

SPFM 5211: Intercultural Spirituality: Praying Together

Course Instructor: Rev. Dr. Debra R. Auger, associate professor of ministry dauger@northpark.edu

Spring Semester 2021

Thursday 1:30-2:30 synchronous

1 credit

Course Description: Praying together is a core element of Christian Discipleship. But too often our prayer consists of a list of our wants, needs and desires, making prayer more self-focused than God-focused. In this course we will challenge prayer as transactional, to prayer as relational-both with God and others.

Howard Thurman writes,

Experiences of meaning which people share are more compelling than the barriers that separate them. If such experiences can be multiplied over a time interval of sufficient duration, then any barrier between men [sic], of whatever kind, can be undermined. Thus the way of reconciliation is open. (Howard Thurman, *Disciplines of the Spirit*. Richmond: Friends United Press, 1963, 120)

This spiritual formation course will address the students' experiences of community and engagement with cultures other than one's own, with prayer as the method of engagement with one another. The Lord's Prayer is primary as a common and biblical Christian prayer and together we will explore its ability to cross the divides of community, culture and history. It is this prayer which will frame the course and ground our learning together. The biblical and theological significance of the Lord's Prayer in various Christian traditions will be explored in a dialogical and experiential format utilizing a variety of classic spiritual disciplines including lectio divina, centering prayer, prayer of the body and iconography, to name a few. Other points of crossing culture occur across the readings as well as guest speakers which reflect a diversity of experiences. The interactions in and among the class as community will be another point of crossing culture.

This course will use both online and face-to-face interactions (as permitted) to fulfill the course objectives and be a blend of both campus and distance students. All class materials are located in the Canvas course shell.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Articulate the biblical, historical and cultural significance of the Lord's Prayer in its original setting/community
2. Describe the use of the Lord's Prayer and prayer more broadly in a variety of Christian communities and settings
3. Participate in a variety of prayer practices
4. Demonstrate the capacity to listen more intentionally to oneself and others
5. Identify one's own cultural biases of prayer and worship

6. Examine the ways prayer can *cross* difference and *create* difference

Course Readings:

Required text:

Gonzalez, Justo L. *Teach Us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church and Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.

All other required readings and other instructional materials will be located in the Canvas course shell. The materials chosen represent diverse perspectives whose authors are from a variety of cultural and religious contexts and backgrounds.

Course Requirements/Assignments:

1. Full participation and attendance in each synchronous class session and weekly module is required for a passing grade.
2. Completed reading *prior* to each class session. Student engagement is critical to the class and preparation by reading the material for each session is expected.
3. Weekly postings in response to class materials.
4. A final integrative paper of 5-6 pages. **Due: April 30, 2021.** See explanation below.
5. Two sessions of Spiritual Direction by **April 30, 2021.** See explanation below.

Grading and missed class information:

Grading is Pass/Fail. Successful completion of the assignments and online posting and faithful attendance in the synchronous sessions will result in a grade of **PASS**. In Spiritual Formation courses where grading is Pass/Fail, students are expected to be present and prompt for all class sessions. If there is an **emergency** and you must miss class, *contact the course instructor before class session*.

Students with more than 2 absences will need to withdraw from the course. The last day to drop a course with permission is April 10, 2021. We hope you will be well this semester and do not need to miss class, but in case you do, it is your responsibility to contact the professor before class. If you must miss a class due to an emergency, a make-up assignment of a written reflection paper of 250 words on the week's reading is required. The paper must be emailed to the instructor by 5:00 p.m. on Monday of the following week.

Online expectations: As this is a formation course that requires your full presence, please refrain from using other electronic devices during our sessions together. In addition, when in a synchronous session, please be sure your camera is on so we can be fully present to each other. Phones are to be turned off and put away.

Assignment Details

Assignment 1: Integrative paper:

In 1500 words, write an integrative paper using your journal entries collected over the semester and other cogent material including the class texts, readings and other materials and experiences from the

class. Please note your journal entries with the date they were first written with a footnote or parenthetically. Please reference the NPTS writing guide for help here: <https://assets.northpark.edu/wp-content/uploads/20200717101927/Writing-Handbook-2020-2021.pdf> Use the following as a guide to your writing:

- a. Describe a new way (or ways) of praying that you encountered as a result of this class and how you intend to incorporate this practice into your life.
- b. Describe your experience of engaging cultural perspectives within the class and any ways this influenced your experience of God. Here you can discuss readings, presentations, etc. How was this experience crossing culture for you and how does that impact your spirituality and life of prayer? Where have you become more aware of your own biases regarding prayer and spirituality?
- c. Articulate one or two key learnings through your encounter with the Lord's Prayer this semester.

