



To develop Christ-minded leaders who make a difference in the world.

SF 523 Theology of Formation

Winter Semester, 2019

INSTRUCTOR: Cory Seibel, PhD
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SCHEDULE: Tuesdays, 6:30 – 9:30 pm

MODES OF DELIVERY: In addition to being offered in the classroom setting at Taylor Seminary, this course will make it possible for students who can't come to campus to participate synchronously (live) through the online meeting platform Zoom. Thanks to state-of the-art audio/visual technology that has been installed in our campus classrooms, online students will be enabled to interact in real-time with their instructor and peers.

CREDITS: 3 [90 hours of work outside of class time]

DESCRIPTION: An in depth examination of the Christian practices of reflection, rest and confession. Special attention will be given to the practical implications of dealing with the sin nature as well as the grace afforded to Christians through the practice of Sabbath and other forms of reflection. Historical and contemporary spiritual practices will be evaluated in light of the goal of training spiritually formed disciples of Jesus Christ.

TARGET STATEMENTS:

A. Knowledge—Students will:

- Articulate a theological understanding of Christian spiritual formation.
- Describe principles and practices from the Christian spiritual tradition that have potential to aid spiritual growth and explain how they can be implemented within contemporary life.
- Engage substantively and accurately with historic and contemporary literary sources.

B. Character-Students will:

- Assess personal patterns of sin and brokenness and develop strategies for growth.
- Evaluate the motivational dimensions impacting personal engagement in spiritual practices.
- Attend class regularly, participate meaningfully, and complete reading assignments.

C. Ability-Students will:

- Engage consistently in the practices of solitude and silence.
- Implement a constructive, restorative, and reflective Sabbath practice.
- Develop a healthy rule of life.

TEXTBOOK(S):

Benner, David. *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004. (110 pp.).

Buchanan, Mark. *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath (Paperback)* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006 (240 pp.)

Howard, Evan B. *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation: How Scripture, Spirit, Community, and Mission Shape Our Souls*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018 (288 pp.).

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. New York: HarperOne, Reprint 2015 (192 pp.)

Scazzero, Peter. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: it's Impossible to be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017 Edition (240 pp.).

The student should also have a copy of the *Guide for Research and Writing (SBL style)*. This is available online on the seminary website, as well on the Moodle site for the course.

REQUIREMENTS: [Please note: these assignment descriptions are still being finalized. More details are forthcoming and will be included in an updated syllabus closer to the start of the new semester.]

1. **Class attendance and participation:** Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Students who anticipate that they will need to miss class for legitimate reasons are expected to contact the course instructor in advance of the class day in question. Students are expected to fully prepare to participate in each class discussion by completing all assigned reading in advance.
2. **Assignment 1:** Submit your learning covenant to the course instructor for approval. **This is due on Tuesday, February 5th.**
3. **Assignment 2:** Review of Benner's *The Gift of Being Yourself*. This paper should be a minimum of three-to-four double-spaced pages in length. Be sure to include the following elements in this review: 1) articulate the book's central thesis, 2) summarize its contents, 3) identify at least two ideas from the book that you found most helpful, and 4) indicate what aspects of the book you found worthy of critique. This assignment should take about 10 hours to complete. **It is due on Tuesday, February 12th.**
4. **Assignment 3:** Write a 3,000 word research paper on one of the following topics:
 - a. The human/divine tension in the work of sanctification.
 - b. A Christian response to suffering.
 - c. Is "the dark night of the soul" a biblical concept?
 - d. How should a Christian keep the Sabbath?
 - e. A biblical and theological anthropology.

You may also write on another topic approved by the instructor. Write this paper according to the requirements of the *Guide for Research and Style*. This should take about 20 hours to complete. **Due on Tuesday, March 12th.**

5. **Assignment 4:** Using the assigned readings write an imaginary dialogue between the authors and you regarding the place of reflection in spiritual formation. You need to demonstrate that you have a grasp of each author’s perspective, potential agreements and disagreements and questions you would like to ask of each author. The paper should be written as a script and is to be within 12 – 15 pages in length. This should take about 50 hours to complete. **Due on Tuesday, April 16th.**
6. **Assignment 5:** Submit a written report of your experience in implementing your learning covenant. This should take about 20 hours to complete. **Due on Tuesday, April 23rd.**

EVALUATION:

Assignment 1	5%
Assignment 2	10%
Assignment 3	25%
Assignment 4	30%
Assignment 5	30%

ATTENDANCE POLICY: This section functions to reinforce the importance you place upon class attendance as indicated in your Requirements section above. A sample statement could be: “Excessive, unexcused absences and lack of participation may adversely affect your grade. More than three unexcused absences may result in failure for the course.”

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. MOODLE

Taylor Seminary’s Moodle is located on a shared platform with our partner seminary, Sioux Falls Seminary. Bookmark this site on your computer for easy, regular access: <https://moodle.sfseminary.edu>

Moodle log-in is the first initial of your first name and your last name - all in lowercase, with no spaces. For example, if your name is John Calvin, you would log-in as jcalvin

The default enrolment key is the course code (all in lowercase, with no spaces). The course code consists of the course prefix followed by the course number.

For example, Old Testament Introduction’s key is: ot417

If you are having trouble logging into Moodle or self-enrolling, please email teresa.scibel@taylor-edu.ca

2. COURSE WRITING

Formatting

All studies and papers should be typed and formatted according to the Society of Biblical Literature writing style as outlined in the Seminary’s *Guidelines for Research Writing in Religion & Theology (SBL)*. For the full stylesheet, please refer to Patrick H. Alexander, et al., ed., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014) which is in Reading Room.

Research Language.

You should employ acceptable research language for your paper which is not too informal yet reads inclusively. Avoid the use of gender specific language (e.g., Do not refer to “man” generically or to “mankind,” “men,” “he”; rather use “humankind,” “humanity,” “person,” etc.)

Plagiarism.

Academic honesty and integrity is essential to the academic enterprise and the Seminary community. All written work submitted *must* be your own. *Guidelines for Research Writing* defines plagiarism as the failure to give credit where credit is due: “To plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written something original which in fact you have borrowed from another without acknowledging that other person's work” (*Guide for Research and Writing*, 2016, p. 11-13). If you borrow ideas or distinctive phrases, or include direct quotations in your written assignments, you must acknowledge your source(s) properly by in-text citation or footnote. It is also wrong to copy another person's work or to submit an assignment previously handed in for credit in another course. **Students guilty of plagiarism may receive a grade of zero for the assignment and may be brought to the attention of the Seminary's Academic Committee.**

3. COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

After the period for which tuition refunds are available, a “W” will be placed on the transcript of a student who withdraws from any course. Beyond those dates, an “F” will be recorded on the student's transcript.

COURSE OUTLINE:

This information will be provided in the final version of this syllabus that will be posted at a later date.