

Reading Contemporary Christian Spirituality

**SP 4482
Spring 2006
Thursday 5:10- 8:30pm
Mudd 102**

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NOTA BENE: *This is a draft syllabus; a final syllabus is distributed at the first class.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a seminar for students interested in the academic discipline of Christian Spirituality. MDiv students are welcome and upgrades are available for doctoral students. In this course, students are introduced to a method for the critical existential interpretation of selected texts within the general field of Christian Spirituality. Two methods for engaging texts are introduced: (1) a method of "active reading," which facilitates the critical interpretation of texts and (2) an approach to "learning through discussion," which focuses upon developing skills for leading classroom or group discussions. Evaluation is based upon active class participation, weekly short papers, class presentations, and a final paper (reflection or research, depending upon the student's degree program).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- (1) To introduce the academic discipline of Christian Spirituality.
- (2) To learn strategies for interrogating and critically engaging Christian Spirituality texts through "active reading" and "learning through discussion."
- (3) To consider ways in which our spiritualities, religious practices, ministries, and scholarship are informed, enriched, and challenged by recent trends in Christian Spirituality.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Brackley, Dean, *THE CALL TO DISCERNMENT IN TROUBLED TIMES: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE TRANSFORMATIVE WISDOM OF IGNATIUS LOYOLA*, Crossroad Publishing, ISBN: 0-8245-2268-0.
- Bridges, Flora Wilson, *RESURRECTION SONG: AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY*, Orbis Books, ISBN: 1-57075-359-8.
- Dreyer, Elizabeth A. *EARTH CRAMMED WITH HEAVEN: A SPIRITUALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE*, Paulist, ISBN: 0-8091-3450-0.
- Foster, Richard, *CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE: PATH TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH* (20th anniversary edition). HarperSanFrancisco, ISBN 0060628391.
- Freitas, Donna and Jason King, *SAVE THE DATE: A SPIRITUALITY OF DATING, LOVE, DINNER, AND THE DIVINE*, Crossroad Publishing, ISBN: 0824521234.
- Gula, Richard M., *THE CALL TO HOLINESS: EMBRACING A FULLY CHRISTIAN LIFE*, Paulist, ISBN: 0-8091-4130-2.
- Ryan, Thomas, ed. *RECLAIMING THE BODY IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY*, Paulist Press, ISBN: 0809142953.
- Schneiders, Sandra Marie, *SELLING ALL: COMMITMENT, CONSECRATED CELIBACY, AND COMMUNITY IN CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS LIFE* (volume 2 of Schneiders' *RELIGIOUS LIFE IN A NEW MILLENNIUM*), Paulist Press, ISBN: 0-8091-3973-1.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course participants are held to the following expectations:

- ÿ **Attend all class sessions.**
- ÿ **Complete all reading assignments before the start of class.**
- ÿ **Actively participate in all class discussions.**
- ÿ **Write weekly essays.**
 - v Except when you are leading a class discussion (see below), you are responsible for submitting a weekly response paper (1-2 pages, see McAloon style sheet). A reading guide is provided to assist you in composing these essays.
 - v *Please note:* because these writing assignments serve the purpose of helping you prepare for classroom discussions, late submissions are not accepted. In cases of excused absences, students are encouraged to meet with the professor to discuss extra-credit possibilities.
- ÿ **Lead class discussions.**
 - v Either individually or in teams, you are responsible for leading class discussions throughout the semester. At the end of each meeting, members of the seminar evaluate your facilitation.
 - v The week you lead a class discussion, you DO NOT write a weekly response paper; however, you prepare and submit an LTD (Learning Through Discussion) synthesis paper (see handout). You are encouraged to use this LTD synthesis paper to facilitate your leadership of the class discussion.
- ÿ **Write an integration paper.**
 - v Students in pastoral degree programs write a reflection paper (5 pages) based upon the semester's readings – no further research required.
 - v Students in academic degree programs write a research paper that in length and content is appropriate to the level of their program. Students select a research project in consultation with the professor.
 - v All written materials, including all final papers, are due (Alma mailbox) by 5pm, Friday, May 19, 2006. Late submissions are not accepted. Students who cannot meet this deadline are responsible for following the JSTB protocol for requesting an incomplete.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

30%	Weekly Essays
30%	Final Integration Paper
20%	Class Discussions Leadership (peer evaluated)
20%	Class Participation

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS

February 2: Access, print, and read before the first class Sandra M. Schneiders, "Religion and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?" *The Santa Clara Lectures*, Santa Clara University 6/2 (February 6, 2000), 1-26. Go to: <<http://scu.edu/ignatiancenter/bannan/eventsandconferences/lectures/archives/schneiders.cfm>>

February 9 & 16: Elizabeth A. Dreyer, *EARTH CRAMMED WITH HEAVEN*.

February 23 and March 2: Richard Foster, *CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE*.

March 9 & 16: Dean Brackley, *THE CALL TO DISCERNMENT IN TROUBLED TIMES*.

March 23: Richard M. Gula, *THE CALL TO HOLINESS: EMBRACING A FULLY CHRISTIAN LIFE*.

March 30: Reading Week. No Class.

April 6: Sandra M. Schneiders, *SELLING ALL*.

April 13: Holy Week. No Class.

April 20: Sandra M. Schneiders, *SELLING ALL* (continued).

April 27 & May 4: Flora Wilson Bridges, *RESURRECTION SONG: AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY*.

May 11 Donna Freitas and Jason King, *SAVE THE DATE: A SPIRITUALITY OF DATING....*

May 18: Thomas Ryan, *RECLAIMING THE BODY IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY*.

[January 9, 2006]