Course Description: This course will explore a representative sample of Christian devotional literature from the early church to recent times in order to ascertain the depth and variety of Christian spirituality in the church’s history. Devotional literature is defined to include spiritual manuals written to guide others as well as spiritual autobiography, meditative poetry, and other personal devotional writing. The required reading is offered as a selection of texts which it is good for every minister of the gospel to have read.

Goals:

- Engage both mind and heart with classic spiritual texts from across the centuries and a spectrum of Christian traditions.
- Identify distinctive characteristics of different Christian spiritual traditions along with discerning common themes.
- Discover and explore connections between the Christian spiritual exercises and experiences of previous generations and our own faith journey.
- Examine today’s contexts of ministry in dialog with faithful exemplars who lived in other historic cultural contexts.
- Reflect critically on spiritual issues that challenge believers and the church today in the light of Christian history.
- Embrace at least one historic saint as a personal role model for life in Christ.

Required Reading:


Confessions by Augustine (This book can be downloaded free of charge at www.ccel.org.)

Thomas a Kempis (c.1380-1471), The Imitation of Christ (This book can be downloaded free of charge at www.ccel.org.)
Students shall also be required to read one Christian spirituality classic of his or her choice. (See “Course Requirements for more detail.)

**Course Requirements for Master of Divinity or MA Students:**

Attend all class sessions (10% of grade)

Participate in class discussions in ways that demonstrate completion and understanding of each week’s reading (20% of grade).

Write a 3-5 page informal paper on your favorite saint. Your paper should include answers to the basic questions of who, what, and why (15% of grade).

Complete the 50 Day Spiritual Adventure. (See weeks 4-10 on page 3 of syllabus. (30% of grade).

Write a 10-page academic paper (with proper footnotes) on a book on the attached list (25% of grade). The paper shall include the following:

- An introduction describing your reasons for selecting the book (see page 3 of syllabus: “possible books for research paper”)
- Section on the Author
- Section on the Book in its historical context
- Section on the history of the book since its publication
- Conclusion on the book’s value today

The paper is due the Monday following the last day of class: December 9, 2013

**Course Requirements for Diploma and Certificate Students:**

Attend all class sessions (10% of grade)

Participate in class discussions in ways that demonstrate completion and understanding of each week’s reading (20% of grade).

Participate in class discussions in ways that demonstrate completion and understanding of each week’s reading (20% of grade).

Write a 3-5 page informal paper on your favorite saint. Your paper should include answers to the basic questions of who, what, and why (15% of grade).

The paper is due the Monday following the last day of class: December 9, 2013

Complete the 50 Day Spiritual Adventure (35%) of grade.
Grading Scale

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Course & Reading Schedule:

Week 1  Introduction to devotional writing in American Christian experience


Week 3  Thomas a Kempis (c.1380-1471), The Imitation of Christ. Read Book I (Helpful Counsels for the Spiritual Life) and Book II (Directives for the Interior Life). Read as many chapters in Books III and IV as possible (esp. recommended, Bk. III, Ch. 10, “The Sweetness of Serving God;” Bk. III, Ch. 15 “How To Pray for What We Desire;” and Bk. III, Ch. 17, “Placing All One’s Cares on God”).

BEGIN 50 DAY SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE THROUGH FOSTER

Week 4  Come to class having completed Foster, “The Prayer-Filled Life.”

Week 5  Come to class having completed Foster, “The Virtuous Life.

Week 6  Come to class having completed Foster, “The Spirit-Empower Life.”

Week 7  Come to class having completed Foster, “The Compassionate Life.”

Week 8  Come to class having completed Foster, “The Word-Centered Life.”

Week 9  Come to class having completed Foster, “The Sacramental Life.”

Week 10 Come to class prepared to introduce “Your Saint” to the class.

Possible Books For Research Paper (Most, if not all of the following books can be downloaded free of charge at www.ccel.org.)

On the Incarnation by Athanasius

Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

From the Catholic Mystical Tradition, Teresa of Avila, The Interior Castle or John of the Cross, The Dark Night of the Soul or Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God or The Cloud of
Unknowing.

From the Reformed Tradition, *The Marks of God’s Children*

From the Puritan and Baptist Tradition, John Bunyan (1628-1688), *The Pilgrim’s Progress.*

From the Anglican Spiritual Tradition, William Law (1686-1761), *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.*

From the Contemporary Russian Roman Catholic Tradition, Walter Ciszek, *He Leadeth Me.*

From the Contemporary American Protestant Tradition, Evelyn Underhill, *Life as Prayer.*

From the Pietist Tradition, John Arndt, *True Christianity.*

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**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.

**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 penalty for late work is one full grade reduction. 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*, 7th ed., 2007.

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) in order to receive a final grade for the course. The evaluation will be open for one week starting the last day of the term. If you need assistance connecting to Moodle or accessing the evaluation, please send an email to ithelpdesk@seminary.edu.