

Longing for God? Christian Spirituality in Theological Perspective

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Dr. **Najib George Awad**
Office Location: 76 Sherman Street, Building of 'Faith in Practice'
Office, second floor

Mobile Phone Number: 860-987-8048
Email Address: nawad@hartsem.edu

- **Course Description:** This course endeavors to introduce the broad traditions of spirituality from different historical eras in Christian history; from Antiquity, to Medieval time, through to Renaissance/Reformation and then to Modern time. It aims to achieve this by exposing students to primary spiritual texts and then trying to highlight and extract the theological foundations and dimensions of the spiritual orientations in these texts, so that students will be introduced to theological hermeneutics in the study of spirituality. The primary goals of the course are for the students to learn the basic spiritual trends in Christianity, and to be able to assess every trend from a theological perspective and in light of the Christian theological tradition as a whole.

- **Course's Objectives:**

At the end of the course the students would:

- 1- Get exposed to conceptual, scriptural and historical understanding of the pluriform nature of Christian Spirituality
- 2- would have a chance to discover the link between Spirituality and theology and to discern their mutual importance to each other.
- 3- will try to read some primary spiritual texts written by different Christian figures at different eras and try to learn from them ideas on experiences of the relation with God and of faith.

-**Suggested Primary Readings:** there is no single textbook for this course and there are no required texts to be read *before* the beginning of the class. Students are required to read the assigned texts for every session during the semester (you will find them recorded

underneath the title of every session in the course's outline section, and you will be able to obtain a pdf copy of each text from SONISWEB).

- Course's Outline and Reading Assignments

I- Week One:

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| 1- Introducing the Course & Syllabus 2- On Christian Spirituality in the Course |
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I- Conceptual Framework

II- Week Two

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| 1- the Nature of Religious Experience (1): Metaphysical Approach [R.R.: Rudolf Otto, <i>The Idea of the Holy</i> , pp. 5-7; 12-30; 143-154] 2- the Nature of Religious Experience (2): Psychological Approach [R.R.: William James, <i>The Varieties of Religious Experience</i> , pp. 1-18] |
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II- Scriptural Framework

III- Week Three

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| 1- Spirituality in the Old Testament (1): General Overview [R.R.: Daniel Block, "The View from the Top: the Holy Spirit in the Prophets," in <i>Presence, Power and the Promise</i> , D. Firth and P. Wenger (eds.), pp. 175- 207] - Extra Session: 2- Spirituality in the Old Testament (2): Textual Samples [R.R.: Texts from the Bible: Abraham conversing with God; Jacob's Dream; Job; the Suffering Servant] |
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IV- Week Four

1- Spirituality in the New Testament (1): An Overview

[**R.R:** Bonnie Thurston, “The New Testament in Christian Spirituality,” in *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, pp. 55- 70]

- **Extra Session**

2- Spirituality in the New Testament (2): Samples

III- Historical Framework

V- Week Five

1- Spirituality in Roman Empire (100- 600 A.D.) (1): Overview

[**R.R:** A. Holder, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, pp, 73- 89]

- **Extra Session:**

2- Spirituality in Roman Empire (100- 600 A.D.) (2): Samples

[**R.R:** St. Anthony, *The Letters of St. Anthony the Great*, Lt. III, pp. 12-15; Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, Bk. 2, pp. 37-42; 76-82; 100-111; St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. I, pp. 7-8; Bk. V, pp. 15-16]

VI- Week Six

1- Spirituality in Byzantium & the East (600- 1700 A.D.) (1): Overview

[**R.R:** A. Holder, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, 90-105]

- **Extra Session:**

2- Spirituality in Byzantium & the East (600- 1700 A.D.) (2): Samples

[**R.R:** R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, pp. 355-256; A. Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 258-268; G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings*, pp. 36-38; A. Palmer, *Seventh Century in West-Syrian Chronicles*, pp. 236-239]

VII- Week Seven

1- Spirituality in Medieval West (600- 1450 A.D.) (1): Overview

[**R.R:** Holder, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, 106- 121]

- **Extra Session:**

2- Spirituality in Medieval West (600- 1450 A.D.) (2): Samples

[**R.R.:** Hildegard of Bingen, *Secrets of God*, “The Book of Divine Works,” pp. 62-67; 82-85; Thomas A Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, pp. 1-3; 6-7; 12-13; 15-36]

