Course Syllabus

Spiritual Formation for Ministry (MC/SF501)  
Semlink Plus  

Dr. Steven Klipowicz, Professor

Online Modules begin on January, 27 2014 with a course end date of May, 5 2014.

Contact Information

Professor of Record

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Course Description:

Spiritual Formation for Ministry (MC/SF501) is a foundational course in the Division of Practical Theology that explores the processes and goals of spiritual formation in the life of the Christian minister, counselor or leader from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint including personal, biblical, theological, psychological, and historical perspectives. The student is introduced to the historic disciplines and practices of the Christian faith that promote intimacy with God and Christ-likeness in character with the goal of fostering ongoing personal vitality essential to ministry and the ability to facilitate spiritual renewal and consistent discipleship in others.

Relationship to GCTS Curriculum:

Hamilton:

Spiritual Formation for Ministry (MC/SF 501) is required of all students in the Master of Divinity, the Master of Arts in Spiritual Formation, and Master of Arts in World Missions and Evangelism programs. Students in the Master of Arts in Educational Ministries can substitute MC/SF501 for a core course, but at this time it is not actually required.
Charlotte and Jacksonville:

Spiritual Formation for Ministry (MC/SF 501) is a required concentration course in the MAR-Hybrid program. It is a required course in all other degree programs except the Master of Arts in Christian Leadership and the Master of Arts in Christian Counseling. This course can also serve as a ministry option in the Master of Arts in Christian Counseling program. Students in the counseling program should arrange with the course professor to develop a bibliography and projects that will correspond with the counseling degree.

Online Features

This course will utilize paced learning modules on the SAKAI learning management platform throughout the course. This online work will include lectures, assignments, student blogs, discussion boards, forums, online office hours, and other elements of educational support. It will be expected that all students have Internet access, a compatible browser and fully participate in all online segments.

Course Objectives:

The goal of this course is to develop a foundation for personal spiritual development in the student as a Christian leader in pastoral ministry or other callings. In addition, the course seeks to prepare students to teach and facilitate others in the process of spiritual growth. Adequate completion of assignments, projects, readings, and other class activities should enable the student to demonstrate the following as objectives:

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of Christian spirituality and faith development with a biblical and theological rationale for the nature of spiritual life and growth. Students will explain required factors for the cultivation of an intimate relationship with God and Christ-like character in private practices and through community.

- The student will be able to recount major streams of spirituality historically fostered within the Christian tradition, comparing and contrasting key theological features.

- Students will describe in writing how their personalities influence spiritual orientation and the process of spiritual and character formation.

- Students will review and “exegete” their life narratives reflectively as a journey of faith and interpret life events in light of God’s sovereign purposes for spiritual formation and vocation.

- Students will be able to identify, articulate, and apply key Christian practices and disciplines of the spiritual life in a guided time of spiritual assessment and practice.
• Students will identify both the primary and secondary elements of spiritual renewal (cf. Dynamics of Spiritual Life) and apply these factors to personal and congregational formation.

• Students will provide a framework for the understanding and practice of spiritual mentoring and friendship.

• Students will recognize the various pitfalls to formation that ministerial life present and develop a plan to maintain spiritual vitality in vocational practice in terms of a personal “rule of life.”

Attendance:

Students are required to complete all online modules by the due dates listed. Unexcused absenteeism or lack of completing online modules will result in a loss of grade points. If for reason of illness or family death or emergency, please contact Dr. Klipowicz or any recognized teaching assistant regarding these events to determine appropriate make-up activities. For additional information concerning attendance, consult the Student Handbook requirements and the Syllabus Addenda (end of document).

Required Personality Testing

As a part of this course, all students should complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Students who have not recently taken this inventory should follow the instructions posted in the course Resources posted in SAKAI for directions on how to take the test online. This testing service will cost the student $20 and should be done before the class begins in order to insure timely delivery of test scores. Payment will be made by check to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Charlotte.

Students who recently (last 5 years) have completed the MBTI in other contexts should familiarize themselves with their type profiles. They do not need to be re-tested.

MC 501 Required Readings:

The following books are required reading for the class. They should be read in their entirety (except for Calhoun) unless otherwise noted in the Online Modules:


*A statement indicating the amount of reading completed in terms of pages read must be submitted at the conclusion of the course.*

**Course Requirements**

Achievements of this course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The successful completion of these activities will require student will spend at a minimum 135 hours (required Federal government guidelines) devoted to coursework, both on and offline.

**Class Assignments:**

Grading for this course will be based upon the following assignments. Students will complete the following projects and exercises and submit them by the identified due date. Grades will be determined by the extent and quality of the work completed. Additional explanations of each project will be provided during the first class session.

