

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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

Spring 2025

Preliminary Syllabus as of 11/6/24.

There may be some changes in final syllabus

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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: 978-0-8192-2940This 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 through Canvas.

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.

Inclusive Language: NPTS encourages all students to follow the Statement of Inclusive Language from the Board of Publication Policy of the Evangelical Covenant Church which states, “We are committed to being inclusive in language and imagery in an effort to eliminate prejudice, whether gender, racial, ethnic, national, religious, denominational, cultural, or physical. This way of proceeding in no manner seeks to deny personal identity; rather, it guards against any use of word or phrase that tends to exclude people.” Consider how you can best incorporate inclusive language into all of your communication during the course particularly in your references to God and to humanity. [See Student Handbook](#)

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:

- Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
- Copying another’s answers on an examination.
- Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
- Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
- 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 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 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. 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 being 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](#).

Integrative Reflection Guidelines:

The integrative reflection will be done in two parts.

Part I Due: Week two

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: Week fourteen

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?

Format Guidelines: Use parenthetical referencing Book: (Stoner, 2014, 2006, 37); Article: (Davis, 2014) Video: (Name of video) Lecture notes: (Chase-Ziolek, 6.16.17)

Grading Rubric Integrative Reflection

Outcome	Possible points	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Integrates effectively, in written form, essential learning from engagement in class, required readings and experiences.		9-10 points	7-8 points	Less than 7 points
Writing integrates with class readings, materials and exercises	10	Paper strongly integrates class readings, materials and exercises	Paper adequately integrates class readings, experiences and exercises	Paper fails to integrate class readings, experiences and exercises
Writing demonstrates personal insight on one's wellness from the body reflection done week two to the present	10	Paper demonstrates strong personal insight and self reflection in discussing one's personal wellness journey throughout the semester	Paper demonstrates some personal insight or self reflection in discussing one's wellness journey throughout the semester	Paper fails to demonstrate personal insight and self reflection in discussing one's wellness journey throughout the semester
Writing demonstrates reflection on discipline of health engaged in this semester and its connection to personal spirituality	10	Paper demonstrates thoughtful reflection on discipline of health engaged in and its connection to personal spirituality	Paper demonstrates some reflection on discipline of health and its connection to personal spirituality	Paper fails to demonstrate reflection on discipline of health and its connection to personal spirituality
Writing quality and formatting	10	Well written paper with no formatting, grammatical or spelling errors following length requirements and syllabus guidelines	Well written paper with a few spelling, formatting or grammatical errors, length requirements, most of syllabus guidelines	Paper is written weakly has many grammatical or spelling errors. Fails to follow length requirements, syllabus guidelines
	40		28 points minimum requirement	

Course Schedule

Module I Perspectives on Health: Individual and Communal

Week 1 – January 13 – A Life of Wholeness: Personal Perspectives

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 1; lecture notes and
- **View:** *Connecting Church, Faith and Health* [Scott Stoner video](#) from 2018 NPTS Faith and Health Symposium (60 minutes)
- **Complete** – 1) Class orientation quiz and 2) Living Compass self assessment, either pages 155 -164 or [online](#) by Saturday, January 18
- **Post** – Introduction by Thursday, January 16
- **Practice** – Pray for discernment in area of wellness to explore
- **Connect** – schedule getting acquainted conversation with professor
- **Optional Reading:** *Wholeness: Rhythms Intimacy and Health* by Richard Carlson and Mary Chase-Ziolek

January 20-24 – Covenant Midwinter Conference – no class

Week 2 – January 27 - Community Connections & Health

- **Read** – *Health is Membership* by Wendell Berry and lecture notes
- **View:** 1) *The 'Hispanic Paradox' Explained: Faith and Family Key to Longevity Advantage for Latinos* (4:38 minutes): 2) *Interview with Pastor Semmeal Thomas of City Covenant Church, Detroit* (on Canvas 30 minutes)
- **Post** – Response to class materials by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday
- **Complete** - Body Reflection, part I of Integrative Reflection.
- **Optional Reading:** *Human Bodies and the Image of God* by Nadia Bolz-Weber *Repairing, Restoring, And Revisioning The Health of Our Communities: The Challenge of Isaiah 58* by Mary Chase-Ziolek

Module II Living Well with all your Soul

Week 3 – February 3 – Spirituality

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 2, and lecture notes
- **View** – 1) *Spiritual Directors International Learns from , Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown, PhD, and The Rev. Kirk Byron Jones, PhD* (10 minutes)
2) *Fiesta Spirit Moving American Church* (4:18 minutes)

- **Post** – Response to class materials by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday
- **Practice** – 1) continue to pray for discernment in area of wellness to explore 2) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 3) Engage in a new spiritual practice 4) schedule first meeting with spiritual director
- **Optional Viewing** *Living Compass*, Rev. Scott Stoner, PhD (10:21 minutes)

Week 4 – February 10 – Rest & Play

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 3 and lecture notes
- **View** – 1) *Centered in the Storm: Rest as Resistance* NPTS Practical Theology Webinar October 26, 2022 (90 minutes)
- **Post** - Response to class materials by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday
- **Practice** – 1) continue to pray for discernment in area of wellness to explore 2) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 3) Engage in a practice related to rest and play
- **Share** - who your spiritual director is and when you plan to meet
- **Optional Viewing/Reading:** 1) *Rest as a Biblical Practice*, Kirk Byron Jones (2 minutes) 2) *Rest Life*, Tricia Hershey, (3 minutes) 3) *Nap Ministry*

Module II Living Well with all your Mind

Week 5 – February 17 - Vocation

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 4, lecture notes, *Those who flourish in ministry are intentional about their well-being* from Faith & Leadership at Duke, and *Bi-vocational Ministry is on the Rise*
- **Post** – No post this week
- **Practice** – 1) continue to pray for discernment in area of wellness to explore 2) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 3) identify area for personal growth related to your health

