Northern Seminary  
SP 306 INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

September 14 – 18, 2015  
Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Jill Sidler Fleagle, DMin Leadership and Spiritual Formation, MPC, LPC  
jfleagle@faculty.seminary.edu  
815-353-0713

Course Description

The course will follow the pattern of day retreats. We will participate in a rhythm of worship throughout the day. The course will provide an introduction to the spiritual disciplines, beginning practice, communal mid-day meals, sacred time and opportunity for study, stillness, and journaling.

Students will be introduced to the disciplines of formational reading of Scripture (lectio divina), contemplative and communal prayer, Biblical and Christian meditation, journaling, stillness (silence) and solitude, personal Sabbath keeping, attending and savoring, cultivating wonder and gratitude, and creating lifestyle margins for the preservation of disciplines.

We will plan to meet off campus for a day retreat to enhance the practice of disciplines. The day will be partially determined by favorable weather, and will be planned during our first class.

Course Goals

1. To conceptualize and concretize an understanding of Christian spiritual formation.
2. To gain an overview of various approaches to Christian spiritual formation.
3. To gain an understanding of the interrelatedness of psychological and spiritual health and its impact on the effectiveness of the use of disciplines.
4. To identify one’s primary facet of formation (Boa).
5. To be introduced to several disciplines and to begin to develop a rhythm of practice.
6. To integrate learning from this course with one’s broader theological and biblical learning in seminary.

Required Reading


Ravin-Anderson, Angela, "They Had Followed Him from Galilee: The Female Disciples." Priscilla Papers, 28, no 2 (Spring 2014). (Class handout)


**Bibliography**


Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville, KY:


**Student Requirements**

1. Full participation in class through worship, reflection, service through hospitality in community, discussion of concepts and reading, and demonstrated engagement with the practice of the disciplines.

2. Completion of required reading before each class.

3. Completion of written reflections of Questions for Personal Application.

4. Participation in discussion of personal application questions in triads.

**Tentative Course Schedule**

**Monday, September 14**

Morning Session – 9:00 a.m.

Welcome, Worship, Review of Syllabus.

Introduction and Overview.

Reading, discussion of Weavings article, *Embracing a Midwinter God*. “The paradox of the spiritual life is that we find the way once we release the path.”

Teaching on the Service and Practice of Hospitality.

Meeting in Triads for discussion and prayer.

11:45 Worship followed by Communal Meal.

Afternoon Session – 1:00 p.m.

Introduction to Formational Reading of Scripture with corresponding exercise.

Time in solitude and stillness for reflection.

Discussion of reflection with class.

Review of Reading and Reflection Homework for the week.


3:45 Closing Worship
Tuesday, September 15

Morning Session – 9:00 a.m.

Worship
Discussion of Reading Reflections. Hand in papers.
Teaching on Contemplative Prayer and Journaling.
Time in solitude and stillness for practice.
Meeting in Triads.
Bring reflections into discussion with the class.
11:45 Worship followed by Communal Meal.

Afternoon Session – 1:00 p.m.

Teaching on Biblical and Christian Meditation.
Time in solitude and stillness for reflection.
Meeting in Triads.
Bring reflections into discussion with the class.

Homework for 9/16: Read Boa’s Facets 4 – 6: Exchanged Life, Motivated, Devotional, P. 99-198. Write reflection paper answering one question in each section of Questions for Personal Reflection. Read Thompson, Ch. 5-9.

3:45 Closing Worship.

Wednesday, September 16

Morning Session - 9:00 a.m.

Worship
Discussion of Reading Reflections. Hand in Papers.
Invite reflection on previous days’ experiences of Stillness and Solitude.
Teaching on solitude and silence/stillness.
Time for practice and reflection.
Meetings in Triads.
Bring reflections into discussion with class.
11:45 Worship followed by Communal Meal.

Afternoon Session – 1:00 p.m.
Teaching on Personal Sabbath keeping.

Time for practice and reflection.

Meetings in Triads.

Bring reflections into discussion with class.


3:45 Closing Worship.

Thursday, September 17

Morning Session - 9:00 a.m.

Worship

Discussion of Reading Reflections. Hand in papers.

Teaching on Attending and Savoring.

Time for practice and reflection.

Meeting in Triads.

Bring reflections into discussion with class.

11:45 Worship and Communal Meal.

Afternoon Session – 1:00 p.m.

Teaching on Wonder and Gratitude.

Time for practice and reflection.

Meetings in Triads.

Bring reflections into discussion with class.


Discuss plan to meet off campus for final day retreat.

3:45 Closing Worship.
Friday, September 18

Morning Session – 9:00 a.m.

Worship

Morning for practice of integrating disciplines in personal reflection during solitude and stillness.

1:45 Worship and Communal Meal.

Afternoon Session - 1:00 p.m.

Discussion of Final Reading Reflections. Hand in Papers.

Review of week’s discoveries and reflections.

Teaching on Creating Lifestyle Margins for Preservation of Spiritual Disciplines.

3:30 Worship and Blessing.

4:00 Departure.

Grading

Grades are calculated by percentage of completion according to adherence to seminary standards and Student Requirements as printed in this syllabus with the following breakdown:

Participation in triads, and experiential learning exercises – 50%

Written reflections – 25%

Reading and discussion – 25%

POLICIES FOR ALL MASTERS CLASSES

NOTE: All communications from the seminary will go to your seminary email account. Contact ithelpdesk@seminary.edu if you need help forwarding your seminary email address to your personal email address.

As a seminary community we hold integrity/hospitality as core values. Individuals are able to do their best work and thinking when their peers are fully present and engaged. We expect each person to both participate in class and carefully listen to others with the belief that everyone’s contribution is equally important. Therefore, the following policies have been established in order to provide clarity in regard to attendance expectations and relationships in the classroom.

Diploma/Certificate Student Course Requirements

The amount of work required of Diploma/Certificate students will be at the discretion of the professor. Students will be responsible for contacting the professor about what assignments are required.
Class Attendance Policy
It is expected that students will attend and participate in all class sessions. Failure to attend at least 80% of class sessions is grounds for automatic failure. A professor may set other attendance expectations. Students are always expected to communicate with a professor in advance if they will be absent. Attendance expectations are higher for online and intensive courses (see syllabus for specific requirements).

Class Tardiness Policy
The third time a student is late to the start of class, it will be counted as a class absence. It is also expected that students will return from a break by the time specified by the professor.

Late Work Policy
If a student cannot complete the work for a course by the due date listed on the syllabus, they must submit a “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form to the Registrar by 4:30 of the last day of the term. The form must be signed by the instructor and Dean of Students. The professor may set stipulations and grade reductions. In the absence of a formal request form, the student will receive a grade based upon work completed by the last day of the term.

Turabian Format
All papers, including footnotes and bibliography, must be submitted in the correct format according to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed., 2013.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgement or documentation. See the “Academic Honesty Policy” in the Seminary Catalog for more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Electronic Format
Unless otherwise specified by the professor, all work submitted electronically must be in a Word document format (.doc, .docx).

Technology Use in the Classroom
Unless it is directly tied to note-taking or research for the class, students are expected to refrain from using cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class.

Course Evaluation in Moodle
Students must complete an online course evaluation using the seminary Moodle system at [http://moodle.seminary.edu](http://moodle.seminary.edu). The evaluation will be open at the end of the course. If you need assistance connecting to Moodle or accessing the evaluation, please send an email to moodlehelp@seminary.edu.