

**St. Peter's Seminary / King's University College
at The University of Western Ontario**

***Introduction to Spiritual Theology 5460A
Course Outline – Sept. to Dec. 2020***

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A. Course Description:

This course entails a historical survey of Christian spirituality from the post-apostolic age to the period preceding the Reformation. Parallels are demonstrated between the spiritual movements that emerged during this historical period and contemporary figures and movements that continue to demonstrate today the charisms of these earlier individuals and schools of spirituality.

This course will be taught in a completely online format. For each week of the course, the following will be provided on the course OWL page: an introductory video clip, class notes, additional handouts and (periodically) Youtube video clips pertaining to the authors studied that week. In addition, a weekly zoom conference will be held for all the students in the class during which discussion will take place on the assigned readings for the week. At the beginning of the course, discernment will be made as to the day and time each week for this zoom conference to occur. Other than the weekly zoom conference, students can review the posted material for the class any time during the week. At mid-term and at the conclusion of the course, an exam will be scheduled on a particular day of the week.

B. Goals:

1. To investigate the main trends, issues and developments in Christian Spirituality from post-apostolic age to the end of the 15th century.
2. To explore the question: "How have Christians throughout history understood what it is to seek and know God?"
3. To seek a deeper understanding and appreciation of the heritage of Christian Spirituality in order to shed light on, and give assistance to, our present spiritual journey, both communal and personal.
4. To provide a framework within which to appreciate various spiritual schools, movements, and writings both in themselves and in their relationship with one another.
5. To make contact with the history and writings of the great saints and mystics of the Christian tradition as well as those of the principal schools of spirituality.
6. To provide knowledge and encouragement so that students can develop their own personal spirituality.
7. To begin to develop in the students the skills that will assist them to serve as spiritual guides to other people in their future ministries.

Knowledge

1. To know the historical and cultural contexts within which the great spiritual guides developed their spiritual writings.
2. To understand and acquaint oneself with the primary texts of great spiritual authors, communities and movements in the tradition of spiritual theology.
3. To grasp the connection between classical spiritual teachings and their contemporary expressions, understanding both the continuity and the differences.
4. To understand and appreciate the variety of spiritual paths witnessed to by the many schools and movements within the one Christian Catholic Tradition.
5. To understand and appreciate the teachings of other spiritual traditions within both the Christian and other faith traditions.
6. To have a knowledge of the aberrations and errors within the Christian Spiritual Tradition as well as their remedies, in order to be able to detect and address similar aberrations and errors today.
7. To understand the nature of spiritual theology, its methodology and the various theological distinctions in order to develop tools for a critical analysis of texts, communities, structures and movements.

Skills

1. To enable the student to interpret and analyze a primary text of a great spiritual writer in the social, cultural and ecclesial context of its time.
2. To enable the student to detect and understand those unchanging values of the Christian Spiritual Tradition that are still found in our time, while being able to know and set in context those dimensions of the Tradition which are historically and culturally conditioned.
3. To enable the student to articulate, in both oral and written forms, the principal elements of the Christian Catholic Tradition of spiritual theology.
4. To enable students to express their own personal spirituality as related to the authentic spiritual tradition of the Church, and at the same time to be able to appreciate those authentic spiritualities to which they are not drawn, but to which they may be called to minister.
5. To enable the student to appreciate the spiritualities of the Christian East and West, , as well as those found in our secular society.
6. To enable the student to detect those movements of the spirits that are divisive and destructive of the path toward union with God, so that he/she may be able to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the healing and reconciliation needed to recover authenticity and life.

Values and Attitudes

1. To acquire a love for the working of the Spirit of Jesus Christ throughout our whole Christian tradition.
2. To have a critical openness to, and capacity to learn from, both the good and bad in our Christian Catholic Tradition of spirituality.
3. To appreciate the great variety of ways the Holy Spirit is present: in the human heart, in our communal life together, in societal structures, in social movements throughout our human history, and in the beauty of creation.
4. To value one's personal spiritual life as a response to the invitation to life in union with our Triune God, and to nourish this grace-filled life by prayer and an ever more faithful living of the Gospel.