Week 6 – February 24 - Organization

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 5, lecture notes, *Exploring our Relationship with God and Money* by Jon Hokama and *My Financial Autobiography*, from Faith & Leadership

- **Reflection** –consider your autobiography of money (see website) and of time.
- **Post** - Response to class materials by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday
- **Practice** – 1) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 2) identify area for your FAITH step towards wellness and the discipline of health you will practice
- **Connect** – with your accountability partner(s) and commit to pray for each other
- **Optional Reading** - *How do you decide to spend your time?*

Module III Living Well with all your Strength

Week 7 – March 3 – Care for the Body Part I

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 6, and lecture notes
- **View** - *Works Without Faith is Dead: Restoring Purpose to Health Ministry* – Kara Davis, MD Begins at 5:57 Plenary Session from the 2018 faith and health symposium at North Park on Being Well: Connecting Church, Faith and Health. (60 minutes)
- **Search** – for a quality, reliable website with information relevant to your wellness practice to share with your group
- **Post** - Response to class materials by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday
- **Practice** – 1) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 2) Engage in a new practice related to physical wellbeing 3) Engage your FAITH step towards wellness
- **Connect** – pray for your accountability partner(s)
- **Optional Reading:** 1) *Riding my Bike as a Spiritual Discipline* by Laura Everett 2) *Practicing an embodied faith through yoga* by Kathy Khang

March 10-15 Spring Reading Week - No Class – Be well!

Week 8 – March 17 - Care for the Body Part II

- **Read** - lecture notes and **either** read *Flesh and Blood Spirituality* by Ruth Haley Barton **or** view Keynote address on *Honoring the Body as a Spiritual Practice* by Ruth Haley Barton at the 2018 faith and health symposium (60 minutes) Begins at 46 minutes with introduction
- **Listen:** *Devon Mihesuah and Indigenous Food Sovereignty*, Real Food Reads podcast, Episode 45:, October 12, 2020 (11 minutes)

- **Post** – No post this week
- **Practice** – 1) Continue on your FAITH step towards wellness
- **Connect** – with your accountability partner (s) and 2) meet with your spiritual director, if you haven't
- **Optional Reading**
 - 1) *Eating Faithfully is Key to Living Faithfully* by Grace Hackney
 - 2) Mihesuah, D. A. (2003). Decolonizing our Diets by Recovering our Ancestors' Gardens, *American Indian Quarterly*, 27, 807-839.

Week 9 – March 24 – Stress Resilience

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 7 and lecture notes
- **Create** - This week you are invited to share a creative response to living well with all your strength. Take a picture, create a drawing, video, poem or song that reflects some dimension of physical wellness that is important to you and share with the class along with an explanation. Alternatively, you can find a picture, drawing, poem or song created by someone else that speaks to you of living well with all your strength and share along with an explanation.
- **Post** – Share your creative response by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday
- **Practice** – 1) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 2) Continue on your FAITH step towards wellness
- **Connect** – pray for your accountability partner(s)

Module IV Living Well with all your Heart

Week 10 – March 31 – Relationships, Part I

- **Read** – Lecture notes
- **Post** – No post this week
- **Connect** – Invest your class time this week in a personal relationship
- **Practice** – 1) Continue on your FAITH step towards wellness
- **Connect** - 1) plan second meeting with spiritual director pray for your accountability partner(s)

Week 11 – April 7 - Relationships, Part II

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 8 and lecture notes
- **View** - *Gratitude as a Spiritual Practice*, Wilkie Au (60 minutes)
- **Post** – Response to class materials by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday

- **Practice** – 1) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 2) Continue on your FAITH step towards wellness
- **Connect** – pray for your accountability partner(s)
- **Optional Reading** - Moltmann-Wendel, E. (2005). *Touching and being touched* in Denton, J. ed. *Good is the Flesh*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Week 12 – April 14 – Handling Emotions

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 9, lecture notes and brief reflection on the Art of Developing a Beautiful Mind by John O’Donohue
- **View:** *Decolonizing Mental Health* (59 minutes)
- **Post** – No post this week
- **Practice** – 1) Reflect on thought, word and deed questions in *Your Living Compass* 2) Experience Holy Week 3) Continue on your FAITH step towards wellness
- **Connect** – with your accountability partner(s)

Module V Integration: Living in Harmony

Week 13 – April 21 – Connecting Creation, Spirituality & Health

- **Read:** 1) *We are Related to One Another and All Creation* by Lenore Three Stars; 2) *Otis Moss III: Care for the land is intimately tied to Black liberation | Faith and Leadership* and; 3) *Connecting Nature, Faith and Health*
- **View:** 1) *Indigenous Theology and the Harmony Way* Randy Woodley, (24:41 minutes) and 2) *Nature and Taste of Chicago* brief narrated powerpoint
- **Post** – Response to class materials by Thursday, and response to fellow students by Saturday
- **Practice** – 1) Continue on your FAITH step towards wellness 2) Choose a Silent Sensory Awareness or Activity from Connecting nature, Spirit and Health that appeals to you or take a “Parable Walk” in which you look in nature for metaphors through which God might speak to you.
- **Connect** – 1) Second spiritual direction session complete 2) connect with your accountability partner(s)
- **Optional Reading** Choose one of the articles on the environment from Christians for Social Action

Week 14 – April 28 & May 5 – Moving Toward Wholeness

- **Read** - *Your Living Compass*, chapter 10 and lecture notes
- **Post** – Response to class materials by Thursday, May 1
- **Practice** – Reflect on your steps towards wellness over the semester
- **Submit:** 1) Integrative reflection paper and 2) dates of meeting with spiritual director by Thursday, May 8