



**WBUonline Campus
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:

MNST 5160 VC01 The Practice of Spiritual Disciplines: Hearing Movies As Prayers

TERM & DATES:

Spring 2 2024 Mar 23 – May 16, 2026

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. J. M. Givens Jr.
Professor of Theological Studies
Ben and Bertha Mieth Professor of Missions

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office phone: 806.291.1166 (assistant 806.291.1160)

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Mobile phone: 806.292.3957

OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:

Flores Bible Building office suite

Office Hours will be posted in the Instructor Info section of Blackboard

COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

Asynchronous interaction with specific deadlines managed through [Blackboard](#)

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Introduction to one or more spiritual disciplines of the Christian life, discussed and practiced within a weekly spiritual formation small group. Note: May be repeated when content varies.

The discipline for this term is prayer as considered through the cultural expressions of cinematic movies.

PREREQUISITE:

MNST 5301 or THST 5301 or similar undergraduate courses

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL:

Title	Editor/Author	Publisher	Year	ISBN
<i>Movies Are Prayers: How Films Voice Our Deepest Longings</i>	Josh Larsen	InterVarsity	2017	9780830844784

Bible	Any modern translation recognized by mainstream Christianity
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NOTE: There is an Automatic eBook already in the Blackboard classroom – click on the menu link for information. Should you wish to purchase a print copy remember to opt out by the date listed in Blackboard. It might be cheaper.

- Internet Equipped Computer
 1. Must conform to [minimum recommended settings](#) identified by Virtual Campus
 2. Should use compatible browser and have [correct settings](#) as recommended by Blackboard
 3. Must utilize WBU [student email account](#) for official university communications
- WBU Blackboard Course Management Software
 1. All assignments and other class issues will be available through Blackboard.
 2. WBUonline technical support can assist you with log in issues, such as username and password.
 3. Contact to technical support is available on the login page of Blackboard. Support is 24/7 support by phone and available also by chat or creating a case.

COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

The student will

1. Describe the spiritual significance and benefits to the Christian faith of the spiritual discipline practiced for the term.
2. Demonstrate an appreciation that Christianity is a way of life, not merely a set of beliefs or values, by the sharing of practical examples of the impact of the spiritual discipline upon daily life.
3. Reflect on how the spiritual discipline impacts their lives in their daily decisions and relationships.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance for online courses is defined fully in the [university catalog](#).
2. Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses.
3. Student “attendance” in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus (completing weekly assignments).
4. Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.
5. Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 3 or more weeks of an 11 week term, may receive an F for that course.
6. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given term is considered a "no-show" and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus.
7. When a student reaches a number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will submit a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress to the student’s WBU student email account and to appropriate university personnel.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Read Wayland Baptist University’s [policy on academic integrity](#), as you will be held to it in this course. There is a no tolerance for plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

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 Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:

1. *Discussion Boards.* Students will read assigned chapters and participate in discussion with classmates and professor each week.
2. *Review of Movies.* Students will watch one movie each week related to the type of prayer discussed in the assigned chapter. Students will write a journal entry about how the movie expresses prayer or causes one to reflect on the spiritual life from a specific frame of reference.
3. *Final Paper.* Students will write a final reflective paper on the thesis that movies are prayers, discussing why they agree or do not agree with the author on this proposition. They will also discuss what they have learned from the consideration of various films during the term—especially how to see and appreciate the human longing for God and the work of the Spirit within these works of art.

GRADING CRITERIA

1. University Grading Scale	2. Computation of Final Grade	
	a. Weekly Discussion:	35%
Cr Credit	b. Journal Entries and Interactions:	35%
NCr No Credit	c. Final Reflective Paper:	30%

The grade for the capstone course is Credit/Non-credit. The grade for each individual assignment, however, will be based on the university grading scale. There is no format to allow late submissions of material and evaluations on the self and peer assessment tool, so timely work is essential. **Students must complete the course with a minimum average of 70 for the assignments.**

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Topics for discussion; specific assignments will be posted weekly in Blackboard.

Week	Topic	Assignment
1	Movies are Prayers? Movies as Prayers of Praise	chs. 1-2
2	Movies as Prayers of Yearning	ch. 3
3	Movies as Prayers of Lament	ch. 4
4	Movies as Prayers of Anger	ch. 5
5	Movies as Prayers of Confession	ch. 6
6	Movies as Prayers of Reconciliation	ch. 7
7	Movies as Prayers of Meditation and Contemplation	ch. 9
8	Reflection: Prayer as Journey	ch. 11