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WBU Online

School of Christian Studies

**UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT**

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

**COURSE NUMBER & NAME:**

THST5301VC01 Christian Spirituality

**TERM:**

Spring 1, 2021

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. Gary Mitchell

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:**

WBU Online

**COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

Meeting day & time: Asynchronous, Virtual Campus

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Research and analysis of the history of Christian spiritual reflection, focusing on women and men who have reflected deeply on the Christian life with God and its implications; emphasis on critical engagement with a range of classic texts of Christian spirituality, both devotional and contemplative in nature, with a goal to enhance and deepen personal faith.

**PREREQUISITE:** None

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL:**

* *Christian Spirituality* by Alister E. McGrath, Blackwell Publishing, 1999, ISBN-13: 978-0-631-21281-2
* *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* by Bernard McGinn, Modern Library, ISBN-13: 9780812974218
* *Christian Spirituality: The Classics* edited by Arthur Holder, Routledge, ISBN-13: 9780415776028
* *The Holy Bible*

**COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:**

Students will be able to

* Recognize the necessity that Christianity be a way of life, not merely a set of beliefs or values.
* Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of devotional and contemplative forms of Christian spirituality as a means of discipleship and enhancing and deepening faith.
* Research and discuss the history of Christian spiritual reflection, by engaging primary sources, considered classics, by women and men who have reflected deeply on the Christian life and its implications.
* Examine the Christian spirituality of key Christians in the history of the Church.
* Evaluate the significance and methodology of spiritual formation for the individual Christian and congregation in light of biblical materials, theological considerations, and historical practices.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

As stated in the Wayland Catalog, students enrolled at one of the University’s external campuses should make every effort to attend all class meetings. All absences must be explained to the instructor, who will then determine whether the omitted work may be made up. When a student reaches that number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will so advise the student and file an unsatisfactory progress report with the campus executive director. Any student who misses 25 percent or more of the regularly scheduled class meetings may receive a grade of F in the course. Additional attendance policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the University’s attendance policy.

**STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

**DISABILITY STATEMENT:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291-3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:**

#### \*Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:

1. The course will be composed of reading assignments, discussion forums, a personal devotional or contemplative writing project, a critical assessment and evaluation of a classical writing by a man or woman who have reflected deeply on the Christian life, and an analytical book review during the semester.
2. **Reading Assignments**: Students will read chapters as listed in the schedule of readings and tests. Assigned textbook readings as indicated in the schedule must be completed on a weekly basis in order for you to participate meaningfully in discussion board activities. Active participation in an online forum is measured by posting at least **four substantial comments** per forum (not including the Prayer Requests & Praise forum). Comments may be replies to posted questions or to the responses of other students. Participation in discussion board forums will count for 100 points of the final grade (20% of final grade).
3. **Reflective Critique Written Assignment**: Students will submit via Blackboard a 5-10 page (double-spaced), reflective (critical evaluation) paper on the writing of a post-New Testament, deeply spiritual Christian writer (a list of these may be found in McGuinn’s book as well as Holder’s book). The paper should include a title page and a bibliography page. References must be cited in Turabian style. The paper will consist of three parts: (1) a summary/highlights of the writing; (2) critical evaluation of the writing; and (3) personal application of the writing to student's life. The completed written assignment will be **DUE FEBRUARY 21. Any paper not submitted on time will automatically lose one point per day for each day that it is late.** This paper amounts to 100 points (20% of the final grade).
4. **Compare/Contrast Written Assignment:** Students will submit via Blackboard a 5-10 page (double-spaced), compare-and-contrast between two classic Christian mystics and their writings. The paper should include a title page and a bibliography page (done in Turabian style) and consist of three parts as well: (1) summary/highlights of the two writings to be compared; (2) comparison/contrast of style and thought of the two writers/writings; and (3) personal impact of the writings to the student’s life and spiritual journey.

The completed written assignment will be **DUE MARCH 6.** This paper amounts to 100 points (20% of the final grade).

1. **Book Review:** At the beginning of the course, students will read Alister McGrath’s book, *Christian Spirituality*, and submit a 5-page summary and analytical review of the book (in terms of what was either problematic as well as most beneficial or helpful). It must have a title page and bibliography page (even if McGrath’s book is the only one listed). This review will be worth 100 points (20% of the final grade). **DUE FEBRUARY 7**
2. **Personal Devotional/Contemplative Project:** As you are reading through the contemplative writings of classic Christian mystics, I hope you would have the urge to jot down your own devotional or contemplative thoughts about your personal faith and your life in Christ. So to help you with that project, please submit a 2-3 page essay expressing those thoughts and ideas. Upload the essay via Blackboard for grading. And if you feel led, please feel free to share it with your classmates via the Discussion Board. Submission of this project counts 100 points (up to 20% of the final grade). **DUE FEBRUARY 28**

**Course Evaluation (Method of Determining Grade)**

Grading will be based on the following scale: Students will have the opportunity to accumulate up to 500 points during the semester. This is how they can be earned:

Reflective Writing Critique = 100 points *(20% of final grade)*

Compare/Contrast Paper = 100 points *(20% of final grade)*

Analytical Book Review = 100 points *(20% of final grade)*

Discussion Forum = 100 points *(20% of final grade)*

Devotional Essay Project = 100 points *(20% of final grade)*

The grading scale then would be as follows: A = 450-500 points; B = 400-449 points; C = 350-399 points; D = 300-349 points; and F = 299 and below.

