

History of Christian Spirituality 1

Fall 2014

DESCRIPTION

This course provides a solid grounding in the history of Christian Spirituality, both east and west. This semester's course examines significant figures and themes from early church through the dawn of the Reformation/Renaissance. Readings draw from classical spiritual texts and relevant secondary literature. Concentrations include patristic, desert, Augustinian, Benedictine, Franciscan, Anchoritic, and Beguine spiritualities. This course fulfills requirements in the DMin and MA programs in Christian Spirituality, as well as the certificate in spirituality. All students must complete weekly readings; however, class participation and written assignments are evaluated according to degree program

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will demonstrate facility with methods of research in specific theological disciplines for post graduate and doctoral studies
- Students will use tools of literary, cultural, historical, and social analysis in the interpretation of various cultures and their relationship to the Christian tradition
- Students will demonstrate a well-rounded knowledge and critical appropriation of the Jesuit and Catholic theological tradition

REQUIRED MATERIALS

[Purchasing texts for this course is expensive. For this reason, arrangements have been made to have available all texts at the Rose Hill library Reserve desk. Students may read assignments there or make copies for themselves.]

Required Primary Texts

Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Ewert Cousins, ed. NY: Paulist Press, 1978. **ISBN-10:** 0809121212

Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage. Ancient Christian Writers, Book 38. George E. Gingas, ed. NY: Newman Press, 1970. **ISBN-10:** 0809100290

Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses. Classics of Western Spirituality. A.J. Malherbe and E. Ferguson, trans. NY: Paulist Press, 1978. **ISBN-10:** 0809121123

Gregory Palamas: *The Triads.* The Classics of Western Spirituality. Nicholas Gendle, trans. NY: Classics of Western Spirituality, 1973. **ISBN-10:** 0809124475

Gregory the Great. *The Book of Pastoral Rule.* Popular Patristics Series, No 34. John Behr, ed. Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007. **ISBN-10:** 0881413186

Julian of Norwich: *Showings.* The Classics of Western Spirituality. Edmund Colledge and J. Walsh, trans. NY: Paulist Press, 1978. **ISBN-10:** 0809120917

Marguerite Porete: The Mirror of Simple Souls. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Ellen L. Babinsky, trans. NY: Paulist Press, 1993. **ISBN-10:** 0809134276

Mechthild of Magdeburg: The Flowing Light of the Godhead. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Frank Tobin, trans. NY: Paulist Press, 1997. **ISBN-10:** 0809137763

Origin: The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies. Ancient Christian Writers, Book 26. R.P. Lawson, ed. NY: The Newman Press, 1957. **ISBN-10: 0809102617**

Pseudo Dionysius: The Complete Works. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Paul Rorem, trans. NY: Paulist Press, 1987. **ISBN-10:** 0809128381

RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in English. Timothy Fry, OSB, ed. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982. **ISBN-10:** 0814612725

Saint Augustine: The Confessions. Henry Chadwick, Trans. Oxford World Classics. NY: Oxford University Press, 1998; 2009. **ISBN-10:** 0199537828

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection. Benedicta Ward, SLG, trans. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Studies, 1975; 2006. **ISBN:** 978-0-87907-959-8

Required Secondary Texts

Holder, Arthur, ed. *Christian Spirituality: The Classics.* NY: Routledge, 2010. **ISBN-10:** 0415776023

Sheldrake, Philip. *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998. **ISBN-10:** 1570752036

Wiseman, James A. *Spirituality and Mysticism: A Global View.* Theology in Global Perspective Series. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006 **ISBN-10:** 1570756562

Requirements

- Attendance at all class sessions. A missed class session results in a partial (1/2) drop in a student's final grade, e.g., one's final grade of B+ is reduced to a B. When a student misses more than two classes, s/he should drop this class.
- Reading all assigned materials before class.
- Active and constructive participation in small and large group discussions.
- On-time submission of all written assignments.
- Oral Presentation: self-selecting pairs of students will choose one of our class sessions in which to lead a 15-minute class discussion of possible contemporary appropriations of the spirituality/ies represented in that class session's readings. In addition to leading this class discussion, both students begin their session by listing and explaining at least three possible examples of contemporary appropriation.
- Final Project.
- BlackBoard Journal