**Community Study Groups**

Interaction with other students is one of the three primary ways students will learn in this course. Students will be asked to work in community study groups of 4-5 students throughout the course. These groups will be created on a random basis by the teacher and will be the basis for collaborative work, group discussions, and faculty conferences.
Weekly SAKAI Modules:

During the 14 weeks of the course, there will be 12 weekly study lessons on SAKAI for students to complete. These lessons will involve didactic, reflective, and collaborative aspects of study. Weekly Lessons will be worth 10 points each for a total of 120 points. Aspects of these modules will be used in the development of the following major course assignments.

Major Course Assignments:

Assignment #1: My Spiritual Journey Narrative

A person’s current sense of personal, spiritual, and ministerial identity is a product of one’s journey or story. To truly understand yourself, you need to tell your story and tell it often! Moreover, your story helps you understand and more deeply appreciate how God has in a providential and sovereign manner demonstrated his grace, mercy, and provision for you. It also reveals how God used events to develop specific spiritual capacities in you such as an increased ability to pray, care for others, or patiently trust God. This assignment provides the opportunity for you to review your life history in terms of creating a spiritual narrative or autobiography. Your story should provide a view of your relationship to God and His people from your earliest memories to the present. This should be more than a salvation testimony or a recounting of one’s call to ministry, although both aspects may figure considerably in your story.

Your narrative text should be at least 8 pages long (double spaced). Use the following prompts to help you shape your narrative. You do not need to explicitly use these terms in your story.

- Heritage: What geographical, ethnic, family features, or history influenced your journey with God?
- Acts and Scenes: How can you divide your life in terms of phases and seasons with God?
- Cast of Characters: What relationships played a key role in influencing you for or against God?
- Mountain Tops: What times or experiences made you feel closest to God and why?
- Turning Points: What incidences were pivotal in your story with God?
- Crucibles: At which points of your story did you find yourself suffering? How did this suffering influence your relationship with God? Your understanding of yourself?

This assignment will be worth a maximum of 70 points and will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Quality and clarity of writing
• Ability to analyze events of life from a spiritual and theological perspective identifying key formative influences in personal formation

The paper in its final completed form will be due at the **end of Lesson 8. A draft form will be developed and submitted in Lesson 3.**

**Assignment #2: Personal Spiritual Assessment/ Rule of Life:** Using the seven point format suggested by Adele Calhoun (p. 256-263), conduct a personal Spiritual Growth assessment on the seven areas of your spiritual life. Meet **three times** with someone you spiritually respect to serve as a spiritual advisor for this project (not a classmate). During your first meeting with the advisor discuss your assessment. Based upon your conversation, choose **three** specific spiritual exercises or disciplines from Calhoun’s book to further your growth in each area. Over a six week period during the semester, practice these exercises. Focus on one discipline every two weeks if possible.

**You will use your personal blog on the SAKAI website to act as a spiritual growth journal in which you daily reflect upon your spiritual experiences with the three practices.** You should explain why you chose each discipline and provide a regular reflection on your experience with the chosen discipline. You should submit at a minimum **20 blog entries.**

A final written report of 5-6 pages should be submitted by **May 5, 2014.** The report will include the following:

• A summary of your spiritual assessment on the Seven Areas in Calhoun (1 page)
• A summary of your discussions with your spiritual mentor or advisor (1 page)
• An evaluation of the spiritual disciplines/practices you chose in terms of their influence upon your life (2 pages) in light of your personality preferences (Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*)
• A 1-2 page “Rule of Life” for the next 12 months developed as a result of your spiritual practices and spiritual conversations (1-2 pages). Guidelines for the Rule of Life will be discussed in Lesson 9.

The assignment will be worth up to **80 points** based upon your ability to complete all elements of the assignment, the extent and depth of your blog reflections on your spiritual journey this spring using specific disciplines, and the ability to develop a sustainable Rule of Life for the next year. Project in final written form and submitted blogs is due on **May 5, 2014.**

**Assignment #3: Comparative Spirituality Paper:** For this assignment, you will work in teams of 4-5 students as determined by your student study groups. Choose from the following list **one** approach, tradition or school of Christian Spirituality for each member in the group to research. Each group member will be responsible to research a type of spirituality and develop a 3-4 page summary. The summary should include the following:

• A short historical sketch of the tradition of spirituality
• A description of the approach using Simon Chan’s theological principles (p. 24 – 122). These principles include Chan’s three material criteria plus concepts discussed regarding the person of God, nature of sin, work of salvation and grace, and the place of the church.

