



HISTORY AND TRADITIONS
CFM 522
Spring 2007, FR 8:30-10:20AM BGC 253

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About this syllabus This course syllabus is a guide for our learning experience. Therefore, we may modify it as the course progresses depending upon our needs or the greater wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Course Description:

This course traces some of the dominant themes of Christian spirituality. Through biblical, theological, and historical study we will examine how various individuals and movements have experienced and sought to nurture their relationship with the Triune God. Particular attention is paid to developing the skills of discernment for reading primary sources. (2)

Textbooks:

Dupre, Louis and James A. Wiseman. eds. *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*. 2d. ed. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001.

Holt, Bradley P. *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, 2d ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

Course Reader

Course Objectives:

1. To recognize the foundational biblical nature of Christian spirituality.
2. To develop the skills of reading and interpreting primary texts with sensitivity to their historical and theological context.
3. To gain an awareness of and appreciation for key leaders and major movements in Christian spirituality and to reflect upon the contributions that they can make to the contemporary church.
4. To discover the origin and development of the denomination or tradition to which you belong.
5. To become familiar with one significant person (your choice) of Christian spirituality through reading and reflecting upon his or her devotional writings.

Course Schedule:

- Jan 12: Course Introduction and Biblical Spirituality
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 1-46; *Light from Light*, pp. 3-14, *Exodus 3:1-14*; *Psalms 63*; *John 15:1-17*; *Romans 8:1-17*, and Hindmarsh, Course Reader
- Jan 19: The Early Church (The Desert Fathers and Mothers)
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 47-65, 69-77, Ward and May, Course Reader
- Jan 19: Retreat at St. Procopius Benedictine Abbey, Lisle: Monastic Spirituality (Benedict and Bernard)
Read Benedict, Course Reader; *Light from Light*, pp. 95-113.
- Jan 26: **NO CLASS** Calvin Symposium on Worship
- Feb 2: Medieval Spirituality (Julian of Norwich and Catherine of Siena)
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 84-96; *Light from Light*, pp. 229-245, 265-282 (skim).
Devotional Classics paper proposal due
Contemplative Tradition Small Group presentation
- Feb 9: Orthodox Spirituality

Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 79-84, 130-131; Theophan the Recluse, Course Reader
Incarnational Tradition Small Group presentation

Feb 16: Reformers Before the Reformations
Read a Kempis, Course Reader

Feb 23: The Protestant Reformation (Martin Luther)
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 99-108, Luther, Course Reader
Evangelical Tradition Small Group presentation

Mar 2: The Protestant Reformation (John Calvin)
Read Calvin, Course Reader

Mar 9: **NO CLASS** Spring Break

Mar 16: The Roman Catholic Reformation (Ignatius of Loyola)
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 108-114; *Light from Light*, pp. 284-305.
Denomination/Treasures of the Tradition paper due

Mar 23: The Roman Catholic Reformation (Teresa of Avila)
Read *Light from Light*, pp. 307-327.

Mar 30: Puritanism and Pietism (Jonathan Edwards)
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 116-136; *Light from Light*, pp. 382-410

Apr 6: **NO CLASS** Good Friday

Apr 13: Methodism (John and Charles Wesley)
Read the Wesleys, Course Reader
Holiness Tradition Small Group presentation

Apr 20: Charismatic Spirituality
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 138-179, Smail, Course Reader
Charismatic Tradition Small Group presentation

Apr 27: Asian Spirituality (Watchman Nee)
Read *Thirsty for God*, 181-201, Phan and Nee, Course Reader
Devotional Classics Research/Reflection paper due

May 3: Celtic Spirituality
Read *Thirsty for God*, pp. 65-69, 203-208, Celtic readings, Course Reader
Reading Log Report due
Social Justice Tradition Small Group presentation

Philosophy of Education and Pedagogy:

Bernard of Clairvaux, the highly influential Christian leader of the twelfth century, captured the challenge of education when he wrote, “For there are some who long to know for the sole purpose of knowing, and that is shameful curiosity; others who long to know in order to become known, and that is shameful vanity. ... There are others still who long for knowledge in order to sell its fruits for money or honors, and this is shameful profiteering; others again who long to know in order to be of service, and this is charity. Finally there are those who long to know in order to benefit themselves, and this is prudence.”

“Of all these categories, only the last two avoid the abuse of knowledge, because they desire to know for the purpose of doing good.... Food that is badly cooked and indigestible induces physical disorders and damages the body instead of nourishing it. In the same way if a glut of knowledge stuffed in the memory, that stomach of the mind, has not been cooked on the fire of love, and transfused and digested by certain skills of the soul, its habits and actions---since, as life and conduct bear witness, the mind is rendered good through its knowledge of good---will not that knowledge be reckoned sinful, like the food that produces irregular and harmful humors?” (Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* 2. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976, (SC 36:3-4), 176-77).

Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664), a Puritan pastor from England, reflects a similar approach to Bernard. He reminded his listeners, “Study therefore, and study more, but be sure thy study and thy knowledge, be rather practical than speculative; do not merely beat thy brains to learn the history of Christ’s death, but the efficacy, virtue and merit of it: know what thou knowest in reference to thyself” (Isaac Ambrose, *Looking Unto Jesus*, Sprinkle ed., 375). And St. Francis cautions us not to drive a wedge between our theology and spirituality, “It pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers, as long as –in the word of the Rule—you ‘do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion’ with study of this kind” St. Francis of Assisi. *The Complete Works*. Paulist Press, p. 79.

Further, one of the best ways to learn is through asking questions. John Cassian (c. 365-c.435), a key Christian leader who collected the wisdom of Christianity from the East and brought it back to the West once wrote, “One is very close to knowledge when one clearly recognizes the questions to be asked” (John Cassian, *Conferences*, 10.9).

Course Requirements and Grading

Favorite Quote Reflection papers	25%
Denomination/Treasures of the Tradition paper	20%
Traditions of Christian Faith Small Group paper	20%
Devotional Classic Research/Reflection paper	35%

Requirements and Assignments:

Favorite Quote Reflection papers

Students will write a one page paper each week beginning with January 19 of their favorite quotes for the reading of that day. The purpose of this assignment is to guide your reading and preparation for the class discussions and to assist you in reflecting upon the contemporary significance of ancient texts. Select two or three quotes from each primary reading that touches your life. For each quote indicate why you selected it and how it has encouraged or challenged your life (Fifteen papers each worth 6 points for a total of 90 points with 10 points added). **25% grade, due beginning Jan 19 and weekly**

Denomination/Treasures of the Tradition paper

Students will write a 6 page paper that researches the background and development of their denomination or worship tradition. The purpose of this assignment is to guide students in learning about the theological roots and spiritual heritage of their spiritual background. No church or Christian fellowship exists in a vacuum. Therefore, all are descendents of previous generations of leaders. Your paper should be organized around the following sections: (1) Origin and Roots. Who were the early leaders of your tradition? From whom did this tradition descend and why? What struggles or other factors affected the development of this spiritual tradition? (2) What are the distinguishing features or characteristics of your tradition? How have they changed over the years? (3) What are the contemporary beliefs and spiritual practices of your tradition? What contribution can or could they make to develop a healthy contemporary Trinitarian Christian spirituality? **20% grade, due Mar 16**

Traditions of Christian Faith Small Group paper and presentation

Students (in small groups of 3-4 students) will be responsible for presenting a 20 minute class presentation on one of the six traditions of the Christian faith as described by Richard J. Foster in *Streams of Living Water*. These presentations will serve to introduce the respective movement or period of the history of Christian spirituality for the day that material is covered. It is expected that all members will participate equally in this project but realizes that the contribution will vary depending upon various gifts and creativity of the members. Your presentations should include, but does not need to be limited to (1) the historical context and background of your respective tradition, (2) significant leaders and persons of this tradition, (3) major issues or challenges that shaped or impacted this tradition, and (4) the contribution of this tradition towards forming a biblically based and Trinitarian shaped Christian spirituality. **20% grade, due on the date when the respective period is discussed**

Devotional Classics Paper

Our contemporary church suffers from a lack of historical awareness of earlier Christians and the significant movements that have shaped Christian spirituality. Therefore, the goal of this assignment is to become better acquainted with some of God's friends from earlier centuries. To guide your selection of a devotional classic please consult any of the following items (available on the Reserve Shelf in the Wheaton College library): Richard J. Foster and James B. Smith, *Devotional Classics*, Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, *Spiritual Classics*, Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, Frank N. McGrill and Ian P. McGreal, *Christian Spirituality* (another copy of this book is in the reference section of the library). Also the Christian Classics Ethereal Library (www.ccel.org) maintained by Harry Plantinga at Calvin College provides an extensive list of possible devotional classics.

Students will write a 7-8 page research/reflection paper on some individual from the history of Christian spirituality *prior* to the twentieth century. A list of possible names will be provided on the first day of class but students may select any person who is approved by the professor. Written proposals must be submitted by **Feb 2**. The proposal should include your choice of a person, the specific devotional classic you will be reading, and some of the resources you intend to use for the context and background of your individual. You should have a least two reference sources and at least one must be from the library.

