Praying for Justice and Peace*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Steindl-Rast, David. (2008) *Common Sense Spirituality: The Essential Wisdom of David Steindl-Rast*. New York, NY: Crossroads.

## **RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

- Bass, Dorothy C. ed. (1997) *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barger, Lillian Calles (2003) *Eve's Revenge: Women and the Spirituality of the Body*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.
- Rohr, Richard and Joseph Martos. (2005) *From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony's Messenger.
- Ulanov, Ann and Barry. (1982) *Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

In preparation for May 13<sup>th</sup>, Friday evening 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. All of articles can be found on the Internet. If you have other articles/resources you are welcome to substitute them and share pertinent bibliographical information. Two of the books on the recommended texts list pertain to gender and spirituality (Barger and Rohr) as well.

### **Women's Spirituality**

Johnson, Elizabeth. "The Living God in Women's voices." *Sewanee Theological Review*. 48:3 (Pentecost, 2005)  
<http://proquest.umi.com.proxy.seattleu.edu/pqdweb?index=12&did=850865451&SrchMode=1&sid=6&Fmt=4&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1288903966&clientId=19912>

Fischer, Kathleen. "Women Experiencing Naming God." From *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction*. (1988) New York, NY: Paulist. Chapter 3, pp33-74.  
[www.sanpeddrocenter.org/audire/audirepdf/WomenExperiencingNamingGod](http://www.sanpeddrocenter.org/audire/audirepdf/WomenExperiencingNamingGod)

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/Girard%20Aging%20and%20Spirituality.htm>

### **Men's 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)

Drury, Keith. "Male Spirituality" *Money, Sex and Spiritual Power*. (1992) Wesley Press, Chapter 9.  
[www.drurywriting.com/keith/9male.html](http://www.drurywriting.com/keith/9male.html)

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)

### **Hispanic Spirituality**

Rodriguez, Jeanette, "Mestiza Spirituality: Community, Ritual and Justice" *Theological Studies*, June 2004  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb6404/is\\_2\\_65/ai\\_n29096127/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6404/is_2_65/ai_n29096127/)

Garcia, Alberto. "Christian Spirituality in Light of the US Hispanic Experience." *Word and World*, Volume XX, Number 1, 2000  
[http://www2.luthersem.edu/Word&World/Archives/20-1\\_20th\\_Century/20-1\\_Garcia.pdf](http://www2.luthersem.edu/Word&World/Archives/20-1_20th_Century/20-1_Garcia.pdf)

### **African American Spirituality**

Davis, Cyprian. "Black Catholic Theology: A Historical Perspective.", *Theological Studies*, Number 61, 2000.  
<http://www.ts.mu.edu/content/61/61.4/61.4.3.pdf>

Addo, Peter Eric Adotey. "Origins of African American Spiritualism." *Chicken Bone: A Journal*. On line.  
[www.nathanielturner.com/originsafricanamericanspiritualism.htm](http://www.nathanielturner.com/originsafricanamericanspiritualism.htm)

White, Vanessa C. "Full of the Spirit: Five Gifts of African American Catholics." *US Catholic*. Volume 67, Issue 8. August 2002.  
<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/White%2c+C.+Vanessa-a116>

### **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>

Kang, K Corinne. "Asian American Pastors Often Minister Across Cultural Gaps." *Los Angeles Times*. September 29, 2007.

<http://thoughtsactions.wordpress.com/2007/11/23/can-1st-generation-2nd-generation-do-ministry-together/>

### **GLBT Spirituality**

Wink, Walter. *Homosexuality and the Bible*.

<http://www.soulforce.org/article/homosexuality-bible-walter-wink>

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)

Anita. *Unapologetically Christian, Unapologetically Lesbian*. Blog.

February 11, 2008

<http://www.christianlesbians.com/unapologetically-christian-unapologetically-lesbian/>

Crippin, Stephen. *Dancing with the Queen of Sheba*. Sermon. August 29, 2010.