##### University Grading System

A 90-100 I INCOMPLETE\*\*

B 80-89 Cr FOR CREDIT

C 70-79 NCr NO CREDIT

D 60-69 WP WITHDRAWAL PASSING

F BELOW 60 WF WITHDRAWAL FAILING

W WITHDRAWAL

\*\*A grade of incomplete is changed if the deficiency is made up by midterm of the next regular semester; otherwise, it becomes "F". This grade is given only if circumstances beyond the student's control prevented completion of work during the semester enrolled and attendance requirements have been met. A grade of "CR" indicates that credit in semester hours was granted but no grade or grade points were recorded.

**Grade Appeal Statement**: “Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.”

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

## *Course Outline and Calendar*

The student is responsible for reading the assignments before the class session. The instructor reserves the right to give quizzes over the reading assignments at his discretion.

**Week 1 (January 11 – 17)**

Introduction to Course/syllabus review

Begin reading McGrath’s book – Book report is due February 7

Begin readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: “Preface” and “Introduction”

Begin readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics* – Read “Editor’s Introduction” and Chapter 1 “Origen” (pages 1-12)

Respond to Discussion Board prompts for the week

**Week 2 (January 18 – 24)**

Complete reading McGrath’s book – report is due February 7

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part One: Section 1: “Biblical Interpretation” (pages 3-46)

Continue readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*: Read Chapter 4 “Augustine” (pages 37-48), plus another of your choice from Chapters 2-5

Continue to respond to Discussion Board forums

**Week 3 (January 25 – 31)**

Continue reading/writing up report on McGrath’s book

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part One: Section 2: “Asceticism and Purgation” (pages 47-77)

Section 3: “Prayer, Liturgy, and Sacraments” (pages 79-121)

Continue readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*: Read Chapter 6 “Benedict of Nursia” (pages 62-73), plus one of your choice from Chapters 7-9

Continue to respond to Discussion Board forums

**Week 4 (February 1 – 7)**

Complete the writing up of report on McGrath’s book

Begin work on Reflective Critique paper – due February 21

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part One: Section 4: “Inner and Outer Practices” (pages 123-148)

Continue readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*: Read Chapter 10 “Bonaventure” (pages 111-123), plus one of your choice from Chapters 11-13

Continue to respond to Discussion Board forums

**Book Review Report Due (McGrath’s *Christian Spirituality*) on February 7**

**Week 5 (February 8 – 14)**

Work on Reflective Critique paper – due February 21

Begin work on Devotional/Contemplative Project – due February 28

Begin work on Compare/Contrast paper – due March 6

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part One: Section 5: “Mystical Itineraries” (pages 149-187)

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part Two: Section 6: “Living the Trinity” (pages 191-220) and Section 7: “Encountering Christ” (pages 221-250)

Continue readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*: Read Chapter 14 “Anonymous” (pages 160-171), plus another of your choice from Chapters 15-17

Continue to respond to Discussion Board forums

**Week 6 (February 15 – 21)**

Complete work on Reflective Critique paper – due February 21

Continue to work on Devotional/Contemplative Project – due February 28

Continue to work on Compare/Contrast paper – due March 6

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part Two: Section 8: “Love and Knowledge” (any 2 excerpts, pages 251-280), Section 9: “Positive and Negative Ways to God” (any 2 excerpts, pages 281-308), and Section 10: “Vision, Contemplation, and Rapture” (any 4 excerpts, pages 309-364)

Continue readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*: Read Chapter 18 “Teresa of Avila” (pages 209-220), plus Chapter 19 “John of the Cross” (pages 221-232); Read Chapter 22 “Madam Jeanne Guyon” (pages 257-268), plus Chapter 23 “Jonathan Edwards” (pages 269-280)

Continue to respond to Discussion Board forums

**Reflective Critique Written Assignment Due on February 21**

**Week 7 (February 22 – 28)**

Complete work on Devotional/Contemplative Project – due February 28

Continue work on Compare/Contrast paper – due March 6

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part Two: Section 11: “Distress and Dereliction” (any 2 excerpts, pages 365-393), Section 12: “Deification and Birthing” (any 2 excerpts, pages 395-425), and Section 13: “Union with God” (any 4 excerpts, pages 427-477)

Continue readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*: Read Chapter 24 “Soren Kierkegaard” (pages 281-292; Read Chapter 28: “Dietrich Bonhoeffer” (pages 329-340)

Continue to respond to Discussion Board forums

**Personal Devotional/Contemplative Project – Due February 28**

**Week 8 (March 1 – 6)**

Complete work on Compare/Contrast paper – due March 6

Continue readings from *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*: Part Three: Section 14: “Mysticism and Heresy” (pages 481-517) and Section 15: “Contemplation and Action” (pages 519-551)

Continue readings from *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*: Read Chapter 30: “Thomas Merton” (pages 353-364)

Begin to wrap up Discussion Board forums

**Discussion Board Reflection on Texts & Course**

**Compare/Contrast Written Paper Due – 11:59 p.m. CDT March 6**

**CONGRATULATIONS! JOB WELL DONE!**