VIII- Week Eight

1- Spirituality from Renaissance to Modern Time (1450- 2000 A.D.) (1): Overview

[**R.R.:** Holder, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, 122-155]

- **Extra Session:**

2- Spirituality from Renaissance to Modern Time (1450- 2000 A.D.) (2): Samples

[**R.R.:** M. Luther, *Luther’s Spirituality*, pp. 4-5; Luther, *Luther’s Works: Devotional Writings*, pp. 183-186; Luther, *Conversations with Martin Luther*, pp. 210-211; Luther, *What Luther Says*, p. 1075; St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, pp. 15-17; 35-37; 146-149; T. Merton, *The Monastic Journey*, pp. 11-23; 167-177; D. Bonhoeffer, *Meditating on the Word*, pp. 98-100; Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, pp. 77-79; Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, pp. 347-349]

IV- Communal/ Churchly Framework

IX- Week Nine

1- Spirituality in Orthodox Christianity

[**R.R.:** T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 208-218; 264-273; 298-306]

2- Spirituality in Catholic Christianity

[**R.R.:** Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, Ch. I, II & V; and D. Tracy, “Recent Catholic Spirituality: Unity Amid Diversity,” in *Christian Spirituality*, L. Dupre and D. Saliers (eds.), pp. 143-173]

X- Week Ten

1- Spirituality in Lutheran Christianity

[**R.R.:** Timothy Wengert, *Centripetal Worship*, pp. 19-31; and David Scaer, “The Distinctive Spirituality of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,” in *Logia*, 2(8), 1999, pp. 9-11]

2- Spirituality in Reformed Christianity

[**R.R.:** Joel Beeke, “Calvin on Piety,” in *Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, D. McKim (ed.), pp. 125-152]

XI- Week Eleven

1- Spirituality in Anglican/Episcopalian Christianity

[**R.R:** J.R.H. Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition*, pp. 210-223; and Harvey H. Guthrie, “Anglican Spirituality: An Ethos and Some Issues,” in *Anglican Spirituality*, W. Wolf (ed.), pp. 1-16]

2- Anabaptist/Born-again Spirituality

[**R.R:** S. Murray, *The Naked Anabaptist*, pp. 109-127; 130-135; 138-141; 148-160]

XII- Week Twelve

1- Charismatic/Pentecostal Spirituality

[**R.R:** S. Land, “Pentecostal Spirituality: Living in the Spirit,” in *Christian Spirituality*, L. Dupre and D. Saliers (eds.), pp. 479- 499]

2- Black/African American Spirituality

[**R.R:** M. Battle, *The Black Church in America*, pp. 22-42; 163-182]

Reading Week & Easter...Reading Week & Easter....Reading Week & Easter

XIII- Week Thirteen

1- Spirituality & Inter-Faith Encounter

[**R.R:** Kwok Pui-Lan, “Interfaith Encounter,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, pp. 532- 549]

2- Conclusion and Evaluation.

- Course Requirements

1) **Assigned readings’ preparation and active class participation:** Students are required to read these texts as thoroughly and perceptively as they can and then to demonstrate an active class participation by coming to the sessions with questions or comments on them and the taught materials therein.

2) **Extra Sessions Reflections:** between week **three** and week **eight**, when the course will cover the theological aspects of spirituality in the Scripture and in the history of Christian thought, the instructor will invite the students into extra, one hour-long session during each one of these assigned weeks to reflect together on sample texts of spiritual pieces of writing that are relevant to the subject and historical period that are studied that week. The students must read these samples carefully and then ready themselves to contribute to these extra sessions responses to the following questions:

- 1) How is God imaged and understood in the spiritual imagination of the text's author?
- 2) How is the human life and condition are presented and understood in the spiritual imagination of the text's author?
- 3) what are the nature and characteristics of the God-human spiritual relation which the author presents in the text?
- 4) what is spirituality according to the presentation of the text's author?

2) **Book Review:** Students are required to write **4-6** pages-long book appraisals (2000-2500 words-long). The appraisal must:

- A- present a sufficient and accurate exposition of the book's main argument and claims.
- B- offer a perceptive critical assessment of these argument and claims
- C- end with a proposal on how such a book is valuable for today's readers on Christian Spirituality.

