

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SPFM 6230 Being Well: Christian Spirituality and Personal Health **(online)**
Spring 2022

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Walk in all the ways I have commanded you, that it may be well with you
Jeremiah 7:23

Course description:

The movement towards being well is central to human flourishing and provides the framework for this course. Seeking a healthy balance within one's capacities, the relationship between spirituality and wholistic health will be explored from a perspective of faith, along with stewardship of one's personal being and the biblical foundations for this stewardship. 1 credit

Class format:

Class format will include online discussion, readings, didactic presentation, small group work, personal reflection, and action. As a one credit class students should anticipate an average of 3 hours of work per week for class. Because process is significant to the experience of spiritual formation class, please allow unhurried time and space to reflect on the class material.

Course objectives:

1. Discuss the multiple dimensions of health as they interface with Christian spirituality
2. Identify and reflect upon the meaning of honoring the body from a personal faith perspective
3. Identify issues of stewardship in the care of one's own being
4. Engage in a personal discipline of health and reflect on the experience
5. Identify life affirming and life denying habits that influence one's well being

Course requirements:

- Class participation is essential to this class. Reading and assignments need to be completed in the allotted time frame so the class can progress together at an appropriate pace.
- Follow the course schedule for when online discussion occurs. The content for each week will have discussion questions for your reflection as

well as activities to complete. Your response should be posted by Thursday midnight, and by Saturday midnight of each week responses to two fellow students are to be posted.

- Over the first five weeks, students will identify an area for personal growth related to their health and then set a **realistic** goal to work towards during the remainder of the semester reflecting on personal spiritual dimensions of this process. Students will be in accountability groups of 2-3 persons for following through on this goal. You will be in communication with your accountability partner every other week.
- A 5 page reflection paper will be submitted at the end of class exploring one's personal journey of integrating spirituality and health following the assignment guidelines.
- Students who have not taken a NPTS online class before are required to complete an orientation to online education.
- To aid in personal reflection, each student will participate in two sessions of spiritual direction. This is the person with whom you met in Vocational Excellence. You are responsible for contacting your director and scheduling those sessions, which typically would be a month apart. These sessions are to be completed by the last week of class. If you have yet to complete Vocational Excellence and have not been assigned a spiritual director, contact Sue Braun suebraun4@gmail.com who will help connect you to a director. If it seems appropriate, but this is not required, you can use these sessions to explore faith and wellness in your own life

Required Texts:

1. ***Living Compass: Living Well in Thought, Word, and Deed*** (2014). by Scott Stoner, Morehouse Publishing. ISBN: 978-0-8192-2940- This text provides our framework for a faith-based understanding of wellness. Additional readings and videos will incorporate diverse perspectives.

Office Hours:

Online: I will be active in the course on Monday and Friday and check email regularly Monday – Friday. Personal conversation is welcome. Online or phone appointments can be requested via email.

Grading:

This class is Pass/Fail based on participation and completing **all** course requirements. In order to pass students must satisfactorily complete assignments within the allotted time frame unless they have received **prior** approval for an extension from the professor. If you miss more than 3 weeks of posting (which means either neglecting to post OR posting late without having requested prior approval from the professor) or of connecting with your accountability partner, you may not pass this course.

Confidentiality:

This is a spiritual formation course and all personal information shared in class discussion is confidential and should not be shared with anyone. Students who have not done so for prior NPTS spiritual formation classes should read and sign the confidentiality agreement.

Integrative Reflection Guidelines:

The integrative reflection will be done in two parts.

Part I Due: Friday, Week two, February 3

The purpose of this component is to lay a foundation for your reflection at the end of the class. Students are not required to submit Part I, however you may do so if you would like to discuss your reflection with the professor.

Take a good look in the mirror. What do you see?
Mentally scan your body from head to toe. How does your body feel? How might God be speaking to you through your body? Are there any parts for which you are particularly grateful? Are there any parts of your body that are giving you problems?

Where in your body do you hold your emotions? i.e. when you are stressed, where do you feel it in your body?

If your body could speak to you, what would it say? To what might your body be inviting you?

Do any images or metaphors come to mind that would describe your current experience of your body?

Part II Due: Friday, Week fourteen, May 12

In light of what you have learned in this class write a 5 page reflection paper. on the current state of your well being and identify plans for how you might grow in life-affirming behavior in the future, addressing the multiple dimensions of well being discussed in class. Discuss how, if at all, your experience of your body has changed since your initial body scan.

Reflection papers should be a dialogue between you and the class material, not a report. Discuss the thoughts and feelings that this material evokes as well as any issues that it raises for you personally.

Talking about issues for people in general or seminary students in particular is not appropriate for an integrative reflection. Rather you should reflect on your own personal experience as your life has interfaced with the material of class this

semester. One way to tell that you are doing this is your use of pronouns. A reflection paper uses “I” language rather than talking about others, as in the following example:

I have found the regular health discipline challenging. My personal goal was to run at least once a week, but I have found that I allow distractions to get in my way. It has been hard for me to make self care a priority, even though I know intellectually care of my body is important in being able to do my studies, I find it hard to live that way. This class has challenged me to look seriously at the values reflected in the choices I make about how I honor or dishonor my body.

There is no prescribed outline for the paper. In case it is helpful, the following questions are provided to stimulate your thinking as you write your integrative reflection. They do not all need to each be addressed explicitly:

- How are you currently experiencing your body? How is your experience of your body related to your spirituality and your relationship with God? How, if at all has this changed since your body scan reflection in the beginning of the semester?
- What in this class did you find thought provoking or challenging, and why was that so?
- What was your personal experience with the self care discipline? What did you learn from the self care discipline experience?
- Where are you currently in taking care of your physical, mental and relational well being, and was there anything in the class that stimulated your thinking in these areas?
- In what areas might self care be challenging for you as you contemplate continued seminary studies and/or moving into ministry?

Course Schedule

Detailed weekly assignments will be posted in the final syllabus

Module I Perspectives on Health: Individual and Communal

Week 1 – January 17 – A Life of Wholeness: Personal Perspectives

January 23-27 – Covenant Midwinter Conference – no class

Week 2 – January 30 - Community Connections & Health

Module II Living Well with all your Soul

Week 3 – February 6 – Spirituality

Week 4 – February 13 – Rest & Play

Module II Living Well with all your Mind

Week 5 – February 20 - Vocation

Week 6 – February 27 - Organization

Module III Living Well with all your Strength

Week 7 – March 6 – Care for the Body Part I

March 13-18 Spring Reading Week - No Class – Be well!

Week 8 – March 20 - Care for the Body Part II

Week 9 – March 27 – Stress Resilience

Module IV Living Well with all your Heart

Week 10 – April 3 – Relationships, Part I

Week 11 – April 10 - Relationships, Part II

Week 12 – April 17 – Handling Emotions

Module V Integration: Living in Harmony

Week 13 – April 24 – Connecting Creation, Spirituality & Health

Week 14 – May 1 & 8 – Moving Toward Wholeness