

SUMMER TERM 2017
Department: Pastoral Theology
Course: PT 500 Spiritual Formation
Credit Hours: 3

Geoffrey Mackey, Instructor
311 11th Street
Ambridge, PA 15003
724.266.3838
gmackey@tsm.edu

Russell Vincent Warren, Instructor

rwarren@tsm.edu

I. Course Description

Catalog Description: This course will expose the student to something of the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition of prayer and to a wide range of readings in the Christian tradition. It will provide a context within which to explore a variety of prayer forms and reflection in small groups. The course will attempt to acquaint the student with what Simon Chan calls the theological principles of a spiritual life as well as the practice of the spiritual life. (*Academic Catalog*, p. 68)

The ordering or patterning of one's life – including prayer, study of the scriptures, and other spiritual disciplines – is expected in the Christian tradition. Those in positions of public ministry, whether lay or ordained, are expected to be “wholesome examples” to their flock, not only so they will be beyond reproach, but so that they can also speak to the faithful of God's love out of their own experiences.

At the same time, there are no ‘experts’ in prayer and the spiritual life. Each of us walks the ‘little way’ when we come before God in our sinfulness, frailty, and distraction. The challenge is to persevere, knowing that it is not our effort, but Christ's faithfulness, that is the source and means of our sanctification.

The Christian life is *communion* (κοινωνία) with God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. By faith and baptism we are born anew into the family of the God, brought into relationship with Christ our Brother. This communion, while it is a free and gracious gift of God, is not automatic – after all, it is a relationship. It depends on continual repentance (μετάνοια) or “conversion of life.” Throughout the history of the Christian Church, the people of God have found various ways and methods of living out their relationship with Christ. “For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work” (Phil. 2.13).

This course will expose the student to a wide variety of readings in the Christian tradition and to a wide range of Christian spiritual practices. It will provide a forum in which to explore a variety of these practices and reflect on them with their sisters and brothers in faith, across jurisdictional and denominational boundaries. Special attention will be paid to the Anglican patrimony within the wider context of Christendom.

II. Required Textbooks (available at bookstore.tsm.edu)

In addition to a basic “standard” Bible (e.g. RSV, NRSV, ESV, NASB) and a Book of Common Prayer (1979) suitable for marking, the following readings will be required:

Benedict of Nursia, *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in English*. Timothy Fry, OSB, trans. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981. ISBN 978-0814612729 List Price: \$2.31

Foster, Richard J. and Emilie Griffin, *Spiritual Classics: Selected Readings on the Twelve Spiritual Disciplines*. New York: HarperOne, 2000. ISBN 978-0060628727 List Price: \$17.99

Manning, Brennan, *Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000. ISBN 978-0062517760 List Price: \$14.99

Smith, James K.A., *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2016. ISBN 978-1587433801 List Price: \$19.99

Ward, Benedicta, trans., *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks*. New York: Penguin, 2003. ISBN 978-0140447316 List Price: \$16.00

Additional Readings Posted on Google Classroom

ONE of the asterisked texts in the Bibliography

III. Learning Outcomes

Master of Divinity Degree

- The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
- The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology.
- The student will be able to communicate effectively the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.
- The student will be prepared to effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities.

Master of Arts (Religion) Degree

- The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
- The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology.
- The student will be able to effectively teach the Christian faith.
- The student will be equipped to apply scholarship to the life of the church in his or her chosen theological discipline.

This course should further all of these goals, but it will focus on helping students to articulate an Anglican understanding, especially, of pastoral theology. It will also focus on developing students to “effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities” through discussion of how to lead others in spiritual formation and catechesis. Through the papers, students should be able to show how they are being “equipped to apply scholarship to the life of the church” and through discussions “communicate effectively the Christian message.”

IV. Assignments

- **Readings**
Students should have read the texts listed in the “Course Schedule” before the date of the class in which we will be discussing them.
- **Exercises**

Each week, an “Exercise” will be assigned. Students are expected, in good faith, to attempt these activities and come to class ready to discuss them.

- **Journaling**
Each student is expected to keep a journal for the duration of the semester. This is relatively open-ended, but there should be entries for at least four days per week. These should be reflections on the weekly “Exercises” and on the readings from the Desert Fathers and St. Benedict.
- **Book Review**
Choose one asterisked book from the Bibliography in the full syllabus (or, in consultation with the instructor, another book may be chosen). Write a 6-8 page book review. Instructions will be posted on Google Classroom.
- **Paper #1: Theological Paper**
This is a research paper, focusing on some aspect of Christian spirituality or ascetical theology. Potential topics would be repentance, conversion of life, self-emptying as it pertains to Christian life, etc. Or it could be on some particular tradition or “charism” within Christian spirituality (e.g. Franciscan, charismatic, Ignatian, the Caroline Divines, etc.) The paper should include both biblical and dogmatic (e.g. systematic) theology, and both primary and secondary sources. 10-12 pages. SBL formatting.
- **Paper #2: Paper on Spiritual Practice**
This paper is not an academic piece. Rather, consider this to be a discussion of some aspect or aspects of Christian spirituality which you would write for a lay audience. (E.g. this could be a serial piece for a future parish newsletter or bulletin). Educate your reader; use references from the scriptures and Church history. Any of the topics covered in class are within bounds, as is your topic for paper #1. 10-12 pages. Formatting will be determined by the direction the paper takes.
- **Discussion**
A portion of each week’s class will be spent in small groups, discussing (a) the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, or (b) the Exercises for the week. Students’ small groups will be assigned at the beginning of the term.

V. Grading

○ Journal	10%	Continual throughout semester
○ Book Review	20%	Due June 16
○ Paper #1	25%	Due July 7
○ Paper #2	25%	Due August 4
○ Oral Final Examination	20%	Schedule before August 25