Students must submit this book appraisal to the instructor no later than the **week Fourteen (the last week)** of the course's schedule. The book the students must review should be one of the following texts:

- Sheldrake, Philip. *Spirituality: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Sheldrake, Philip. *Spirituality: A Guide for the Perplexed*, New York & London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.
- Ford, David. *The Shape of Living*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- Cunningham, Lawrence & Keith Egan. *Christian Spirituality*, New York: Paulist Press, 1996.
- Jones, Alan. *The Soul's Journey*, Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2001.
- Rolheiser, Ronald. *The Holy Longing: the Search for a Christian Spirituality*, 2014.

- Grading Division:

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| 1- reading's preparation and class participation | (40%) |
| 2- Extra Sessions Reflections: | (30%) |
| 3- Book Review | (30%) |

- Additional Policies:

1) Forbidden in the Classroom:

- mobile phones, unless shut down completely, are disallowed in the classroom.
- while bringing laptops or electronic Tablets is allowed for the purpose of recording or writing lecture notes, surfing the net or using any other program on the internet during the session is strictly forbidden.

2) Attendance: Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

3) Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the failure to give proper credit for the words or ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, and is strictly prohibited. Credit will not be given for written work in this course containing plagiarism, and plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the entire course. Please consult the Plagiarism Policy on pp. 56-57 of the Hartford Seminary Catalogue 2011-2012, and/or contact the instructor with questions in this regard.

- Selected Bibliography

The books enlisted here are by no means exhaustive of all the literature on Christian Spirituality that is available in the field. Students are encouraged to look for other primary and secondary literature and to use every theological book they believe is helpful for their presentations or their understanding of Christian Spirituality.

- A Kempis, Thomas, *The Imitation of Christ*, Aloysius Groot and Harold Bolton (trans.), Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003.
- Alexander, Donald L. *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- Battle, Michael. *The Black Church in America: African American Christian Spirituality*, Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2006.
- Bender, Harold S. *The Anabaptist Vision*, Waterloo: Herald Press, 2014.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Meditating on the Word*, D. Gracie (ed. & Trans.), Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1986.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*, J. Doherty (trans.), New York: Harper & Row, 1954.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, E. Bethge (ed.), New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- Clarke, John, O.C.S. (trans.), *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*. 3rd ed, Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1996.
- Cunningham, Lawrence S. (ed.), *Thomas Merton, Spiritual Master: The Essential Writings*, New York: Paulist, 1992.
- Cunningham, Lawrence & Keith Egan. *Christian Spirituality*, New York: Paulist Press, 1996.
- Davies, Oliver (ed. & trans.), *Meister Eckhart: Selected Writings*, London and New York: Penguin, 1995.
- Dillenberger, John (ed.), *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday,

