I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Spiritual Formation (4 hours)

This course introduces students to the essential dynamics of spiritual formation in its individual and corporate dimensions. It invites students to learn about and practice a variety of classical spiritual disciplines, with a special focus on prayer, for the purpose of formation in Christlikeness in both personal and social contexts. This course is 4 hours with two parts of 2 hours each- SPF5541 Spiritual Formation I: Spiritual Disciplines and SPF 5542: Spiritual Formation II: Prayer.

SPF 5541: Spiritual Formation I: Spiritual Disciplines (2 hours)
This course introduces students to the nature and processes of spiritual formation, drawing upon the ancient monastic traditions and weaving these practices into 21st century contemporary culture. It explores spiritual growth as directed by the Holy Spirit through classical disciplines, both personal and communal, of the Christian tradition. Students will have the opportunity to practice particular spiritual disciplines for growth in personal and social holiness.

This course is two hours credit and meets eight weeks online.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
This course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes and requirements of the traditional semester course format.

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of biblical foundations and Christian traditions that inform the practice of spiritual disciplines.

2. Engage in a variety of exercises from the classical spiritual disciplines.

3. Not assessed in this course.
4. Not assessed in this course.

5. Practice disciplines that will form in students a solid foundation of spiritual formation and engage a commitment to do justice in both personal and social contexts.

6. Develop practices that will aid students' spiritual growth and formational leadership in the context of their own particular ministries.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Textbooks and Other Materials

Required:


Recommended:

B. Attendance

According to the Student Handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than six class hours (2 weeks) will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade or withdraw from the class at the discretion of the professor.

C. Assignments/ Assessment of Student Learning

Final Research and Reflection Paper 45%

Please select three spiritual disciplines from the categories below. You need a combination of inward and outward disciplines. (For example: 1 inward and 2 outward or 1 outward and 2 inward). Write a 12 – 15- page, double-spaced, with regular 1-inch margin research and reflection paper on these disciplines. This is an academic research paper. Please send an email indicating which spiritual disciplines you will be
researching to instructor for approval by Monday January 29th. If you choose to practice a discipline not listed, it must be approved by the instructor.

The paper will be divided into three sections, one section for each discipline. For each discipline include:

- ¾ research for each prayer discipline: this includes biblical, theological and experience of early Christians.
- ¼ implications of each discipline in your corporate ministry setting. (Implications for the ministry setting could include but not limited to how it could affect the congregation, community [local and global]. What effect could each discipline make for God’s Kingdom coming upon earth?)

Be sure to include in the paper:

- Relevant material from the textbooks and other outside reading material supporting research of the spiritual discipline and your specific prayer practices.
- An articulation of how you experienced/ or imagine the presence of God to be experience corporately and or personally through these spiritual disciplines.
- Consider:
  - What effect does it have upon your daily living?
  - How could this discipline influence the corporate ministry that you spend the most time in?

This final paper is due March 3, 2018 at 11:59 pm. No incompletes or extensions will be given. Grammar and spelling will influence the grading. Please send the paper as a Word.doc. No other format will be accepted. A paper of this length needs at least 10 differing research resources in the bibliography. Only one source may be from the Internet.

**Disciplines for the Journey Inward** (practices of detachment, disengagement):
- Fasting
- Poverty and Prayer
- Silence/Restrainment of Speech
- Humility
- Purity/Chastity
- Simplicity/Frugality
- Lectio Divina
- Daily Examen
- Sacrifice
- Solitude
- Obedience
- Secrecy/Anonymity
- Study/Meditation
- Daily Hours of Prayer (The Prayer Offices)

**Disciplines for the Journey Outward** (practices of reaching out, engagement, attachment):
- Celebration
- Obedience
- Study/Meditation
- Confession
- Prayer
- Submission
- Fellowship
- Service/Work
- Truthfulness
- Generosity
- Simplicity/Frugality
- Lectio Divina

*If you choose to practice a discipline not listed, it must be approved by the instructor*
Please use inclusive language in written work. You may use either: footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references to document your paper, following consistently the style you select as presented in the *Ashland Theological Seminary Writing Handbook*.

