STMM 561 CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER
Fall Quarter 2012
Date: September 22-23, October 19 - 21, 2012
Instructor: Alexandra Kovats, CSJP, Ph.D. **Phone: (**206) 322 8560
E-mail: cosmicdancer@comcast.net **Room:** Hunthausen 100

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

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

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.

In preparation for the second weekend class you will be required to read some articles on Women's Spirituality, Men's Spirituality, Multi-cultural Spirituality and GLBTQI spirituality. References will be given during the first weekend of class.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

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

Faulkner, Mary and Patricia Monaghan. (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.

Ulanov, Ann and Barry. (1982) *Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer.* Atlanta: John Knox Press. .

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 September 22nd, 2012.
   You can bring a hardcopy to class
   or
   you can e-mail your write up to 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 November 1st, 2012. You can provide a hard copy or you can e-mail your paper to cosmicdancer@comcast.net .

Grade distribution:

Written assignments:	Interview	25%
	Integration Paper	25%
Class attendance and participation		25%
Reading materials		25%

PRE-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Read ***Radical Amazement, Contemplation in Action*** and ***Naked 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 September 22nd, 2012. You can bring a hard copy to class or you can e-mail your write up to** cosmicdancer@comcast.net

5. Please fill out the attached questionnaire and return it by e-mail or regular mail to Alexandra (Mailing Address: **1104 21st Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112;** E-mail: **cosmicdancer@comcast.net** by **September 15, 2012.** Your responses will help me to create and focus the course content and processes. **Thank You!**

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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 **September 15th, 2012** to:
cosmicdancer@comcast.net or by mail to: **Alexandra Kovats, csjp 1104 21st Avenue East, Seattle WA 98112**

Thank You!