

Spiritual Formation, RELI 350
Fall 2009
Paul Anderson

Course Description: An exploration of how people grow and change spiritually. This study integrates biblical insights, classic Christian spirituality, developmental theory, and contemporary individual and corporate practice in spiritual formation. It will critically explore how spirituality relates to vocation, relationships and the demands of daily living—helping the student go deeper spiritually.

Course Objectives: As a result of our study together:

- Students will experiment with the spiritual disciplines and keep a journal narrating their experiences.
- Students will explore the life of prayer and seek to put into practice a daily spiritual discipline that works for them.
- Students will reflect on their experiences and seek to discern the leadings of God in their own lives, opening themselves to God’s callings and direction for the future.
- Students will be able to lead others deeper in the life of the Spirit as a result of this course.

Required Texts:

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline*, rev. ed. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1998.

Kelly, Thomas. *Testament of Devotion*. New York: Harper and Row, 1941.

Mulholland, Robert. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Evaluation: 0-59, F; 60-69, D; 70-79, C; 80-89, B; 90-100, A.

Assignments and Expectations:

Reading and Participation. Students will be expected to read all the assignments, attend class, take in at least two personal retreats, and participate meaningfully in class discussions. (10 points)

Devotional Journal. Students will be expected to keep a daily (or at least a twice-weekly) journal, reflecting on their spiritual lives and experiences and engaging the readings as seems serviceable. (fifteen 1-point entries; 10 points for the final product; 25 points)

Take-Home Essay Exams. The Midterm and Final take-home exams will consist of written essays describing your experiences with the activities and readings of the class. (20 points and 25 points)

Short Papers. Your choice of *four* of the following 3-4 page papers. (20 points)

Paper 1, “My Earliest Experiences with God” (Sept. 10)

Paper 2, “My Lifeline—Highs and Lows” (Sept. 24)

Paper 3, “My Devotional Practices—What Works for me and What Doesn’t” (Oct. 8)

Paper 4, “My Struggles and God’s Empowerment” (Oct. 29)

Paper 5, “Mentors Across Time and Space—The Devotional Classics and Me” (Nov. 12)

Paper 6, “Discerning God’s Leadings and Callings” (Dec. 3)

Calendar of Readings and Assignments

- Sept. 1 Course introduction and welcome!
3 Your Life with God—read and bring to class the most meaningful devotional writing
8 The Spiritual Disciplines: Doors to Liberation—Foster 1-11
10 The Process of Spiritual Formation—Mulholland 15-24; Kelly 3-8 (Paper #1)
15 Meditation—Foster 15-32
17 Being Conformed—Mulholland 25-32; Kelly 9-19
22 Prayer—Foster 33-46
24 The Image of Christ—Mulholland 33-39; Kelly 19-22 (Paper #2)
29 Fasting—Foster 47-61
- Oct. 1 For the Sake of Others—Mulholland 40-44; Kelly 25-29
6 Study—Foster 62-76
8 Creation Gifts—Mulholland 45-56; Kelly 29-34 (Paper #3)
13 Simplicity—Foster 79-95
15 **Midterm Take-Home Exam Due**
20 Solitude—Foster 96-109
22 One-Sided Spirituality—Mulholland 57-63; Kelly 34-39
27 Submission—Foster 110-125
29 Holistic Spirituality—Mulholland 64-73; Kelly 39-44 (Paper #4)
- Nov. 3 Service—Foster 126-140
5 The Classical Christian Pilgrimage—Mulholland 74-78; Kelly 45-47
10 Confession—Foster 144-157
12 Classical Spiritual Disciplines—Mulholland 102-111; Kelly 51-61 (Paper #5)
17 Worship—Foster 158-174
19 The Nature of the Spiritual Disciplines—Mulholland 120-134; Kelly 65-80
24 The Inner Dynamics of the Spiritual Disciplines—Mulholland 135-140; Kelly 80-85
26 Happy Thanksgiving!
- Dec. 1 Guidance—Foster 175-189
3 Corporate Spirituality—Mulholland 141; Kelly 89-100 (Paper #6)
8 Celebration—Foster 190-201
10 Social Spirituality—Mulholland 158-168 (Final Devotional Journal Due)
18 10:00 am, **Final Exam**