**Journaling & Prayer Partner 10%**

Students will keep a daily prayer journal for the duration of this class. The journal will be a written or pictorial notebook or a combination of creative arts and written word (poetry, narrative, picture).

Two entries of the student’s daily prayer journal will be shared with a prayer partner and instructor. The first shared entry will be emailed to the instructor and prayer partner by **Monday January 22nd by 11:59 pm**. This is an actual prayer journal entry, not talking about what was in the entry. For confidentiality of the student’s prayers please send your journal entry to the instructor at brenda@livingstreamsflowingwater.com and your prayer partner. **Please send your prayer in a Word.doc.**

The prayer partner will then send an email response to the originator of the journal entry (copied to the instructor) by **Friday January 26th by 11:59 pm**. The responses to the journal entries are formational in nature – no fixing, advising, judging. The prayer partner will ask open-ended formational questions of the original journal entry to help deepen awareness of God’s presence in review of what the originator journaled. The prayer partner is like an archeologist helping the originator to excavate more insights from God’s word shared in the original journal entry. The prayer partner will ask at least two (2) formational questions of the original entry. **Partner’s response can be inserted onto the original Word.doc by using the “Review” tab at the top of the page and insert a “new comment.”**

Examples of formational, open-ended questions: These are questions that the prayer partner could not know anything about even if you went through the same experience: If the topic of journal entry is a storm. The formational question may be: “What was that storm in your life like for you?”

The second shared journal entry is the same format and will be emailed to the prayer partner and copied to the instructor by **Monday February 19th by 11:59 pm**. The prayer partner will send a response email to the originator of the journal entry (copied to the instructor at brenda@livingstreamsflowingwater.com) by **Friday February 23rd by 11:59 pm**. Each response must have two (2) formational questions.

**Rule of Life 25% (7-8 pages)**

Students will create a Rule of Life for his/her own personal spiritual formation practice.
Please select three spiritual disciplines from the categories above and practice each discipline for the next 8 weeks, for the duration of this class. *If you choose to practice of a discipline not listed, it must be approved by the instructor in writing before the third week.* This Rule of Life will include both private and corporate spiritual disciplines. This could be 2 inward disciplines and 1 outward discipline or 2 outward and 1 inward discipline. *These are DIFFERENT spiritual disciplines than the ones for the student’s research paper.*

The first draft outline of this Rule of Life is due **Wednesday January 17th by 11:59 pm** during the second week of class. Send this draft to the instructor in Word.doc format. The first draft will include:

1. What three disciplines you are committing to practice.
2. Why you are drawn to this discipline.
3. What your hypothesis is about how each discipline will impact your life and ministry.

The Final narrative version of your Rule of Life is due **February 23rd by 11:59 pm**, email your final version of your Rule of Life to the instructor.

There are three distinct parts to your Rule of Life:

1. **Short Biblical foundation for the specific discipline.** You will do this for each discipline you are practicing for your Rule. (¼ of each discipline, maybe less that this) This biblical foundation only sets the groundwork for your practice. A Rule of Life is about your experience of practicing these disciplines for the duration of this class. This is NOT a research paper.
   
2. Give an annotated reflection on your experience for each discipline you are practicing for your Rule. (½ for each discipline, maybe more)
   
   a. Why were you drawn to this specific discipline?
   b. What has been your experience thus far with each practice?
   
   i. How have you noticed the presence and whispers of God’s word, or if you haven’t noticed God’s presence what was that like for you?
   
   ii. Where you able to remain faithful to the practice of each discipline? Why or why not?
   
   iii. How did your experience and your hypothesis match?
   
   c. How has the practice effected and affected your private personal life?
   
   d. What influence has this discipline had on your ministry life?

