



SPFM 5201 Journey: The Story of Our Lives  
North Park Theological Seminary  
January 2 to February 23, 2024 (Semester Dates)  
Jan 11, 12, 13, 2024 (In Person & Online)  
Jan 15 to Feb 23, 2023 (Online)  
1 credit hour

INSTRUCTORS: DR. ROB PETERSON  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*SPFM 5201- Journey* is the introductory course in spiritual formation at NPTS. Using Psalm 23 as the foundational scripture, participants will be encouraged to examine and reflect upon this psalm as a helpful framing of the journey of faith and ministry under the watch and care of the Shepherd. Lectures and readings will cover the themes of Christian Spirituality; Spiritual Formation Dynamics; Embodied Spirituality for Ministers; Spiritual Disciplines; Introduction to Spiritual Direction. The course content and discussions are aimed at laying an enduring foundation for personal and ministerial formation. In addition to class interaction and readings, participants will be placed in Formation Groups to offer the gift of listening and to grow in their ability to discern the movement of God.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Gain a fuller understanding of the breadth of Christian spiritual formation through readings of spiritual theology, church traditions, and practices.
2. Articulate core spiritual practices that help sustain healthy spirituality and ministry.
3. Cultivate greater self-awareness and discernment by sharing experiences from one's personal life through active involvement in Formation Groups.
4. This course contributes toward the MDiv, MACF and MACM learning outcomes of demonstrating a theologically grounded ministerial identity committed to caring for the spiritual formation of the self, individuals, and communities.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS**

#### Text Books

Smith, B.J. and Graybeal, L. (1993) *A Spiritual Formation Workbook/Revised Edition*. New York: Harper Collins.

Peacock, Barbara L. (2020) *Soul Care in African American Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

#### Readings Posted to Canvas

Adamo, David T. (2018) *Reading Psalm 23 in African Context*. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39(1), a1783.

Goldingay, John (2006) *Psalms*. Baker Academic: Grand Rapids. Commentary on Psalm 23 pages 344-354.

Heim, Knut M (2016) *Psalm 23 in the Age of the Wolf*. Christianity Today Jan/Feb.

Katanacho, Yohanna. (2018) *Praying Through the Psalms*. Carlisle: Langham Global Library. Introduction and Prayer from Psalm 23 (pg 45).

Miyashina, Taki (1965) *Psalm 23 - A Japanese Paraphrase*.

Thorpe, Jacquelyn B. *Psalm 23 Re-Mix*. The Journal of Religious Thought, 59 no 1 -60 no 1 2006 - 2007, p 165-179.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Submit Confidentiality Form by Friday, Jan 19: A signed “NPTS Confidentiality Statement” must be on file. This form will be provided. Discussion in class and group is protected under this statement.
2. Memorize Psalm 23 in your heart language or second language if you like.
3. Practice and reflect on three new spiritual disciplines.
4. Attend four Formation Group meetings. Formation groups meetings are typically one hour to an hour and fifteen minutes long. The first Formation Group will be in person followed by an additional three Formation Group meetings by Zoom.
5. Read required readings including course texts books and articles posted to Canvas.
6. Participate in Canvas Discussion Groups. You will be reading articles on Psalm 23 and responding to a few classmates comments. See schedule below and on Canvas.
7. A final integrative reflection paper is required in this course and is due Friday, Feb 23, 2024 at 11:59 pm CST (5-6 pages double-spaced). All quotes by authors, presenters, instructor and the Bible must be noted and cited (the addition of quotes might make paper a bit longer). When making citations put the source in parentheses. Please submit papers as Word Documents with the title of lastnamefirstname (petersonrob-reflection paper).

### Guideline for Final Paper

Prayerfully reflect on all the aspects of the course including Psalm 23. Outline your paper using the following four headings:

- General Reflections
- Formation Group Reflections
- Spiritual Discipline Reflections
- Moving Forward Reflections

General Reflections: Use the following suggested questions to help you write this portion of your paper (You don't need to answer all the following questions. Use them to help you reflect on the course). How did Psalm 23 come alive for you? What did you notice happening in your life and soul as you went through the course? What stood out to you? What was stirred in you? What reading had the most impact on you? Why? How is your story being formed at this season of your life? What do you need to pay attention to in light of the course?



