



**WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
VIRTUAL CAMPUS
SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES**

Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement

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

**THST 5160 VC01
THE PRACTICE OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:
READINGS IN THE DESERT FATHERS AND MOTHERS
WINTER 2019
November 12, 2019 – February 16, 2020**

Instructor: David C. Maltsberger

Instructor information:

- University Phone: 210-590-5656 (*email is a much more reliable contact method*)
- Email: david.maltsberger@wbu.edu
- Office hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays from 1pm-4pm
- Office Location: San Antonio, Main Campus, Rm 154
- Questions received by email responded to within 24 hours.

Class Meeting Time:

- Since this is an online class, class meeting times will be observed by regular and timely participation in online activities every week.
- There are specific due dates per assignments.
- There will be weekly participation in class events with due dates observed. Please plan on regular weekly participation in the class.

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.

Prerequisite: MNST 5301 or THST 5301 or similar undergraduate courses

Required Textbooks and Resources

- John Chryssavgis, *In the Heart of the Desert*, Revised. Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2008. ISBN: 978-1-933316-56-7
- Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings Of The Desert Fathers (The Apophthegmata Patrum): The Alphabetic Collection*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1975. ISBN: 9780879079598
- Additional articles or documents in PDF format in the COURSE CONTENT section of Blackboard

Email: All students will need to set up and use their Wayland student email account.

Course Outcome Competencies: Students will be able to

1. *Describe the spiritual significance and benefits to the Christian faith of devotional and/or contemplative spirituality, focused on the text examined 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 devotional and/or contemplative reflection upon daily life.*
3. *Reflect on how the practices and concepts within the assigned text impact their lives in their daily decisions and relationships.*

Attendance Requirements

- As an online class, your attendance will be determined by weekly login to the class website and consistent participation in assignments.
- The Division's "no cut" policy allows no unexcused absences.
- No student missing more than 25% of the class meetings (including both excused and unexcused absences) can pass the course. Thus, if you miss 3 weeks of weekly assignments and quizzes, you will fail this class.
- 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.

Statement on Plagiarism and 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

- The course will be composed of reading assignments and reflective exercises each week as well as interacting with fellow colleagues via discussion forums, involving the history of the material, its personal effect on the reader, and the spiritual impact of the readings of the self.
 - Each week's assignment will be posted in the COURSE CONTENT tab in the appropriate week's folder.
 - Instructions and links to assignments will be found under each week.
 - There are three primary assignments: 1) Weekly collection of readings; (2) A Discussion Board reading and contribution; 2) A Weekly Written Assignment that includes analysis and personal reflection.
 - A Final Essay on Week 11.

For Complete expectations on assignments, see the Class Home Page on Blackboard. On the main menu, click COURSE CONTENT. This tab will contain info concerning assignments and expectations.

Discussion Board

1. **Discussion Question Post.** Students will read the various reading assignments each week 1-10. A Discussion Board (DB) will be set-up on Blackboard for students to post **thoughtful and reflective responses to two discussion questions**, which will be made available by the professor through the lecture or through the DB. The DB Response to the professor must be posted by Wednesday, 11:59 PM of the week it is due, allowing for other students to respond to posts later in the week.
2. **Student Response Post.** In addition, every week each student must post at least two (2) thoughtful and reflective responses to other student posts. Students will have until 11:59 on Sunday evenings to post a response to other students' posts.
3. **Late Responses.** Please be aware that the success of any Discussion Board is significantly dependent on students posting their answers/responses in a timely fashion. As such, students will not be permitted to post their answers/responses late. Late posts will not be counted toward the final grade.
4. Participation in discussion board forums will count for 100 points of the final grade.

Weekly Written Assignments

Throughout the course, students will read *In the Heart of the Desert*, and will complete all exercises or projects corresponding to the assigned reading and then submit these materials to Dr. Maltsberger via Blackboard, as stipulated in the Weekly Assignment folder.

- Each week's assignment (ten total) will be worth ten possible points; these application assignments will therefore count for 100 points of the final grade (50% of the total grade). Students are expected to follow instructions carefully in completion of these assignments.

The Final Essay

A final reflective essay will be written during Week 11. This will draw upon your personal journey through the texts, your gathered knowledge of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, and your self-evaluation and reflection. The essay will be valued at 100 points.

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 300 points during the semester. This is how they can be earned:

Discussion Board Forums	= 100 points
Application Assignments	= 100 points
Final Essay	= 100 points

To receive credit for the class, the student must earn 210 points or higher.

University Grading System

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F BELOW 60%
- I INCOMPLETE**

**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.

Student Grade Protection and Appeals

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 Executive Vice President/Provost to the 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 Outline and Calendar

The student is responsible for reading the assignments before the class session.

Week 1

- Introduction to Course/syllabus review
- Welcome to the Practice of Inward Spiritual Disciplines/Please introduce Yourself via Discussion Board Forum
- *Desert*, xvii – 18; *Sayings*, xvii-xxii
- Written Assignment - “Evolving Faith and Practice: The Rise of the Desert Experience”

Week 2

- *Desert*, 19-32; *Sayings*, pgs. 1-19
- Written Assignment: “The Body and Early Monasticism”
- Participate in discussion board

Week 3

- *Desert*, 33-40; *Sayings*, pgs. 20-31
- Written Assignment – Biographical Sketch
- Participate in discussion board

Week 4

- *Desert*, 41-52; *Sayings*, pgs. 31-50
- Written Assignment – “The Role of the Abba and Amma”
- Participate in discussion board

Week 5

- *Desert*, 53-68; *Sayings*, pgs. 51-72
- Written Assignment – “The Challenges of Withdrawal and Asceticism”
- Participate in discussion board

Week 6

- *Desert*, 69-78; *Sayings*, pgs. 73-96
- Written Assignment - “Cell Phones, Social Media, and Separation”
 - Participate in discussion board

Week 7

- *Desert*, 79-84; *Sayings*, pgs. 96-111
- Written Assignment – “The Desert Mothers: Gender and Spiritual Reflection”
- Participate in discussion board

Week 8

- *Desert*, 85-92; *Sayings*, pgs. 112-138
- Written Assignment – “Issues of Character and Self in the *Sayings of the Fathers.*”
- Participate in discussion board

Week 9

- *Desert*, 93-102; *Sayings*, pgs. 138-152
- Written Assignment – “Simeon the Stylite and the Spread of the Withdrawal Experience”
- Participate in discussion board

Week 10

- *Desert*, 103-110; *Sayings*, pgs. 163-180
- Written Assignment – “Sharing the Sayings:” The Desert Fathers and Mothers in Your Church”
- Participate in discussion board

Week 11

- Final Essay