

**Writing as a Spiritual Practice**  
**SPFM-7190-I1, Spring 2024**  
**North Park Theological Seminary**  
(1 credit hours, \*syllabus subject to minor changes)

Instructor: David Bjorlin  
Phone: 218-590-2953  
\*Email: [dbjorlin@northpark.edu](mailto:dbjorlin@northpark.edu)  
Office Hours: TBD

*\*preferred method: barring any unforeseen circumstances, I will respond to any emails within 48 hours.*

### **Course Description:**

Writing As a Spiritual Practice explores the ways several different creative writing genres—journaling, psalms, collects, poetry, blessings—can help nurture Christian faith. Through a combination of readings and writing exercises, students will learn *about* the creative act of writing as a path of spiritual discovery as they also engage in these writing practices to better understand their own relationship with God, themselves, and their neighbors.

### **Course Objectives:**

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

1. Articulate the role of creativity and creative writing in Christian spirituality;
2. Engage in several different genres of spiritual writing—journaling, memoir, poetry, blessings—to discover the unique ways each can function and open us up to the presence of God;
3. Develop their own sustainable writing practices for ongoing spiritual renewal and growth.

### **Required Texts**

1. Helen Cepero, *Journaling as a Spiritual Practice: Encountering God through Attentive Writing* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008).
2. Other weekly readings as assigned on Canvas.

### **Assessments**

1. Complete all assigned readings for each week (a reading log will be completed at the end of the semester).
2. Following the prompts below in the course schedule, write and post the weekly exercise by the end of the week (by Friday 11:59 p.m. of the week).

3. Respond to two other group members' posts (by Sunday 11:59 p.m.) using the following guidelines:
  - a. What did you resonate with in their writing and why?
  - b. What are you curious to hear more about?
4. Complete a final reflection paper of 750 words that reflects on what you have discovered about your faith through the practice of writing in the class and how you would like to integrate writing into your life moving forward. **Due: May 11, 11:59 p.m.**

## Grading

The grading in this course is pass/fail.

## Accommodations

North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services at 773-244-5619 as soon as possible. If desired and necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Act Service is found in the Student Academic Handbook by visiting the following website: <http://www.northpark.edu/ada>.

## Title XI

Students who believe they may have experienced sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773) 244-5664 or [TitleIX@northpark.edu](mailto:TitleIX@northpark.edu) to learn more about reporting options, resources, and support 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 members are private resources meaning we are legally obligated to share information about the behavior reported above with the University's Title IX coordinator. If you are unsure whether you want your concerns disclosed to the Title IX Coordinator, we encourage you to contact Counseling Support Services at (773) 244-4897 or [counseling@northpark.edu](mailto:counseling@northpark.edu).

Please refer to North Park's [Safe Community](#) site for reporting, contact information, and further details.

## **Academic Honesty**

Academic Honesty: In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion.

Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Using one’s own work from previous assignments or other class assignments.
5. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

In the special instance of group work, the instructor will make clear his/her expectations with respect to individual vs. collaborative work. A violation of these expectations may be considered cheating as well.

For further information on this subject you may refer to the Academic Dishonesty section of the University’s online catalog.

## **Incomplete Grades**

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as “I” until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of “I” will automatically be changed to “F.” For the full policy, see page 15 of the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#).