[www.stpaulseattle.org/sermon/082910.html](http://www.stpaulseattle.org/sermon/082910.html)

## **TENTATIVE SYLLABUS**

### **FIRST WEEKEND**

#### **Saturday Morning:**

Introduction to Course

Descriptions/images of Spirituality

Brief Historical Overview of Christian Spirituality

#### **Saturday Afternoon:**

Overview of Christian Spirituality continues

Key themes of Contemporary Christian Spirituality

#### **Sunday Morning:**

Spirituality: The Dance of the Mystic and the Prophet

**Sunday Afternoon:**

Spirituality: The Dance Continues  
Pastoral Implications regarding Diverse Spiritualities

**SECOND WEEKEND**

**Friday Night:**

Divers Experiences of Spirituality: Gender, Culture, Sexual  
Orientation

**Saturday Morning:**

Overview of Christian Prayer

**Saturday Afternoon:**

Images of God  
Prayer as Embodiment  
Stages and Approaches to Prayer

**Sunday Morning:**

Prayer Rituals and Prayer Ways  
Insights about Prayer

**Sunday Afternoon:**

Pastoral Implications regarding Prayer  
Refocusing on Spirituality and Prayer

**During both weekends we will participate in various prayer experiences in class.**

**BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

- 1. Attend all class sessions.** Consult with instructor if emergencies arise.
- 2. Read and review assigned texts and articles and reflectively engage with the author's ideas and your experiences and understandings.** Be prepared to discuss them in class.
- 3. Establish/reaffirm a 15 minute daily prayer practice.** Participate and reflect on the prayer experiences during class.
- 4. 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.

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

**Due Date: by April 2, 2011. You can bring a hard copy to class or you can e-mail your write up to [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net)**

### **5. Integration Paper**

This **4-5 page** (typed, double spaced) **Integration paper** 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 describe and elaborate on new practices of prayer you have decided to implement, comment on insights that challenged and/or surprised you, and articulate where you are in your own search for Mystery.

**Due Date: by May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. You can provide a hard copy or you can e-mail your paper to [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net)**

#### **Grade distribution:**

<b>Written assignments:</b>	Interview	25%
	Integration Paper	25%
<b>Class attendance and participation</b>		25%
<b>Reading materials</b>		25%

### **PRE-COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Read ***Radical Amazement, Contemplation in Action*** and ***Common Sense Spirituality*** before the first weekend session. Please read the books with your “head and heart.” Take notes (not to be handed in) and keep track of questions, resistances, “ahas” and concerns that emerge for you.
2. Establish or re-affirm a **15 minute daily prayer practice** at least a month before the course begins.
3. **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 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 they influence your living 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 Date: by April 2, 2011. You can bring a hard copy to class or you can e-mail your write up to [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net)**

5. Please fill out the attached questionnaire and return it by e-mail or regular mail to Alexandra (Mailing Address: **1104 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112**; E-mail: [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net) ) by **March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011**. Your responses will help me to create and focus the course content and processes. **Thank You!**

**CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER  
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**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Denomination:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 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.
  
- 5. What image and/or name of God is most significant to you at this time in your life?
  
- 6. What topics/concerns emerge for you regarding spirituality and/or prayer in light of your own journey and your ministry?

7. What situations/processes/activities help you to learn best?
8. Do you feel called to lead a prayer in class?  
*(Focus at beginning of class or after the break, or a longer prayer experience.)*

What form/type of prayer would you use? (e.g. Taize prayer, centering prayer, psalm reading, movement, guided imagery, a song, a poem, scripture, ritual, etc.) Please describe it.

- 9 Do you feel called to create a sacred space for class that would be a visual reminder of the presence of Mystery and an expression of spirituality?
10. Do you feel called to be part of a panel that explores spirituality in relation to gender (male/female) ethnicity, culture and sexual orientation?
11. Further comments/suggestions/information that would help me to respond to your learning needs....

**Due Date: March 21, 2011**

**Please return Questionnaire to:** Alexandra Kovats, csjp, Ph.D.  
1104 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East  
Seattle, WA 98112

**or e-mail to:** cosmicdancer@comcast.net

**Thank You!**