- 1972.
- Dieter, M. et al. *Five Views on Sanctification*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.
 - Dupre, Louis and D.E. Saliers (eds.). *Christian Spirituality III: Post-Reformation and Modern*, New York: Crossroad, 1989, Vol. 18.
 - Eller, Cynthia, *Living in the Lap of the Goddess*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.
 - Evan B. Howard. *Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos Press, 2008.
 - Firth, David and Paul Wenger (eds.), *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.
 - Ford, David. *The Shape of Living*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
 - Gregg, Robert C., *Athanasius: The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, Classics of Western Spirituality New York: Paulist Press 1980.
 - Gregory of Nyssa. *The Life of Moses*, Abraham Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (trans.), New York: Harper Collins, 2006.
 - Hildegard of Binegn, *Secrets of God: Writings of Hildegard of Bingen*, Sabina Flanagan (trans.), Boston & London: Shambhala, 1996.
 - Holder, Arthur (ed.), *Christian Spirituality: the Classics*, London & New York: Routledge, 2010.
 - Holder Arthur (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, Malden: Blackwell, 2005.
 - Holt, Bradley. *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, 2nd ed., Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993.
 - Hoyland, Robert. *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1997.
 - James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Marston Gate: Renaissance Classics, 2012.
 - Julian of Norwich. *Revelations of Divine Love*, Elizabeth Spearing (trans. & ed.), New York: Penguin, 1999.
 - Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, Western Classics of Western Spirituality, Edmund Colledge (trans. & ed.), New York: Paulist Press, 1977.
 - Jones, Alan. *The Soul's Journey*, Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2001.
 - Jones, C. et al. *The Study of Spirituality*. New York: Oxford, 1986.
 - Krey, Philip and Peter Krey (trans & ed.). *Luther's Spirituality*, New York: Paulist Press, 2007.
 - Land, Steve J. *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, Cleveland, Ten: CPT Press, 2010.
 - Lovlace, Richard, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979.
 - Louth, Andrew. *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
 - Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works: Devotional Writings*, Martin Dietrich (ed.), Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969, Vol. 42.I.
 - Magill, F. and McGreal, I, *Christian Spirituality: The Essential Guide to the Most Influential Spiritual Writings of the Christian Tradition*. San Francisco: Harper& Row, 1988.
 - Maximus the Confessor. *Selected Writings*, George Berthold (trans.), New York: Paulist Press, 1985.
 - McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*, Malden: Blackwell, 1999.
 - McIntosh, Mark A., *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology*, Malden: Blackwell, 1998.
 - McKim, Donald K. (ed.). *Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
 - Merton, Thomas. *The Monastic Journey*, Patrick Hart (ed.), Kansas City: Sheed Andrews & McMeel, 1977.
 - Moorman, John R.H. *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition*, Springfield, IL: Templegate Publishers, 1983.
 - Murray, Stuart. *The Naked Anabaptist: the Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith*, Kitchener, ONT: Herald Press, 2010.
 - Nasr, Seyed Hossein, *Islamic Spirituality, Foundations*, New York: Herder and Herder, 2015.
 - Origen Adamantius, *Origen on Prayer*, USA: Beloved Publishing, 2015.
 - Otto, Rudolf, *The Idea of the Holy*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
 - Palaskow, Judith & Carol Christ (eds.), *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989.
 - Palmer, Andrew. *The Seven Century in Western-Syrian Chronicles*, Liverpool: Liverpool University

- Press, 1993.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart, *Christian Spirituality*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983.
 - Plass, Ewald (ed.). *What Luther Says: An Anthology*, Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, Vol. II.
 - Pope Paul VI, "Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution of the Church," in http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html
 - Powell, Samuel M., *The Impassioned Life: Reason and Emotion in the Christian Tradition*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016.
 - Reed, Angela H. *Quest for Spiritual Community*. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.
 - Rolheiser, Ronald. *The Holy Longing: the Search for a Christian Spirituality*, 2014.
 - Scorgie, Glen G, *A Little Guide to Christian Spirituality: Three Dimensions of Life with God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
 - Sheldrake, Philip. *Spirituality: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
 - Sheldrake, Philip. *Spirituality: A Guide for the Perplexed*, New York & London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.
 - Simonson, Harold (ed.), *Selected Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, 2nd ed., Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland, 2004.
 - Smith, Preserved (ed. & trans.). *Conversations with Martin Luther*, New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1979.
 - St. Anthony the Great, *The Letters of St. Anthony the Great*, Derwas J. Chitty (trans.), Oxford: SLG Press, 2014.
 - St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Henry Chadwick (trans.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
 - St. Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, Anthony Mottola (trans.), Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Image Books, 1964.
 - St. John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, K. Kavanaugh and O. Rodriguez (trans.), Washington: ICS Publications, 1991.
 - Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 2, Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. and Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. (trans.), Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1980.
 - Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, Allison Peers (trans. & ed.), New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946.
 - Thomas á Kempis. *The Imitation of Christ*, Aloysius Groot and Harold Bolton (trans.), Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003.
 - Thornton, John F & Susan B. Varenne (eds.), *Late Have I Loved Thee: Selected Writings of Saint Augustine on Love*, New York: Vintage Books, 2006.
 - Ware, Timothy (Kalestos). *The Orthodox Church*, London: Penguin, 1997.
 - Wengert, Timothy J. 9ed.), *Centripetal Worship*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007.
 - Wesley, John, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 2000.
 - Wiseman, James A., O.S.B. (trans. & ed.), *John Ruusbroec: The Spiritual Espousals and Other Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, New York: Paulist Press, 1985.
 - Wolf, William J. (ed.). *Anglican Spirituality*, Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982.