Paper writing rubric in Canvas

Paper Due: **April 30, 2021**

Assignment 2: Two sessions of Spiritual Direction

1. Spiritual Direction is an important part of each of our spiritual formation classes. It is a spiritual practice meant to help each student engage more deeply with the topic at hand as well as increase their awareness of the work of God more broadly.
2. Each student will participate in two sessions of spiritual direction. Spiritual Direction is commonly a monthly meeting. Please schedule your first session by **Feb. 15**. These sessions must be completed by **April 30, 2021**.
3. In this season of Covid, all spiritual direction will be done virtually. Sue Braun (suebraun4@gmail.com) will assign a spiritual director to each student. Students are responsible to contact their spiritual director and arrange the two sessions. The list of directors will be posted in Canvas.
4. The student is responsible to inform the instructor when this assignment has been completed for full credit. Failure to complete this assignment will result in a failing grade.

Assignment 3: Weekly Online Assignments

Each week there will be required readings and other activities and interactions including discussion postings. Failure to participate in these weekly discussion will result in a failing grade. Please see the Canvas course shell for details.

Confidentiality Agreement: NPTS must have a signed copy of the confidentiality agreement for every registered student in our spiritual formation courses. If you have not read and signed the document in another course, see the instructor. If you have signed the document, please be reminded of its standards of confidentiality.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact seminary academic services at 773-244-6217. Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. If needed, appointments can be relocated. For further information please review the following website: <http://www.northpark.edu/Current-Students/Student-Development/Disability-Resources/Resources-for-Students.aspx>

Title IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773-244-6276 or TitleIX@northpark.edu) for information about reporting, campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. Please refer to North Park's Safe Community site for reporting, contact information and further details. <http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Safe-Community>

Selected Bibliography

Bradshaw, Timothy. *Praying as Believing; The Lord's Prayer and the Christian Doctrine of God*. Oxford: Regent's Park College, 1998.

Crossan, John Dominic. *The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

Douglas-Klotz, Neil. *Prayers of the Cosmos: Reflections on the Original Meaning of Jesus's Words*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Haase, Albert, O.F.M. *Living the Lord's Prayer: The Way of the Disciple*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Hendrick, Jr. Obery M. *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teachings and How They Have Been Corrupted*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.

Holmes, Barbara. *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.

Law, Eric. *The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993.

Mangan, Celine, O.P., *Can We Still Call God Father? A Woman Looks at the Lord's Prayer*, Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984.

- Pak, Su Yon, U. Lee, J. Kim and M. Ji Cho. *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land: Korean American Practices of Faith*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.
- Parker J. Palmer. *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Pramuk, Christopher. *Hope Sings, So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013.
- Raboteau, Albert J. *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African American Religious History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.
- Reininger, Gustave, ed. *The Diversity of Centering Prayer*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999.
- Riggs, Marcia Y. and Barbara Holmes. *Can I get a witness? Prophetic Religious Voices of African American Women: An Anthology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Simon, Arthur. *Rediscovering the Lord's Prayer*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.
- Stevenson, Kenneth. *Abba Father: Understanding and Using the Lord's Prayer*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2000.
- _____. *The Lord's Prayer: A text in Tradition*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- Stewart III, Carlyle Fielding. *Soul Survivors: An African-American Spirituality*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
- Thurman, Howard, *Disciplines of the Spirit*. Richmond: Friends United, 2001.
- _____, *Mysticism and the Experience of Love*, Wallingford: Pendle Hill Press, 1961.
- Underhill, Evelyn. *Abba: Meditations based on the Lord's Prayer*. New York: Morehouse, 1982.
- Vest, Norvene. *Tending the Holy: Spiritual Direction Across Traditions*. New York: Morehouse, 2003.
- Wright, N.T. *The Lord and His Prayer*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.