Evaluation

- 30% Class participation; class oral presentation
- 30% Written assignments; online Journal, BlackBoard Blog
- 40% Final Project

Journals: Beginning in September, weekly journal entries are required. You are free to journal as you like; however, some attention should be given to the topic of how you see the week's readings informing both your own spiritual life and, potentially, the spiritual lives of other contemporary Christians. Journal entries should be approximately 250 words per week. The class does not have access to your journal. I will read it at various points throughout the semester.

Class Blog: You are welcome to add to the class blog anything pertinent to our weekly discussions. Appropriate submissions are considered "extra credit." Making contributions is entirely at your initiative and are available to the entire class.

Final Project: Due December 17, this 10-15 pages paper is graded on the basis of content, argument, and grammar. Content should be appropriate to your degree program.

- DMin students are held to a higher expectation and, ideally, your paper's content is somewhat related to the topic of your DMin dissertation. You must employ Turabian style (8th ed.), with end or footnotes, bibliography, and the like. Mid-semester, DMin students should begin submitting theses or ideas for the topic of their final paper. You must commit to your final paper's topic/thesis by November 21.
- Certificate students are free to propose a final project topic that is appropriate to their certificate focus. You may choose from the options listed below or propose one of your own. All written materials must adhere to academic standards and Turabian stylebook. You must commit to your final project topic/thesis by November 21.
- MA students will write a paper or project that will be evaluated at a MA level; however, the expectations for writing and Turabian stylebook are the same as above. MA students are free to choose from among the topics listed below or may propose their own. Before November 21, MA students must have faculty approval for a final project topic.

Final Project Options (10-15 pages, double spaced, 12-pt font; one inch margins, single side of paper -- or submitted electronically):

- Analysis and reflection upon three representative figures/texts from this semester: one each from Monastic, Patristic, and medieval readings. Include a section in which you address the contemporary appropriation of each of the authors/texts you select.
- Select one of this semester's schools of spirituality, e.g., Desert, Monastic, Patristic, Mendicant, Devotio Moderna), and write an analysis/reflection on selected individuals/texts from this tradition. Include a section on contemporary appropriation of this tradition's spirituality.
- Perhaps you want to concentrate on only one author/text, for example, the RB. Write an analysis/reflection of the selected figure/text and include a section in which you address the possibilities for a contemporary appropriation of your chosen spirituality. Include a bibliography of recent secondary resources available on your figure/text.

I invite alternative proposals, which must be submitted to by in November 21.

Assignments

September 4	Introduction to the historical study of Christian Spirituality
September 10	Biblical spiritualities
September 17	Origin: <i>Commentary on the Song of Songs</i>
September 24	<i>Sayings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers</i>
October 2	Egeria: <i>Journey of a Pilgrim (381-384)</i>
October 8	Gregory of Nyssa: <i>The Life of Moses</i>
October 15	Augustine of Hippo: <i>The Confessions</i>
October 22	Pseudo-Dionysius: <i>The Divine Names, Mystical Theology</i>
October 29	Benedict of Nursia: <i>Rule</i>
November 6	Gregory the Great: <i>Book of Pastoral Rule</i>
November 12	Mechthild of Magdeburg: <i>The Flowing Light of the Godhead</i>
November 19	Bonaventure: <i>The Soul's Journey into God</i>
November 26	<u>No Class: Thanksgiving Break</u>
December 4	Marguerite Porete: <i>The Mirror of Simple Souls</i>
December 11	Gregory Palamas: <i>Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts</i>
December 17	Julian of Norwich: <i>Showings</i>
	Final Projects Due