Spiritual Formation, Part 1

Course Description
The spiritual formation of leaders is a key commitment of the Hazelip School of Theology and is central to the entire M.Div. program. The two courses of Spiritual Formation are designed to nurture the student’s personal participation in the formative work of the Holy Spirit for life and mission with God. Spiritual Formation, Part 1, focuses on our participation in the *life* of the Triune God, emphasizing the God and self/church relationship and the resulting *human formation* that occurs in union with God. Spiritual Formation, Part 2, focuses on our participation in the *mission* of the Triune God, and will emphasize the God, self/church, and world relationship and the *missional formation* that occurs in co-laboring with God in the world. The overall aim of both courses is to establish students in a spiritually-vital, sustainable way of life in union with the Triune God for mission in the contemporary context. This course is also designed to introduce students to the theological, historical, and ecclesial dynamics of Christian spirituality and spiritual formation. Both the personal-experiential and critical-reflective forms of knowledge are essential in the formation of students for Christian life and mission. Beginning with a five-day retreat, this course is built upon the dynamic interaction between experience and reflection.

Objectives
1. Students will grow in love for the Triune God and in awareness of God’s love for them.
2. Students will become more aware of their relationship with God and the formative experiences of their lives.
3. Students will discover historic and theological themes of Christian spirituality and spiritual formation.
4. Students will understand the nature of Christian spiritual life and spiritual formation in the light of Christian theology.
5. Students will think through the role of movements and traditions in spiritual formation.
6. Students will engage and reflect upon formative practices of the Christian tradition as part of their own spiritual formation.
7. Students will develop a rule of life, envisioning and implementing a rhythm of life that is helpful, sustainable, and fitting with their current season of life toward intentional participation and enjoyment of the Holy Spirit’s formative work in their lives.
## Objectives and Measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>How Delivered</th>
<th>How Assessed</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grow in love for the Triune God and in awareness of God’s love for them</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions, written assignments, small group meetings, spiritual direction</td>
<td>Written project</td>
<td>Acknowledgement in written projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become more aware of their relationship with God and the formative experiences of their lives</td>
<td>Group exercise</td>
<td>Group exercise</td>
<td>Group exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover historic and theological themes of Christian spirituality and spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions</td>
<td>Course interaction, online posts, written project</td>
<td>Successful identification in written projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the nature of Christian spiritual life and spiritual formation in the light of Christian theology</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions</td>
<td>Verbal assessments, online posts, written project</td>
<td>Successful identification in written projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think through the role of movements and traditions in spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lectures, online discussions</td>
<td>Written project</td>
<td>Successful identification in written projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage and reflect upon formative practices of the Christian tradition toward spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions</td>
<td>Online posts</td>
<td>Engagement and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a rule of life, envisioning and implementing a rhythm of life toward their own spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, written assignments</td>
<td>Written project</td>
<td>Successful construction of a rule of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Requirements
The first gathering of the spiritual formation course is a five-day retreat on **August 20-24**. There are assignments to be completed prior to and after the retreat.

**Pre-Retreat Assignments.** Admittance to the retreat is dependent upon students’ completion of these two pre-retreat assignments. They are tailored to help prepare students for the retreat and begin their M.Div. journey together with their cohort.

1. *Outline your personal history of relationship with God.* In preparation for the retreat, students will prepare a 1-3 page outline of the history of their relationship with God thus far. The outline should be organized by their *most formative experiences* and *relationships* (both positive and negative) that influenced their relationship with God. Students are encouraged to pay attention to *God’s work* and *their responses* in each of those experiences and relationships. These outlines are due **August 17** and are to be emailed as a Word attachment to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu. Furthermore, this outline will serve as a guide for students to share from as part of the retreat experience. Students will not be expected or asked to share anything which they are not comfortable sharing. In order to promote a safe atmosphere for sharing, all retreat participants, both students and faculty, will promise confidentiality to one another. Furthermore, other guidelines for how we respond to one another as we share will be given orally at the retreat to foster a culture of safety, mutual respect, and growth.