There are three sections to this paper: (1) Introduction and context of your selected individual (2 pages), (2) Summary and reflection of the key insights from your devotional writings (4 pages), and, (3) Personal and church application from your reading for today (1-2 pages). **35% of grade, due Apr 27**

Reading Report Log

Students will submit a reading log indicating how much they have read of the daily class assignments. It is critical that you are faithful in reading and reflecting on these writings so that you are prepared for the daily class discussions on the assigned texts for the day. To receive full credit it is essential to read all of the books, and not just merely skim them. **Due May 3**

Optional but strongly encouraged Journal Keeping

Since the origin of the Church, Christians have recognized the importance of recording and reflecting on their spiritual experiences. Journal keeping is a spiritual discipline that still provides vital insights and encouragement for Christians as they seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Triune God. Students are encouraged to keep a journal to assist them in noticing and paying attention to God throughout the course. More specifically it can provide a means for reflecting and interacting with the primary source readings, as a means for processing the class lectures and discussions, and it can assist in the creation of a list of favorite quotes from the class readings. You may want to experiment and use any form (e.g. prose, poetry, sketching or other art, writing a song/music, etc.) that helps you to become more aware and attentive to the presence of our Triune God. The personal benefit that you will receive from journaling will be in direct proportion to your reading and honest interaction with it. A good question to guide your journaling is “How do I sense God in this reading or experience (reading, place, activity, etc.) and why?”

Learning Covenant:

As professor of this course, I covenant with each student that I will model Christ-like behavior, value and respect each student as a person in Christ, come to class prepared, begin and end class on time, make appropriate assignments and grade them fairly, and be available for consultation outside of class. In return, I expect each student to model Christ-like behavior, show proper respect to me as the professor and your classmates, come to class prepared, arrive and leave class on time, and submit assignments and participate in ways that demonstrate your integrity and desire to learn.

Policy for Writing and Grading Papers:

All papers must be typed and double-spaced in 12 point size. Papers will be graded according to the following three criteria: content, clarity, and structure and style. (1) Content relates to the development of the major themes of your assignment. How clearly have you understood the topic and nature of your presentation or assignment? (2) Clarity relates to your ability to express yourself clearly with consistent sentences that develop your thoughts and present them in a logical and flowing manner. (3) Structure and style relates to grammar and spelling. All papers should be carefully spell checked and proofed.

Grades on unstapled papers will be reduced by 3 points. Since technology is not a respecter of the history of Christian spirituality it is strongly suggested that you back up all work on a separate computer disk and keep an extra hard copy.

Please use the following format when writing your papers. Place your name, class (CFM 522 History and Traditions), box number, and date in the upper left hand corner of the paper. Do not use a title page. Your name should appear only on the first page. This process allows your papers to be read anonymously. **PLEASE NOTE:** email attachments of your papers are not acceptable.

Expectations and Guidelines:

Attendance:

Attendance and engaged participation are expected of all students. It is difficult for you to learn if you are absent. However there may be unexpected emergencies or crises that might prevent your attendance. Unexcused absences will lower the “subjective assessment” portion of your grade. Gross disregard for class attendance and participation could result in failure of the course.

Grades:

Satisfactorily fulfilling the expectations and assignments for this course as outlined in the syllabus will earn the student a B+ grade. It is possible to achieve an A- or A only by going beyond expectations—not necessarily in length, but in depth and integration of thinking, in creative development, and in level of involvement.

Late Papers: Late papers will be reduced by 5 points of a letter grade for each day late. After one week a late paper becomes a zero.

Grading Scale:

94-100 = A	74 - 76 = C
90-93 = A-	70 - 73 = C-
87-89 = B+	67 - 69 = D+
84-86 = B	64 - 66 = D
80-83 = B-	60 - 63 = D -
77-79 = C+	below 60 = F

Subjective Assessment: 10% of final grade

Attendance, preparedness, diligent work and engaged participation are important to me for this to be a collaborative and effective learning experience. I reserve a percentage of your final grade for my subjective assessment of these and other factors related to your coursework.

Academic Honesty:

As students and faculty of Wheaton College, we are members of an academic community with high scholarly standards, a commitment to pursuing truth, a recognition that our actions affect others in the community and a desire to follow Jesus’ example of integrity and

truthfulness. Academic honesty is essential for establishing and maintaining the trust that is fundamental to the educational process. Examples of academic dishonesty, which will result in disciplinary action, include, but are not limited to ...
cheating – using unauthorized material or unauthorized help from another person in any work or examination submitted for academic credit
fabrication – inventing information, citations, reporting participation in activities never done, or inflating the effort put in and/or the effect of various self-reported activities
facilitating academic dishonesty – providing unauthorized material or information to another person
plagiarism – representing the work of another as one’s own without acknowledging the source
misrepresentation – giving the impression of having done more significant work than you actually did (e.g., padding references with works not consulted, doing less than your fair share of a group project, or recycling one’s own work)
Disciplinary responses will be individualized to reflect the maturity of the student, the severity of the infraction and any evolving patterns.

Academic Support:

College can be a challenging experience. While not intending to limit the possible resources students often find it helpful to visit the Writing Center to assist them in the preparation of their papers. Additionally the Counseling Center may be of assistance in resolving relational, emotional, and other issues that often can impact learning. For further assistance please visit the Writing Center: <http://www.wheaton.edu/learnres/writectr/> or Counseling Center: <http://www.wheaton.edu/Counseling/>

A Selective Bibliography:

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