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Virtual 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 Spiritual Discipline: Practice of Fasting

**TERM:**

Winter, 2019-20

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. Gary Mitchell

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Office phone: (575) 763-0535

WBU Email: mitchellg@wbu.edu

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**OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:**

M/T/W/TH/F 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

WBU-Clovis Campus, 810 E. 21st Street, Suite A-6, Clovis, NM 88101

**COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

Meeting day & time: Asynchronous, Virtual Campus

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Introduction to one or more spiritual disciplines oriented toward the inner life of the Christian, practiced within a weekly spiritual formation small group of M.Div. students. ***To be taken in the second semester of enrollment in the Master of Divinity program.***

**PREREQUISITE:** MNST 5301 Spiritual Formation or THST 5301 Christian Spirituality

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL:**

* **Required Texts**
* *Fasting* by Scot McKnight, Thomas Nelson, Nashville: 2009, ISBN-13: 9780849946059
* *The Holy Bible*

**Optional Texts/Resources**

* *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard J. Foster, HarperCollins, ISBN-10: 0060628391; ISBN-13: 978-0060628390
* *The Believer’s Prayer Manual: A Classic Study on Prayer* by Gary Mitchell, Redemption Press, ISBN-13: 9781632328731
* **Access to WBU Learning Resources:** Click on link at left entitled "Wayland Library"; Email Distance Librarian Sally Quiroz ([lrcref@wbu.edu](mailto:lrcref@wbu.edu)) about having books mailed to you.
* **Internet links:** See "Web Resources" tab.
* **Class message board:** See “Announcements” and "Discussion Board" tab.
* **Email:** All students will need to set up and use their Wayland student email account.

**COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Students will be able to

1. Describe the spiritual and physical significance and benefits of fasting as a spiritual discipline of the Christian faith.
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 in daily life.
3. Reflect on how the inward discipline of fasting impacts their lives both spiritually and physically in their daily decisions and relationships.

**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:**

1. The course will be composed of reading assignments and corresponding exercises/projects each week as well as interacting with fellow colleagues via discussion forums, involving the areas of prayer and meditation during the semester.
2. **Reading Assignments/ Discussion Board Forums**: Students will read chapters as listed in the schedule of readings and complete weekly assignments/projects at the end of the chapters or as assigned by the instructor. Assigned textbook readings and exercises as indicated in the schedule should 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 (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.
3. Throughout the course, students will read the textbook, *Fasting*, and will complete any exercises or projects corresponding to the assigned reading and then respond within two weeks to various Discussion Board items prompted by the textbook readings.
4. During the course of the assigned readings, students will select a personal fasting project, such as: carrying out a one- or three-day fast for a specified purpose; developing and following a plan for regular, public or frequent fasts during the semester or coming year; or preparing and conducting an inductive Bible study on fasting and prayer. **Personal spiritual discipline project report is due by** **February 9.**

Projects should be reported on a form provided by the instructor in Blackboard as well as shared with the group through a Discussion Board forum.

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

Although this one-hour course is a credit/noncredit class, grading within the class will be based on the following scale: Students will have the opportunity to accumulate up to 200 points during the semester. This is how they can be earned:

Discussion Board Forums = 100 points *(50% of final grade)*

Weekly Readings/Project Report = 100 points *(50% of final grade)*

To receive credit for the class, the student must earn 140 points or higher (70%). No grades will be given except credit or noncredit.

##### 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 (November 11 – 17)**

Introduction to Course/syllabus review

Welcome to the Practice of Fasting/Share Prayer Requests via Discussion Board Forum

Begin reading McKnight’s book: Foreword/Introduction (McKnight, ix-xxii).

**Week 2 (November 18 – 24)**

Read: Chapters 1 & 2 – Fasting and Body Image; and Fasting as Body Talk (McKnight, 1-23)

Begin responding to Discussion Board items, such as the prayer requests, current assignments, especially the forum pertaining to the chapters you just read.

**THANKSGIVING BREAK (November 25 – December 1)**

**Week 3 (December 2 – December 8)**

Read: Chapters 3 & 4 – Fasting as Body Turning; and Fasting as Body Plea (McKnight, 24-50)

Continue with your responses on the Discussion Board Forums, including the current week’s forum.

**Week 4 (December 9 – 15)**

Read: Chapters 5 & 6 – Fasting as Body Grief; and Fasting as Body Discipline (McKnight, 51-80)

After reading the material, respond or reflect on the questions for this week in Discussion Board.

**Week 5 (December 16 – 22)**

Read: Fasting as Body Calendar; and Fasting as Body Poverty (McKnight, 81-111).

Continue working on Discussion Board items.

**CHRISTMAS BREAK (December 23-January 5 – Christmas Holidays)**

**Week 6 (January 6 – 12)**

Read: Chapters 9 & 10 – Fasting as Body Contact; and Fasting as Body Hope (McKnight, 112-130).

Continue responding to Discussion Board forums.

**Week 7 (January 13 – 19)**

Read: Chapter 11 (McKnight, 133-146)

This week, if you haven’t started on your fasting project, now would be a good time to get started and to start wrapping it up by the end of the term.

Continue with your responses to Discussion Board items.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday January 20 – no assignments / no class this day**

**Week 8 (January 21 – 26)**

Read: Chapter 12 – Fasting and its Benefits (McKnight, 147-155)

Continue working on your fasting project. If you need additional resources, see Richard Foster’s classic book, *Celebration of Discipline,* John Piper’s book, *A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer,* or my book, *The Believer’s Prayer Manual: A Classic Study on Prayer* (see Chapter 11: Fasting and Prayer).

Continue working on your Discussion Board responses.

**Week 9 (January 27 – February 2)**

Read: Chapter 13 – Fasting and the Body/Conclusion (McKnight, 156-168)

After reading the material on fasting, if you haven’t already done it, try to schedule either a one- or a three-day fast sometime during the following week, and share your results or discoveries with the group via the Discussion Board format.

**Week 10 (February 3 – 9)**

Read: No special reading assigned for this week.

After reading McKnight’s book, use this time to complete your chosen fast project for the course and to evaluate its benefits and significance. Reflect on your experience or discoveries in a Discussion Board forum.

**Personal Spiritual Disciplines Project Report is due February 9.**

**Week 11 (February 10 – 15)**

In lieu of a FINAL EXAM, share in a final Discussion Board forum, your evaluation of what you have learned or benefitted from either your study or experiences with fasting during the course of this study and practice.

**Course policies**:  
***Respect*.** Because the university classroom is a place designed for the free exchange of ideas, we will frequently encounter the opinions of others which may seem novel and, occasionally, outlandish. We must show respect for one another in all circumstances. I will show respect for you by not belittling or ignoring you. You will show respect for me by giving attention to assignments. We will show respect for one another by exhibiting patience and courtesy in our exchanges.

***Student rights*.** Your rights as a student have been outlined in the current WBU catalogue. If you feel that your rights have been infringed upon in this class, please inform me. If you have a disability which will require particular attention on my part, you must inform me as soon as possible.