2. *Read the assigned chapters and submit a written response.* Reading is a spiritual discipline in which the Spirit of God forms us. Students are to read the following chapters and submit written summaries and responses that demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the material:

   (a) Students are to read Evan B. Howard, *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*, chapters 1, 2, and 6, pages 13-75 and 195-227, writing an approximate two-page *summary AND response* for each of these three assigned chapters (totaling approximately 6 pages). The written responses to these chapters are due on **August 17** and are to be emailed as Word attachments to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu.

   (b) In preparation for the retreat, students are to read about the following twelve disciplines from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*: “Teachability” (pgs. 92-94); “Retreat” (pgs. 77-79); “Community” (pgs. 149-151); “Face-to-Face Connection” (pgs. 158-160); “Hospitality” (pgs. 161); “Small Group” (pgs. 172-174); “Spiritual Friendship” (pgs. 175-177); “Spiritual Direction” (pgs. 132-134); “Silence” (pgs. 121-124); “Fixed-Hour Prayer” (pgs. 250-253); “Liturgical Prayer” (pgs. 269-271); and “Inner-Healing Prayer” (254-257). Immediately after reading about each one of these twelve practices/disciplines,
write a brief paragraph (6-10 sentences) responding to these questions for each of the twelve disciplines/practices: (1) What has been your experience with this discipline/practice? (2) What seems significant to you about this discipline/practice? (3) What especially drew you (or repelled you) from the description, reflection questions, or suggested spiritual exercises? Once you have completed all twelve paragraphs, send them as Word attachments to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu by August 17. We will begin to experiment with these disciplines/practices at the retreat.

The Retreat
Students will meet for a five-day retreat on August 20-24. This retreat will simultaneously serve as a class and as the beginning of the two-year M.Div. cohort experience. This retreat will provide space to begin healthy relationships, to explore spiritual practices, and to establish a culture of safety, mutual support, and growth. Commensurate with the nature of spiritual formation, this retreat will combine the academic rigor of a master’s-level course and the experience of a retreat, holding together the personal-experiential and critical-reflective components that are inherent within spiritual formation. This retreat will lead students through daily rhythms of formational experiences, including fixed-hour prayer, silence and solitude, sharing, listening, and responding to one another’s stories of our personal histories with God, forms of healing prayer, listening and responding to lectures, and others. The focus of this retreat will be our personal experience and relationship with God. Prepare to be stretched and deeply blessed.

Post-Retreat Assignments
1. Experiment with fitting spiritual practices and reflect upon your experience in a weekly online discussion. Engaging in “daily” (at least four times per week) spiritual practices and reflecting on your experiences is one of the most important aspects of this course. The best spiritual practices are those which are congruent with the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives and appropriate to our current life context. You are invited to experiment with various spiritual disciplines in a meaningful and consistent way throughout this course. Allow yourself to experiment with and learn from new ones as you read about them as the course progresses. Notice to which practices/disciplines you are drawn as you read the books Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton and The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. Experiment with those practices that week. Then, you are to share about your experiences and how God is using them to form you in an online threaded post on each of the twelve Friday’s between August 31 - November 16. For your online posts, simply respond to the following statement and question: “Describe your experiment with spiritual practices this week. What is happening within you as you engaged with God in this way?” (If you do NOT engage in a given spiritual practice at least four times in a given week, then your online post must answer the question, “Why did I not engage in my spiritual practice this week?” This is not for punishment,
but for your awareness, discovery, and formation. More than, a simple, “I was busy,”
notice and describe your internal movements – your feelings, thoughts,
attachments, and priorities – that moved you away from your practices that week.)

2. Discuss selected readings using online discussion. A helpful way to more fully digest
the readings communally is to share your thoughtful response with your classmates,
to read and respond to one another’s posts, and to read their responses to your
posts. As a learning community, students will help one another read and respond
more broadly and fully than simply reading alone. Students will share their
responses to each chapter of Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton and the assigned
chapters (see schedule below on pages 7-9 of syllabus) of Spiritual Disciplines
Handbook by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun through an online threaded discussion on nine
Friday’s from August 31 through November 9 (except October 19 and November
23). Students are to respond to two other students’ posts each of the nine weeks,
writing both an affirmation and a question for both of your responses. The chapters,
page numbers, and due dates are listed in the course schedule below.