3. What are your hopes for going forward with this discipline, projected out over the next 6 – 12 months? (¼ for each discipline maybe less)

No incompletes or extensions will be given. Grammar and spelling will influence the grading. For every day late, the student’s grade will be reduced by one letter grade.
Worship Disciplines - Small Group Blackboard Presentation 10%

The class will be divided into small groups for video conference presentation of worship. 
**Suggested dates for the blackboard video conference presentation are: Monday February 26th and Wednesday February 27th at 12:00 noon ET. These times will be confirmed and or adjusted as needed once the class opens.**

Students will work in groups to present a worship experience on blackboard for the class. This ½ hour group experience will draw upon the Biblical, Monastic, European, Feminine or Black experience. The facilitating (presenting) group will lead the remainder of the class through this worship experience. Options for your group’s preparatory conversations are: via email, a group wiki, group discussion board and telephone planning. These experiences of worship will be shared on the blackboard site.

Request for pre-approval of the small groups’ chosen worship style must be submitted to the instructor via email to brenda@livingstreamsflowingwater.com by **February 5th before 11:59 pm**

The small group leadership team for this worship experience will:
1. Give a brief (five minutes) introduction to the worship style you will be leading. Include:
   a. A brief history of where this practice originated
   b. Expectations of participation by the instructor and class as they experience your group’s worship.
2. Lead the class through your group worship experience.
3. A short debrief of the experience
   a. What was the experience of the participants?
   b. What was it like for the small group leadership team to facilitate this experience?

**Due date** small groups will present a ½ hour worship experience via blackboard with the confirmed date through discussion forum by **January 15th, Suggested dates are Monday February 26th and Wednesday February 27th at 12:00 noon ET.**

Discussion Forum Postings 10%

Participation in class discussions is critical to the process of theological reflection. Each student should come to this class prepared to participate and contribute with readings completed. There are two discussion forums each week that the student must post to. The first discussion forum is for prayer and practicum. **Posts to this forum are due each Wednesday by 11:59 pm.**
This post will include your experience of the prayer and practicum.
1. Use one of the exercises from the practicum as your prayer.
   a. What was that experience like for you?
2. How is this prayer applicable to personal and professional leadership in contemporary cultural?

3. Any other thoughts you have from the practicum and video prayer experiences.

The second discussion forum is on the teaching videos and readings. **Posts to this forum are due each Thursday by 11:59 pm**

Other discussion postings from lecture video and reading due by Thursday of each week. These posts include:
1. The major “take away” for you from this weekly lesson.
2. How does this “take away” influence your own practice of spiritual disciplines?
3. How does this “take away” apply or impact your leadership in your ministry context?

**Original posts to these two forums must be at least 350 words in length.**

**Response posting to classmates:**
After posting your original post, each student is to post response to at least two classmates post. The student will post two response post on the prayer and practicum forum AND the two response posts to classmates on the teaching and reading forum. **These response posts will include at least two (2) formational questions. Response posts are due by Friday each week at 11:59 pm**

Thus, each week each student will have six (6) posts on the discussion forums:
1. One post to the prayer and practicum forum.
2. One post to the teaching videos and reading forum.
3. Two response posts to classmates to their original prayer and practicum forum.
4. Two response posts to classmates to their original teaching and reading forum.

