

STMM 593-04 Contemporary Expressions of Monastic Spirituality SYLLABUS

STM: Summer Quarter 2009 – July 27-31, 2009

Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. 4:30 p.m. (with 1-½ hour lunch break)

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Course Description:

Monastic spirituality offers the contemporary world a set of ancient practices, deeply rooted in the Christian tradition, which are profoundly counter-cultural and offer us life-giving ways for being in the world. They call us to contemplative ways of being in a hurried world, to welcome in the stranger as Christ in an age of increasing fear of the other, to a commitment to rootedness in a time of mobility, and to a healthy asceticism in response to the worship of consumerism.

In this course we will briefly explore the roots of Christian monastic tradition, especially in its Benedictine form. The main focus of our time will be an examination and critical appropriation of monastic practices and virtues through reading, discussion, experience, and reflection. We will consider the Liturgy of the Hours, *lectio divina*, contemplative prayer, creating a Rule of Life, hospitality, humility, asceticism, a balance of work and prayer, community and solitude, and the vows of conversion, stability and obedience as ways to ground a spiritual life that nurtures justice. The course will also examine some of the flourishing contemporary, ecumenical movements such as Oblates and “new monasticism,” as well as implications of monastic spirituality for healthy ministry, and openings for dialogue with other religious traditions.

Please do NOT register for this course if you are unable to commit to all five days of class sessions as well as completing all of the readings in advance and the assigned papers on time.

Course Objectives:

- To become familiar with an historical overview & the contemporary practice of monastic spirituality
- To evaluate elements of monastic practice in light of contemporary issues
- To explore the relevance of monastic spiritual tradition for ministry
- To articulate the student’s own relationship to monastic spiritual practices and virtues

Course Requirements:

First Five Requirements Constitute 50% of the Student's Course Grade

- Student Introduction, reasons for taking the course, and personal hopes & expectations posted to Angel Class website by **Monday, July 20, 2009.**
- Response to at least three other students' introductions on Angel by **Friday, July 24, 2009** (connections, resonances, etc).
- **Two One-Page** (single-spaced) **Responses to the Readings** (see below) submitted to Online Drop-Box by **Friday, July 24, 2009.**
- All required readings completed ahead of the course start date of **July 27, 2009**-- Please read all these materials with both your head and your heart. Take notes (not to be handed in) and keep track of questions, challenges, and insights that emerge for you.
- Attendance at **all** ten class sessions (morning and afternoon) and active, informed participation in large and small group discussions and exercises.

Final Requirement Constitutes 50 % of the Student's Course Grade

- Students will each get approval for their **Final Integrative Project** topic from the instructor and then post to the Angel Course Website by **Friday, July 31, 2009.**
- **Final Integrative Paper** 8-10 Double-Spaced pages (see below)) submitted to Online Drop-Box by **Monday, August 3, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.**

Angel Course Website

Because of the intense nature of our class sessions, we will not be using Angel extensively for discussion, but there will be several items posted there by both students and instructor including Student Introductions, Students' Final Paper Topic, Class Lecture Notes, and Links to Articles and Resources. You will also be submitting your Reading Responses and Final Paper to the Angel Online Drop-Box.

Paper One: Responses to Reading – Due Friday, July 24, 2009

Select two of the books required for class and write a one-page, single-spaced response to each one highlighting portions that especially resonated with or challenged the student. Submit online to the Drop-Box.

Paper Two: Final Integrative Project – Due Monday, August 3, 2009

The student will design a 7-10 page(double-spaced) final project integrating the ideas presented in class with the student's specific interest in monastic spirituality. It may include creative expression, but must demonstrate an active engagement with the course readings and class discussions. (The student must submit the idea to the

instructor for approval prior to ***Friday, July 31st*** and then post their topic online to the Angel Course Website Discussion Board.)

Criteria for Grading Papers:

- Evidence of authentic personal engagement with the material
- Specific references made to both the class lectures/discussions and the readings
- Clarity of your writing style

Required Readings:

Books:

Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict, by Esther DeWaal (Liturgical Press, 2001)

Finding the Monk Within: Great Monastic Values for Today, by Edward C. Sellner (HiddenSpring, 2008)

School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of the New Monasticism, edited by the Rutba House (Wipf & Stock, 2005)

Benedict's Dharma: Buddhists Reflect on the Rule of St. Benedict, edited by Patrick Henry (Continuum, 2002)

Music of Silence: A Sacred Journey Through the Hours of the Day, by David Steindl-Rast (Ulysses Press, 2001)

Additional Readings and Resources Will be Posted on the Angel Class Website

Recommended Readings:

Lectio Divina: Contemplative Awakening and Awareness, by Christine Valters Paintner & Lucy Wynkoop (Paulist Press, 2008)

New Seeds of Contemplation by Thomas Merton (New Directions, 2007)

The Cloister Walk by Kathleen Norris (Riverhead Trade, 1997)

The Rule of St. Benedict, edited by Timothy Fry (Liturgical Press)

Tentative Schedule of Class Session Topics and Relevant Readings for Discussion:

(subject to instructor's revision)

Monday Morning: Introduction to Monastic Spirituality

History of Christian Monasticism

Monday Afternoon: Streams of Monastic Tradition: Benedictine, Celtic, and others

Prayer Practices: Liturgy of the Hours (Shaping Life with the Psalms)

Tuesday Morning: Monastic Vows: Stability, Conversion, and Obedience

Tuesday Afternoon: Contemplative Living & *Lectio Divina*/Silence/Solitude

Wednesday Morning: A Life of Balance: Work & Prayer, Community and Solitude

Wednesday Afternoon: Humility, Hospitality, Asceticism

Thursday Morning: Rule of Life

Thursday Afternoon: Contemporary Movements: New Monasticism, Oblates

Friday Morning: Openings for Dialogue with Other Traditions

Friday Afternoon: Implications of Monastic Spirituality for Healthy Ministry

Academic Honesty:

The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy concerning Academic Honesty as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook.

Students with disabilities:

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an invisible disability such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740.