3. Read the assigned texts and submit a written response.

(a) Students are to read select chapters from Evan B. Howard, The Brazos
Introduction to Christian Spirituality, writing an approximate two-page summary
AND response for each of the assigned chapters. The written summary-and-
response to chapter 7 is due on August 31. The written summary-and-response
to chapter 8 is due on September 7. The written summary-and-response to
chapter 3 is due on September 14. The written summary-and-response to
chapter 4 is due on September 21. The written summary-and-response to
chapter 5 is due on September 28. These are to be emailed as Word
attachments to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu.

(b) Students are to read Richard Foster, Streams of Living Water, chapters 1-4 only,
pages 1-134, submitting an approximate two-page summary and response per
chapter (totaling approximately 8 pages) that demonstrate thoughtful
engagement with the material. Also, students are to read Leonard Allen and
Danny Swick, Participating in God’s Life, all chapters (pages 15-196), writing an
approximate four-page summary and response for the entire book. At the end of
your response to Participating in God’s Life, name a question that you would ask
the authors, Allen and Swick, if you had the opportunity. These two resources will
help students see the historical, philosophical, and theological factors which are
part of spiritual formation. These two written responses are due on October 19,
the Friday before the October 22-26 intensive in preparation for class discussion.
They are to be emailed as Word attachments to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu.

4. Meet with your small group four times during the semester. Students will have the
opportunity to meet with a small group of 3-4 students (1) during the August 20-24
retreat and (2) during the October 22-26 intensive. On their own, the small group is to meet two additional times during this semester, (3) once in September and (4) once in November. The purpose of the small group meetings is to encourage intentional community, spiritual friendship, and growth. Dr. Miller will describe the specific agenda for the small group meetings during the August retreat. Students will have the opportunity to reflect upon their small group experiences in their final paper.

5. **Meet with a spiritual director four times during the semester.** Students will have the opportunity to meet with a spiritual director (1) during the August 20-24 retreat and (2) during the October 22-26 intensive. On their own, students are to schedule and meet with a spiritual director two additional times during this semester, (3) once in September and (4) once in November. You will have the opportunity to reflect upon this experience in your final paper.

6. **Write an approximate 10-12 page paper to develop a theology of relationship with God.** Toward developing an inhabitable theology of good life with the Triune God, what do we mean by “relationship with God”? And what role does spiritual formation play? This paper should engage at least five of the following topics: Trinity, Creation, Humanity, Sin, *Missio Dei*, Israel, the Exodus, the experience of God, the “dirt philosophy,” sanctification and healing, and spiritual disciplines/practices (in general or reflection upon a few disciplines/practices in particular). This paper should incorporate your readings and your reflections from your experiences of this course, and perhaps relevant readings from your other two courses, *Exodus* and *The Mission of God*.

   *This paper should include approximately 2-3 pages of reflection upon what has happened in your relationship with God this semester.* Think back upon the retreat, your four small group meetings, your four meetings with a spiritual director, and your daily engagement of spiritual practices. Perhaps scan your readings. Then, answer these two questions: **What has happened in your relationship with God this semester? How has the Spirit of God been forming you during the last few months?** This concluding paper is due on **Friday, November 30** and is to be emailed as a Word attachment to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu.

7. **Write a rule of life, envisioning a rhythm that is life-giving, sustainable, and fitting with your current circumstances toward spiritual formation.** “A rule of life seeks to respond to two questions: Who do I want to be? How do I want to live? Actually, it might be more accurate to say that a rule of life seeks to address the interplay between these two questions: **How do I want to live so I can be who I want to be?**” (Barton, 147). With its origins in monastic communities, a rule of life has been compared to a trellis, a support structure that enables intentional, healthy growth. Oftentimes, a rule of life outlines the daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly practices which you desire to implement in order to grow. Through exposure,
experimentation with various disciplines, and discussion, students will refine and implement a rule of life. Some aspects of this rule the cohort will share together in that all students will commit to certain practices for the duration of the M.Div. cohort experience. (See the “Our Community’s Rule of Life.”) Most aspects will be personal. Students will write a draft of this rule at the beginning of the semester during the retreat and will revise it throughout the semester. Students will post it to share with their cohort for mutual learning and encouragement. This assignment is due on **Friday, November 30.**