**D. Calculation of Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Forum posting</td>
<td>1,2,5,6</td>
<td>Wednesdays, Thursdays &amp; Fridays</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling &amp; Prayer Partner Response</td>
<td>1,2,5,6</td>
<td>#1 January 22\textsuperscript{nd} #2 February 18\textsuperscript{th} Partner Response #1 January 26\textsuperscript{th} #2 February 23\textsuperscript{rd}</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship Blackboard presentations</td>
<td>1,2,5,6</td>
<td>Date confirmed on discussion forum by January 15\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of Life</td>
<td>1,2,5,6</td>
<td>First draft outline January 17\textsuperscript{th} Final narrative February</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IV. Tentative Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day #</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Lecture/Topics</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>January 8-14, 2018</td>
<td>Teaching Video: Introduction, Biblical foundation, Monastic Influence, Silence the heart of discipline, Discussion forums</td>
<td>Teaching video, Foster, intro, ch. 1, Thompson, introduction &amp; ch. 1, Maas &amp; O’Donnell chs. 1, 2 and Practicum 2 Assignments due: discussion forums posting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>January 15-21, 2018</td>
<td>Teaching video: Meditation and Spiritual Reading, Rule of Life, Poverty &amp; Prayer, Discussion Forums</td>
<td>Teaching Video, Foster, ch. 2, Thompson, ch. 2, Maas &amp; O’Donnell chs.3, 10 and Practicum 10, Appendix 10 Assignments due: First draft outline of Rule of Life, forum confirmation of Blackboard video worship presentations, discussion forums posting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td>January 22-28, 2018</td>
<td>Teaching Video: Stages of Awakening, Obedience, Daily Examen, Sabbath, Discussion forums</td>
<td>Teaching Video, Foster, ch. 3, Thompson, chs. 3, 6, Maas &amp; O’Donnell, chs. 4, 5, 6 and Practicum 6 Assignments due: #1 journal entry, Prayer partner response, discussion forums posting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>January 29 – February 4, 2018</td>
<td>Teaching Video: Contemplation, Fasting, Study, Lectio Divina, Lectio Visio, Humility Discussion Forums</td>
<td>Teaching Video, Foster, chs. 4-5, Thompson, chs. 5, 7, Maas &amp; O’Donnell, ch. 8 and Practicum 8 Assignments due:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Teaching Video</td>
<td>Assignments due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>February 5 – 11, 2018</td>
<td>Teaching Video: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Daily Hours, Discussion Forums</td>
<td>Teaching Video, Foster, chs. 6-8 Maas &amp; O’Donnell, chs 9, 10, 11 Practicum 9 Thompson, ch. 8 Assignments due: email approval of group worship presentation topic, discussion forums posting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>February 19 - 25, 2018</td>
<td>Teaching Video: Guidance, Celebration, Daily Life, Corporate Disciplines, Discussion Forums</td>
<td>Teaching Video, Foster, chs. 12, 13 Thompson, chs. 7, 9 Assignments due: Final Narrative Rule of Life, discussion forums posting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>February 26 - March 3, 2018</td>
<td>Teaching Video: Recap of Inward and Outward spiritual disciplines and how disciplines could impact leadership, congregational ministry and into the secular world</td>
<td>Teaching Video, Assignments due: discussion forums posting, Final Reflection Paper Due March 3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning
A. Students may engage in spiritual retreats to practice spiritual disciplines in the future.

B. Students may choose to meet regularly with a spiritual director.

C. Students can continue to read resources about spiritual disciplines for future growth.

D. Students may integrate spiritual discipline practices in ministry with others in their future ministry contexts.

E. Students may connect with others serving the ministry of spiritual formation /direction and retreat ministries through *Hearts on Fire: the Fellowship of United Methodist Spiritual Directors and Retreat Leaders*

F. Other resources for ongoing spiritual formation can be found at www.livingstreamsflowingwater.com

VI. Seminary Guidelines

A. **ATS Academic Integrity Policy**

Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary’s core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one’s own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one’s own capabilities to achieve one’s fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the *Student Handbook*.

B. **Seminary Writing Consultation Service**

The Seminary Writing Consultation Service can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing assignments in your graduate Seminary classes. Masters-qualified Consultants can advise you online or in person. E-mail your request for assistance to swc_group@ashland.edu

Include the following information: Your name, the course # & professor’s name, a brief description of the assignment, and your timeline.

For more information, visit: [http://seminary.ashland.edu/services/student-services/seminary-writing-consultation-services](http://seminary.ashland.edu/services/student-services/seminary-writing-consultation-services)

C. **Accessibility Resources and Accommodations**

It is Ashland University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please contact the Student Accessibility Center at 419-289-5904, or send an email to
dservices@ashland.edu. The Student Accessibility Center office and the course instructor will work together in order to establish accommodations and to meet your learning needs.

D. ATS Grading Scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-96</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-91</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-88</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>68-70</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>65-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
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</table>

VII. Selected Bibliography or References


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