



CS 662 -1

Prayer Paths to God

Semester: Fall, 2014
Days: W/6:30-9:30 pm
Room: A2141

Number of credits: 3

Prerequisite:
None

Instructor: Professor Charles Nienkirchen
Email: cnienkirchen@ambrose.edu
Phone: 403-410-5905
Office: L2069
Office hours: By appointment

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*.

Prayer is not an indifferent or a small thing. It is not a sweet little privilege. It is a great prerogative far reaching in its effects. Failure to pray entails losses far beyond the person who neglects it. Prayer is not a mere episode of the Christian life. Rather the whole life is a preparation for and result of prayer. In its condition, prayer is the sum of religion. Faith is but the channel of prayer. Faith gives it wings and swiftness. Prayer is the lungs through which holiness breathes. Prayer is not only the language of the spiritual life, but makes its very essence and forms its real character.

Edward M. Bounds, *The Possibilities of Prayer*. (1979).

Expected Learning Outcomes:

It is the aim of the course that students acquire the following skills:

1. To understand the highlights in the development of the practice and theology of prayer from the first to the 19th centuries;
2. To develop an appreciation for the value of the ‘prayer classics’ in the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions;

Important Dates:

First day of classes: September 3, 2014
Registration revision period: September 14, 2014
Last day to request revised examination: October 27, 2014
Last day to withdraw from course: November 12, 2014
Last day to apply for time extension for coursework: November 24, 2014
Last day of classes: December 9, 2014

Final Exam: December XX, 2014
Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Room: Room number

-
-
3. To have a heightened appreciation for the essential role of prayer in living a spiritual life;
 4. To acquire an introductory proficiency in the discipline of *lectio divina*.

Outline:

NOTE: No electronic recording devices of any kind are permitted to be used in the classroom without professorial consent. Failure to comply will have serious consequences and possibly lead to expulsion from the course.

Week 1- Course Introduction/**READING:** Foster, pp. 1-15.

Week 2- Praying with Jesus and the Early Church/**READING:** Foster, pp. 17-35.

Week 3- Praying with Jesus and the Early Church (cont'd)

Week 4- Praying with the Monks/*Seek the Stillness*/**READING:** pp. Foster, pp. 55-77.

Week 5- Praying with the Monks (cont'd)/Praying with Mystics

Week 6- *The Still Small Voice*/Praying with the Mystics (cont'd)/Praying with the Reformers

Week 7- Praying with the Reformers (cont'd)/Praying with the Methodists/**READING:** Foster, pp. 79-103.

Week 8- Praying with the Methodists (cont'd)

Week 9- Praying with Scripture/Lectio Divina/**READING:** Foster, pp. 143-178.

Week 10- *Praying with Scripture/Prayer Practicum #1* (Heb. 11)

Week 11- Praying with 19th Century Evangelicals/*Prayer Practicum # 2* (Rev. 1)/**READING:** Foster, pp. 203- 227.

Week 12- **Nov. 19th** *Prayer Practicum # 3* (Rev. 2)(Mt. St. Francis Retreat Centre, Cochrane)

7:00-9:15 pm/Cost \$25./per person

Note: Please arrive by 6:45 pm

Week 13- Praying with 19th Century Evangelicals (cont'd)/*The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakenings*

Week 14- Conclusions re: History of Christian Prayer/**READING:** Foster, pp. 229-242, 243-256.

Requirements:

A. Attendance at all prayer-practicum sessions;

B. A review/response paper (6-8 pages) on Mathewes-Green, *The Jesus Prayer*. which:

1. Explains the relationship between the thesis of the book and the title/subtitle (5 marks/3/4-1page);
 2. Describes the nature of the prayer experience according to the book (10 marks/2-3 pages);
 3. Reflects on the potential contributions which the book could possibly make to the student's own prayer experience/if not why not? (7 marks/1 ½-2 pages);
-
-

-
-
4. Identifies 5 significant critical questions which the book raises in the student's mind (5 marks/1 page)
 5. Gives an assessment of the overall value of the book (3 marks/3/4 page)

Your assignment must have a properly formatted title page. The title of the assignment is *The Jesus Prayer: A Book/Review/Response*

DUE: Wed. October 15th (by midnight) (30% of final grade)

C. A review/response paper (6-8 pages) on Luther, *A Simple Way to Pray*. which:

1. Discusses the relationship between the thesis of the book and the title (5 marks/3/4-1 page);
2. Summarizes Luther's understanding of the nature and content of the prayer experience (10 marks/2-3 pages);
3. Discusses Luther's 'prayer techniques' and their relevance to the student's personal prayer experience (10 marks/2-3 pages);
4. Gives an overall assessment of the value of Luther's treatise and its contemporary relevance (5 marks/3/4-1 page).

Your assignment must have a properly formatted title page and the title of the assignment is a *Simple Way to Pray: A Book Review/Response*.

DUE: Wed. Nov. 12th (by midnight) (30% of the final grade)

D. a prayer journal based on the three practicums which includes the following:

1. a separate entry for each practicum session (make sure the entries are dated and located);
2. a record of physical and emotional responses, images/ insights/impressions/applications to life circumstances received in each session;
3. a written prayer which arises from the assigned scripture text for each practicum;
4. an overall evaluation of the value of this style of prayer for the student's own prayer experience and that of the church collectively. Discuss both individual/collective strengths and weaknesses.

Your assignment must have a properly formatted title page and the title of the assignment is *A Prayer Journal*.

DUE: Wed. Dec. 3rd (by midnight) (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. identifies the main themes of the article;
3. explains the most interesting contribution the article has made to your understanding of Christian prayer.

Your assignment must have a properly formatted title page and the title of the assignment is *An Annotated Review of Articles on Prayer*. Be sure that each article has a full bibliographical citation.

Note: if you are uncertain as to whether or not an article qualifies as a 'scholarly' article consult with the professor so as not to run the risk of compromising your grade by choosing an unacceptable article.

DUE: Wed. Dec. 3rd (by midnight) (20% of the final grade)

Submission of Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted in hard copy in class or to the professor's office. They are always due by midnight of the due date. Any late assignments which have not been granted an extension must still be turned in by the end of the course and will receive the highest possible failing grade provided they have demonstrated an acceptable level of performance otherwise they will receive a '0'.

Attendance:

Conscientious class attendance is the responsibility of the student. Classes should be missed only for emergency reasons. Also, the professor will not assume any responsibility to supply the student with lecture content for classes missed for non-emergency reasons.

Evaluation:

Book review/response paper #1- 30% of final grade

Book review/response paper #2- 30% of final grade

Prayer journal- 20% of final grade

Annotated review of articles- 20% of final grade

Grade Summary:

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

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

Note: final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

Textbooks:

Richard Foster, *Prayer*. (2009).

Frederica Mathewes-Green, *The Jesus Prayer*. (2009).

Martin Luther, *A Simple Way to Pray*. (2000).

Leighton ford, *The Attentive Life*. (2014).



Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**, please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the 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.

Extensions

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**" from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control".

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Other

Any added features in the syllabus are optional. You may or may not wish to include elements such as a bibliography, reading list, schedule of lectures/topics, or reporting form.