Every member will share the outcomes of their research with the rest of the work group by arranging a conference call or SKYPE session. The joint session will include the following:

1. A verbal report from each member of his or her research findings and analysis using Chan.
2. A discussion between team members analyzing these traditions by comparing and contrasting the various schools or approaches to spirituality in light of Chan’s theological framework.
3. A deliberation about the final written project and each member’ contribution to it.

As an outcome of this group research and deliberation, the following will be required from each group:

1. An 18 -24 page report summarizing your group’s research, analysis, and evaluation. This should include a brief survey of the traditions, their unique practices and evaluative perspectives using Chan. This will be due on May 5, 2014. One report per group.

This project will be worth up to 100 points per group member. It will be awarded based upon the quality of the group’s research, its ability to critically analyze and evaluate each tradition or approach according to the frameworks required, and the ability to present the results in cogent writing.

**Schools or Approaches to Spirituality**

• Desert Fathers (required)
• Benedictine Monastic Spirituality
• Jesuit Spirituality (Ignatian)
• Classic Pentecostalism
• African American Spirituality
• Deeper Life (Keswick and Miles Stanford’s Green Letters)
• Word of Faith teachings (Kenyon, Hagin, and Copeland)
• Wesleyan Formation
• Para-church (Campus Crusade or Navigators)
• Greek Orthodox Spirituality
• Quakerism
• English Spirituality (Anglican)
• Puritanism
• Reformed (American) Spirituality
• Emerging Contemplative Movement
• Another global perspective such as an Asian or African perspective
• Others (Please have approval from Dr. Klipowicz)

All work for this course will be due no later than May 5, 2014. Any extensions beyond this date must be determined and approved by the Semlink office who will consult with the professor. Only one set of the assignment needs to be submitted for the group project.

Grading:

Grades for the course will be determined by performance on the above exercises and projects. Students can achieve a total of 400 points from courses assignments with the following grade scale and assignment weighting:

Scoring Scale

360 – 400 points  A-/A  
319 – 359 points  B-/B+  
278 – 318 points  C-/C+  
237 – 277 points  D-/D+

• Comparative Spirituality Project   100 pts.
• Personal Assessment/Rule of Life   80 pts.
• Spiritual Narrative    70 pts.
• Weekly Module Assignments   120 pts. (12 x 10 pts.)
• Course Readings       30 pts.

Completion of all course readings is worth 30 points. For example, completion of 50% of the reading will result in a loss of 15 points. A final statement explaining percent of pages read needs to be uploaded to the Assignments section of SAKAI under Course Reading Statement.

All assignments are expected to be written on the level of graduate education. Incorrect grammar, spelling mistakes, and other indications of poor writing will result in the loss of grade points. Make sure you proof read your work before submitting it.

Course Schedule:

1/27 – 2/2   Lesson 1: What is Spiritual Formation?
2/3 – 2/9   Lesson 2: Foundations for a Spiritual Theology
2/10 – 2/16 Lesson 3: Personal Contours of the Spiritual Journey I
2/17 – 2/23 Lesson 4: Personal Contours of the Spiritual Journey II
2/24 – 3/3 Lesson 5: Models of Change and Formation I
3/4-3/10 Lesson 6: Models of Change and Formation II
3/11 – 3/17 Lesson 7: Patterns and Processes of Formation I (Prayer and Detachment)
3/18 – 3/24 Lesson 8: Patterns and Processes of Formation II (Word Based Disciplines)
3/25 – 3/31 Student Study Week and Group Conferences
4/1 – 4/6 Lesson 9: Patterns and Processes of Formation III (Communal Formation)
4/7 – 4/13 Lesson 10: Developing a Rule of Life
4/14 – 4/20 Lesson 11: Life and Praxis in the Spirit
4/21 – 4/27 Lesson 12: Renewal and Revival
4/28 – 5/5 Student Study Week
5/5 Final Work Due

**General Bibliography**


*Historical*


**Word**


**Prayer**


**Reflection**


Peterson, Eugene. *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity.* Grand Rapids,


**Reflection: Spiritual Direction and Disciple-Building**


**Community**


**Ministerial Formation and Development**


Mulholland, M. Robert, Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1993).


Thielicke, Helmut, A Little Exercise for Young Theologians. (Grand Rapids: Eerdsmans, 1962).


Williams, Brian, The Potter’s Rib: Mentoring for Pastoral Formation. (Vancouver: Regent College Press, 2005).


Ministerial Identity


Piper, John. Brothers, We are NOT Professionals. (Broadman and Holman, Nashville, TN, 2002).

Tidball, Derek, Skillful Shepherds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 1986).

Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards
Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work,” as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are
expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.