

Course #: RGP3272/6272HF
Course title: The Spiritual Journey
Instructor name: Dr. Geoffrey B. (Monty) Williams, S.J.
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Course Format:
13 x 2 hr. Classes

Course Description:

The course will look at the spiritual journey as it is depicted from scripture to the present day. It will examine texts from different religious traditions and cultures to explore the basic human understanding of a person as pilgrim.

Learning objectives:

- An exploration through spirituality of what it means to be human
- An examination of a history of spirituality
- An examination of the guides, compasses, maps and techniques of exploration of the territory called 'the spiritual life'

The course is of note: to those interested in spirituality both theoretical and practical; discernment; cultural history; narrative theology

The class will meet two hours a week for instruction. Class participation is required. Each student will submit 5 four page papers on topics derived from the class but go beyond what was presented. These papers will be assessed both for content and presentation.

Each worth is 15 % of the final mark. 15% will be given for intelligent class participation. 10% for an annotated bibliography of at least 5 books and 5 articles.

For graduate students there will be 5 four page papers, worth 40% of the total mark; a 12-16 page paper worth 30% of the total mark; and 10% for active, intelligent class participation beyond attendance; 10 % for an annotated bibliography of at least six books and 6 articles

Detailed Course Outline of Teaching Weeks

Week 1:

An introduction to the course: concepts; aims, objectives, requirements. Other forms of the spiritual journey: the labyrinth; journaling; dreams; the vision quest; rites of passage; readings of personal history. An example of the spiritual journey: The Joseph story in Genesis (the book of Genesis)

Week 2:

Moses and the Passover (The Book of Exodus)

Week 3:

Jesus: from incarnation to ascension in the gospels (The Gospels)

Week 4:

The Beatitudes (Matthew's Gospel Ch.5:1-16)

The Beatitudes in Matthew's gospel describe the stages of spiritual development in a Christian's life

Week 5:

This class will look at the genre of autobiography as it describes the spiritual journey (redeeming the time)

Week 6:

Rumi. (13 century)

The essential Rumi. Trans. By Coleman Barks (castle books, 1997)

The poetry of this 13th. C Sufi mystic describes significant moments of the spiritual life

Week 7:

The spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. (16th century) based on studies in the language of the autograph. Trans. Louis J. Puhl. The Ignition exercises carries one on a journey to an ever deepening union with the Christ in service to the Father

Week 8:

The Way of Faithfulness: Ignatius for Today

Week 9:

Songs of innocence and experience (1794) by William Blake

The rhyme of the ancient mariner (1798/1817) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

This week examines the internalisation of spiritual quest as explored in English romanticism, 1789-1815 with a nod to Jacques Lacan

Week 10:

Eric Erikson stages of psycho-social development transposed to the spiritual world

Week 11:

The Ox-Herding Pictures. These pictures from the Sung dynasty - 12th. C. -- trace the path to enlightenment in Zen Buddhism. See *zen flesh, zen bones*. Ed. Paul Reps. (Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1987)

Week 12:

Contemporary Versions (secular and sacred) of the spiritual journey

E.g. *The Stalker*. (Film directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, 1979).

This Russian film describes the journey of three men traveling through a post-apocalyptic wilderness called the zone to find a room with the potential to fulfill one's innermost desires. Summing up of course

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