



A M B R O S E

## CS 662 Prayer Paths to God (3)

Ambrose Theological Seminary  
Fall/2011

**Instructor:** Professor Charles Nienkirchen, PhD  
**Office Hours:** W/ F 9:30-12:00  
Or by appointment  
**Class Times:** WED 6:30-9:30 pm

**Office:** L2069  
**Office Phone:** 403 410-2000 Ext 5905  
**Email:** cnienkirchen@ambrose.edu  
**Location:** A2141  
**Website:** [www.downancientpaths.com](http://www.downancientpaths.com)

### Required Texts

Richard Foster, *Prayer*. (Harper & Row/1992)  
Frederica Mathewes-Green, *The Jesus Prayer*. (Paraclete/2009)  
Martin Luther, *A Simple Way to Pray*. (Westminster/John Knox/2000)  
Leighton Ford, *The Attentive Life*. (IVP/2008)

### Course Description

The course studies the historical theology and practice of Christian prayer through the centuries as it pertains to understanding the role of prayer within the spiritual life. It is taught from an ecumenical perspective and includes a practicum in *lectio divina*.

### Course Objectives

- To survey highlights in the development of the practice and understanding of Christian prayer from the first to the twenty-first centuries;
- To expose the student to prayer 'classics' in the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions;
- To expand the student's awareness of approaches to prayer outside his/her own experience and church tradition;
- To raise the student's consciousness as to the essential role of prayer in living a spiritual life;
- To give guidance in the discipline of praying with Scripture (*lectio divina*).

### Course Schedule

<b>Week 1</b> Sept. 7	Course Introduction <i>Reading: Foster, pp.1-15</i>
<b>Week 2</b> Sept. 14	Praying With Jesus and the Early Church <i>Reading: Foster, pp.17-35</i>

- Week 3**  
Sept. 21 Praying With Jesus and the Early Church (cont'd)  
Praying With the Monks  
*Reading: Foster, pp.37-56*
- Week 4**  
Sept. 28 **Note: Class is cancelled (Professor is absent)**
- Week 5**  
Oct. 5 Praying With the Monks (cont'd)  
Seek the Stillness (video)  
*Reading: Foster, pp.57-77*
- Week 6**  
Oct. 12 Praying With the Mystics
- Week 7**  
Oct. 19 Praying With the Mystics (cont'd)  
Praying with the Reformers  
*Reading: Foster, pp.79-103*
- Week 8**  
Oct. 26 Praying With the Reformers (cont'd)  
Praying With the Methodists  
*Reading: Foster, pp.105-142*
- Week 9**  
Nov. 2 Praying With the Methodists (cont'd)
- Week 10**  
Nov. 9 Praying With Scripture / Lectio Divina  
*Reading: Foster, pp.143-178*
- Week 11**  
Nov. 16 Fr. Benedict Groeschel, 'Praying With Scripture' (video)  
**Prayer Practicum # 1 (Heb. 11) (TBA)**
- Week 12**  
Nov. 23 **Prayer Practicum #2 (Rev. 1 ) /Mt. St. Francis Retreat Centre, Cochrane**  
**7:00-9:15 p.m. / Cost \$20/person**  
**Note:** Please arrive by 6:45 pm  
*Reading: Foster, pp. 179-201*
- Week 13**  
Nov. 30 Praying With 19<sup>th</sup> Century Evangelicals  
**Prayer Practicum #3 (Rev. 2) (TBA)**  
*Reading: Foster, pp.203-227*
- Week 14**  
Dec. 7 J. Edwin Orr, 'The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakening' (video)  
Conclusions Re: History of Christian Prayer  
*Reading: Foster, pp. 229-242, 243-256*

## Course Requirements and Grading

- A. Attendance at all prayer-practicum sessions.
- B. A **review/response paper** (6-8 pages) on Mathewes-Green, *The Jesus Prayer* or Ford, *The Attentive Life* which:
1. Summarizes the content of the book and explains its relationship to the title/subtitle (5 marks);
  2. Describes the nature of the prayer experience according to the book (10 marks);
  3. Reflects on the potential contributions which the book could make to the student's own experience / practice of prayer (7 marks);
  4. Identifies 5 significant questions which the book raises in the student's mind (5 marks);
  5. Gives an overall impression/evaluation of the book (3 marks).

**DUE: Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> /2011 (30% of final grade)**

- C. A **review/response paper** (6-8 pages) on Luther, *A Simple Way to Pray* which includes:
1. A discussion of the relationship between the title and the contents of the book (5 marks);
  2. A summary of Luther's understanding of the nature and content of the prayer experience (10 marks);
  3. A discussion of Luther's 'prayer techniques' and their relevance to the student's personal prayer journey (10 marks);
  4. An overall evaluation/impression of Luther's treatise (5 marks).

**DUE: Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> /2009 (30% of the final grade)**

- D. A **prayer journal**, based on the 3 prayer practicums, which includes:
1. A separate entry for each practicum session (make sure the entries are dated);
  2. A record of physical and emotional responses and images/insights/impressions received in each session;
  3. A written prayer based on the assigned Scripture for each practicum;
  4. An overall evaluation of the value of this style of praying for your own spiritual journey and the church, collectively. Discuss strengths and weaknesses.

**DUE: Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> /2011 (20% of the final grade)**

- E. An annotated bibliography of 10 scholarly articles on the subject of prayer with three annotations per article which:
1. Briefly identify the thesis of the article;
  2. Identify the main themes of the article;
  3. Explain the most interesting contribution(s) the article made to your understanding of Christian prayer.

**DUE: Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> /2011 (20% of the final grade)**

## Grading Schedule

Excellent	Very Good / Good	Satisfactory	Minimal Pass
96-100 A+	82-85 B+	68-71 C+	56-59 D+
91-95 A	75-81 B	63-67 C	50-55 D
86-90 A-	72-74 B-	60-62 C-	
			Failure
			<50 F

## Important Notes:

1. The Registration Revision Period is September 7-16/2011. The last day to enter courses without permission and to withdraw from courses and receive tuition refund is September 16/2011.
2. The last day to apply for time extension for course work is November 28/2011.
3. **All students who participate in the field trip to the Franciscan Retreat Centre in Cochrane are responsible for the extra \$20 fee.**
4. Lectures will not always cover all the text material. Readings from the text provide the context for the lecture.
5. **All late assignments which have not received an officially approved extension will be granted the highest possible failing grade. Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or a prolonged illness for which you required treatment by a physician. All requests for extensions must be received in writing at least seven days prior to the due date. Factors such as assignments for other courses, computer software difficulties, or computer printer malfunctions are not sufficient grounds for requesting an extension. If an extension has been granted it is your responsibility when submitting the paper to attach a note indicating the date to which the extension was granted and the date on which the paper is actually submitted. Retain for yourself a copy (software or hard copy) of each paper.**
6. The title page of ALL assignments should include the course name and number, the professor's name, the student's name, ID number and mailbox number. This is imperative!
7. All assignments must be turned in by the last day of classes in order to receive credit for the course. In the event that all work has not been turned in by the end of the course, and a 'time extension' has not been approved by November 28/2011, a failing grade will be received for the course.
8. **No assignments will be received by electronic transmission.**
9. Minimum standards of writing will be observed in all type-written essay assignments.

## Additional Information

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as are stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar.

Personal information, that is, information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information, contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension”. Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination times must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the appropriate deadline. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control”.