

Formation for Religious Experience

Fall 2018

Schlegel 121

Mondays 1:30-3:50

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Schlegel 200

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A. Description:

This course explores religious experience within Christian traditions, looking closely at how communal and individual practices prepare Christians to experience God.

B. Objectives:

This class will help students to recognize traditional categories and descriptions of religious experience, identify formation techniques used by individuals and communities, analyze the theological underpinnings of such techniques, and integrate practical and theological approaches to religious experience. The particular student learning outcomes to which this course is geared are:

MDIVSLO3: Students will be able to think theologically and ethically in relation to particular traditions and contemporary needs.

MIDIVSLO5: Students will acquire the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the practice of Christian ministry.

QEP-SLO 1b: Can articulate important elements of more than one Christian tradition.

Assignments within the course are designed to foster and assess these outcomes.

C. Requirements:

1. Read texts carefully. These texts are chosen for their insights regarding spiritual formation and for the diversity of their theological perspectives (QEP-SLO 1.b).
2. Attend classes.
3. Participate fully in class exercises and discussions (MDIVSLO3).
4. Help lead one class session. This entails a two-page summary of the readings, three open-ended questions, a formation exercise, and a prayer (MDIVSLO5).
5. Participate in an assigned spiritual discipline for 15 minutes a day, five days a week, throughout the semester. The spiritual disciplines will change throughout the semester.
6. Complete a final project integrating two or more readings and one spiritual discipline within a theological understanding of religious experience. This might take the form of a paper, artwork, performance, collaborative presentation, or something else yet to be imagined (SLO17).

The final project is due on or before December 12. Students with serious medical problems or major family emergencies may contact me BEFORE an assignment is due to discuss extensions. Late assignments (without extension granted) will be marked down one third of a grade (for example, A- to B+) every 24 hours for three days. Without an extension granted, papers turned in more than 72 hours after the due date will not be accepted. Late assignments will likely not be graded in a timely manner.

D. Grading:

Class attendance and participation (25%)

Spiritual disciplines (10%)

Seminar leadership (25%)

Final project (40%)

E. Required Books:

Gonzalez, Michelle A. *Embracing Latina Spirituality: A Woman's Perspective*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2009.

St. Ignatius of Loyola. *Spiritual Exercises*. Edited by Anthony Mottola. New York: Doubleday, 1989.

Kelly, Thomas. *Testament of Devotion*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Luhrmann, T.M. *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

Saliers, Don E. *The Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and the Religious Affections*. New York: Seabury Press, 1980.

Thurman, Howard. *Disciplines of the Spirit*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1963.

Wiman, Christian. *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2013.

Additional essays available on CAMS:

Turner, Victor. "Liminality and Communitas," in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Aldine Transaction. Pp. 94-97, 106-107.

Krista Hughes, "Intimate Mysteries: The Apophatics of Sensible Love" in *Apophatic Bodies: Negative Theology, Incarnation, and Relationality*. Edited by Chris Boesel and Catherine Keller. New York: Fordham University Press, 2010. Pp. 349-366.

Nelson, Timothy. "Religious Experience and Ritual" in *Every Time I Feel the Spirit: Religious Experience and Ritual in an African American Church*. New York: New York University Press, 2004. Pp. 46-63.

Orsi, Robert. "The Many Names of the Mother of God," in *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*.

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. Pp. 48-72.

Tillich, Paul. "Experience of Holy." in *Shaking the Foundations*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948. Pp. 87-92.

Harak, G. Simon. *Virtuous Passions: The Formation of Christian Character*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1993. Pp. 1-26.

F. Schedule:

Sep 10. Introduction

Sep 17. Luhrmann, T.M. *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. Pp. 3-188.
Spiritual discipline: Lectio divina OR visio divina. ROGER

Sep 24. Luhrmann, T.M. *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. Pp. 189-325.
Spiritual discipline: Rosary. VAL

Oct 1.

Orsi, Robert. "The Many Names of the Mother of God," in *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. Pp. 1-18, 48-109.
Spiritual discipline: Intercessory prayer. AVERY

Oct 8. Saliers, Don E. *The Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and the Religious Affections*. New York: Seabury Press, 1980. Pp. 1-88.

Tillich, Paul. "Experience of Holy." in *Shaking the Foundations*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948. Pp. 87-92.

Nelson, Timothy. "Religious Experience and Ritual" in *Every Time I Feel the Spirit: Religious Experience and Ritual in an African American Church*. New York: New York University Press, 2004. Pp. 46-63.

Spiritual discipline: Hymn singing. HEATHER and KATE

Discussion of final projects.

Oct 22. St. Ignatius of Loyola. *Spiritual Exercises*. Edited by Anthony Mottola. New York: Doubleday, 1989. Pp. 35-126.

Spiritual discipline: Ignatian meditation. CINDA

Oct 29. Howard Thurman, *Disciplines of the Spirit*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1963.

Spiritual discipline: Intercessory prayer. ABBY

Nov 5. Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2013.

Spiritual discipline: Praying the Psalms. AMANDA and JORDAN

Nov 12. Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Embracing Latina Spirituality: A Woman's Perspective*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2009.

Spiritual discipline: Creating and praying at an altar. WILLIAM

Nov 19. Class does not meet; continue reading.

Nov 26. Thomas Kelly, *Testament of Devotion*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Spiritual discipline: Silence. ALEX

Dec 12. Final Projects Due.

G. Policies:

Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. For more information see: <http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885>
Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange

appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.