**Required Reading** (967 pages)


*The above two books marked with an asterisk will be used for both semesters, Spiritual Formation Parts 1 and 2.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Aug. 17</td>
<td>Outline of personal history with God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read and submit written responses:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a,) Howard, chaps. 1-2 and 6, pgs. 13-75, 195-227.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b,) Calhoun, disciplines assigned above (see pages 3-4 of the syllabus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 20-24</td>
<td>Retreat Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., August 31</td>
<td>Spiritual practice online post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read and respond online:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barton, chap. 1, pgs. 19-28.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sometime in September
Meet with Small Group & a Spiritual Director

Fri., Sep. 7
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 2, pgs. 29-44.

Fri., Sep. 14
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 3, pgs. 45-61.

Mon., Sep. 21
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 4, pgs. 62-77.

Fri., Sep. 28
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 5, pgs. 78-90
Calhoun, “Self-Care,” pgs. 80-83.

Fri., Oct. 5
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 6, pgs. 91-109.
Fri., Oct. 12
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 7, pgs. 110-129.
Calhoun, “Detachment,” pgs. 105-108;

Fri., Oct. 19
In preparation for the October 22-26 intensive,
read and submit a written response:
Allen & Swick, chaps. 1-8, pgs. 23-196;
Foster, chap. 1-4, pgs. 1-134.

Oct. 22-26
Class Intensive
Meet with Small Group & a Spiritual Director
(Opportunities will be provided during the intensive)

Sometime in November
Meet with Small Group & a Spiritual Director

Fri., Nov. 2
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 8. pgs. 130-145.
Calhoun, “Slowing,” pgs. 88-91; “Sabbath,” 42-45;
“Unplugging,” pgs. 95-98

Fri., Nov. 9
Spiritual practice online post
Read and respond online:
Barton, chap. 9, pgs. 146-166.
Calhoun, “Rule of Life,” pgs. 37-41

Fri., Nov. 16
Spiritual practice online post

Thur., Nov. 19-23
Thanksgiving: engage family and friends

Fri., Nov. 30
Theology of Relationship with God paper due
“Rule of Life” due

Grading Scale
All requirements for this course will be graded on a pass or fail basis. If the student completes
an assignment, demonstrating meaningful engagement and understanding, the student will
pass that assignment. If the student does not complete an assignment, or does not
demonstrate meaningful engagement or understanding, then the student will not pass that assignment and will be asked to repeat it until successfully completed. Successful completion of all requirements will result in a pass.

No “incompletes” will be given except for extreme emergency for the student or his/her immediate family. Failure to submit an assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Academic Integrity**

In keeping with our identity as a Christian University and our goal to help shape lifelong disciples of Christ, academic integrity will be taken very seriously in this class. Unless specific permission is given to collaborate on assignments with other students, each student's work shall be his/her own. Cheating on exams or assignments and plagiarizing on written assignments will, depending on the severity of the case, result in penalties ranging from a significantly reduced grade on the assignment to failing the course. Instances of cheating or plagiarism may also be reported to appropriate members of the administration, depending on the situation. Decisions in these matters rest with the instructor. For information on Lipscomb’s policies and procedures see the “Academic Integrity” page on Lipscomb’s website ([http://academics.lipscomb.edu/content.asp?CID=5329&SID=12](http://academics.lipscomb.edu/content.asp?CID=5329&SID=12))

**Dropping the Course**

A decision to stop participating in the class or to not turn in assignments does not constitute dropping the course. Please see the "Graduate Catalog" for the official policies and procedures for dropping a course. If a student's name appears on the roster at grading time and the course has not been officially dropped, he/she will receive a grade based on the course requirements and grading percentages above.

**Students Requiring Accommodations**

If you require accommodations for a documented disability, please discuss your circumstances with the instructor ASAP, preferably prior to the beginning of class. If you are entitled to accommodations but have not yet registered with the Counseling Center, contact that office immediately at 615-966-1781.