C. Course Texts:

Required:

- ❖ Dupre, Louis and Wiseman, James, O.S.B. Eds. Light from Light. An Anthology of Christian Mysticism. (Revised Edition). New York: Paulist Press, 2000.

Recommended:

- ❖ Healey, Charles J., S.J. Christian Spirituality: An Introduction to the Heritage. New York: Alba House, 1999.

Both of these texts can be ordered from **amazon.ca** or **indigo.ca**.

D. Course Requirements:

There will be three main components in the determination of course grades. Students' reading of assigned materials and participation in weekly zoom discussions will be the best means to benefit as much as possible from the course, as well as achieve a good grade in this course.

1. Mid-Term Test: A test will be held on **Wed. Oct. 28th**. It will be provided to you at 9:00 am and is to be returned to the instructor by 9:00 am the next day. **30 %**
2. "Presentation Paper" Each student will prepare a *Parish Evening with a Saint* that would be appropriate to present in a parish setting (8 to 10 pages) due **Mon. Nov. 30th**. **40 %**
3. Final Oral Examination: A 15-minute Oral Conversation on the second half of the semester's work will be scheduled with each student (either via a zoom conference or at the Seminary in one of the parlours) during the December exam period - Dec. 11 to 17th. **30 %**

E. Schedule and Themes of Classes:

Week of:

- Sept. 14th** Introduction to Course, the Apostolic Church, Martyrdom in the Early Church.
- Sept. 21st** *Martyrdom in recent times: Oscar Romero.*
The Alexandrian Schools of the early centuries (Clement and Origen).
- Sept. 28th** Eastern Monasticism and Monastic Writings (Anthony of Egypt, Pachomius).
- Oct. 5th** *Modern day Monasticism: Charles de Foucauld and the Little Brothers & Sisters of Jesus.*
Cappadocian Fathers: Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa.
- Oct. 13th** Early Eastern Mysticism (Evagrius Ponticus and Pseudo-Dionysius).
The Antiochan traditions; Later Developments in the East (John Climacus);
Early Western Spirituality (Ambrose and Jerome).
- Oct. 19th** Early Western Spirituality cont'd (Augustine).
Conversion and Social Involvement: Dorothy Day.
- Oct. 26th** **Mid-Term Test**
Western Monasticism (John Cassian and Benedict).

- Nov. 2nd** **Reading Week – No Class Material**
- Nov. 9th** The Middle Ages: Gregory the Great;
Benedictine Developments, New Orders and Religious Groups.
- Nov. 16th** Benedictine School (Hildegard of Bingen);
Cistercian School (Bernard of Clairveaux and Aelred of Rivaulx);
- Nov. 23rd** The Mendicant Orders (Francis & Clare).
Spirituality of journeying with the poor and love for creation today – Pope Francis.
- Nov. 30th** Mendicants continued (Bonaventure and Dominic); Beguine movement of women.
Late Middle Ages. Mystical Traditions of the 14th Century; Catherine of Siena.
“Parish Presentation Papers” Due.
- Dec. 7th** *Contemporary Lay Movement: Catherine de Hueck Doherty and Madonna House.*
English Mystics; Devotio Moderna (and The Imitation of Christ); Popular Piety.
Summary & Conclusions.

F. Requirements for Written Assignments:

This course adheres to the following policies established by Western University:

Policy on Accommodation regarding Medical Illness:

Students are directed to Western University’s Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

Support Services:

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

For a complete list of options about how to obtain help. University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Information about Counselling and Student Development, including Accessibility Services (formerly Services for Students with Disabilities) at King’s is available at <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/who-we-are/administrative-departments/dean-of-students/>

For emotional/mental health assistance see:

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

The website for Academic Services at King's University College is <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-support/>

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices:

King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of laptop computers can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of laptops by students during lectures and seminars shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using laptops for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct.

Inappropriate use of laptops [or smart phones] during lectures creates a significant disruption. As a consequence instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings.

Statement on Academic Offences:

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks where appropriate and by reference to the author using footnotes or citations.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following webpage:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com: <http://www.turnitin.com>

Copyright re. Course Material:

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