Formation Group: What did you notice in your heart as you met together with others? How did these groups touch you and change you?

Spiritual Disciplines: Identify, practice and reflect on 3 new spiritual practices ( See *A Spiritual Formation Workbook* and *Soul Care in African American Practice*). Describe how these practices helped you with your experience of God. How did you meet God through these practices? Will you continue to use them? Why or why not?

Moving Forward: Conclude your paper by responding to this statement: “As a beloved child of God, I intend to nurture and sustain my life with God by....” Describe your rule of life (See Lecture on Embodied Spirituality by Dr. Peterson)

Use of the pronoun “I” is appropriate and expected. Refrain from summarizations or generalizations such as “the class struggled with the theme of centering prayer” This is about your life and your unique journey with God and what God did in your heart and mind.

**Grading Rubric:** This course is Pass/Fail. 75 points are required for a passing grade.

Course Readings and In Class Participation (20 points)

- Participation in all online sessions, scripture memorization and spiritual disciplines.
- Required reading is completed.

Formation Groups (20 points)

- Engage thoughtfully in the Formation Group. Attendance at all group meetings is required.

Final Reflection Paper (40 points)

- See description above.

### **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 will receive a failing grade on the assignment and 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. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
5. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments.

For additional information, see the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 25–26.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please [email the Disability Access Specialist](#) or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

## **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](mailto: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.

## **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](#).

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Thursday, Jan 11 from 6 pm – 9pm (CST) In Person & Online**

*Course Introduction: Spiritual Formation for a Resilient Ministry*

*The Lord is My Shepherd I: Spiritual Formation and Metaphors for God*

*The Lord is My Shepherd II: Pastors as Shepherds*

The Spiritual Discipline of Examen

### **Friday, Jan 12 from 6pm – 9pm (CST) – In Person & Online**

*I Lack Nothing: Spiritual Formation and Desire*

*The Shepherd Makes, Leads, Refreshes Guides: Spiritual Formation and The Nature of the Soul*

The Spiritual Discipline of Centering Prayer

### **Saturday, Jan 13 from 9 am to 5pm (CST) – In Person & Online**

*Even Though I walk Through the Valley: Spiritual Formation and Suffering*

*The Shepherd Prepares and Anoints: Spiritual Formation and Embodied Faith*

*Living in the Shepherd's Goodness and Love: Spiritual Formation and Trusting Love*

Introduction to Spiritual Direction

Formation Group 1

### **Week of Jan 15-20**

Reading and Discussion - On Canvas

Goldingay, John (2006) Psalms. Baker Academic: Grand Rapids. Commentary on Psalm 23 pages 344-354.

Katanacho, Yohanna. (2018) Praying Through the Psalms. Carlisle: Langham Global Library. Introduction and Prayer from Psalm 23 (pg 45).



**Week of Jan 22-27**

Participation in Formation Group 2

**Week of Jan 29 – Feb 3**

Reading and Discussion - On Canvas

Adamo, David T. (2018) *Reading Psalm 23 in African Context. Verbum et Ecclesia* 39(1), a1783.

Miyashina, Taki (1965) *Psalm 23 from a Japanese Translation.*

**Week of Feb 5-10**

Formation Group 3

**Week of Feb 12-17**

Reading and Discussion - On Canvas

Heim, Knut M (2016) *Psalm 23 in the Age of the Wolf.* Christianity Today Jan/Feb.

Thorpe, Jacquelyn B. *Psalm 23 Re-Mix.* The Journal of Religious Thought, 59 no 1 -60 no 1 2006 - 2007, p 165-179.

**Week of 19-23**

Participation in Formation Group 4

**Friday Feb 23**

Reflection Paper Due - Submit Paper by Friday, Feb 23 at 11:59 pm (CST).

Course Reading Completion Form Due - Submit by Friday, Feb 23 at 11:59 pm (CST).