He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Psalm 1:3, NIV [Photo © D. Kevin Adams]

If then you are wise, you will show yourself rather as a reservoir than as a canal. For a canal spreads abroad water as it receives it, but a reservoir waits until it is filled before overflowing, and thus communicates, without loss to itself, its superabundant water...In the Church at the present day, we have many canals, few reservoirs.

Bernard of Clairvaux, c. 1120

I offer my heart to thee, Lord, promptly and sincerely.

John Calvin's motto
CH/MC 591: Dynamics of Spiritual Life

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Hamilton
Fall, 2012

Course Instructor: Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Class Meeting Time: Mondays, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Contact Information: TBA in class
Office Hours: TBA in class

For students with a significant amount of life or ministry experience or previous coursework in Spiritual Formation, this course may be substituted for the MC 501 Spiritual Formation requirement for the M.Div., by petition to Dr. Steve Kang. Petition is not required if you are taking the course as an elective for any degree or as a requirement for the MASF degree.

Course Description and Objectives:
Drawing on the biblical Creation-Redemption narrative, the course presents a comprehensive model of spirituality that can be used in personal renewal, spiritual formation, direction, discipleship, mentoring, and counseling. Combining theological reflection, historical analysis, literary theory, the arts, and practical application, it explores key spiritual dynamics, equipping persons for ministry to those seeking a deeper life with Christ.

Issues of discovering one’s design and calling, equipping for spiritual warfare, pursuit of intimacy with God, worship and obedience, and growing into Christ-likeness by the power of the Holy Spirit, will be dealt with in an integrated model. In explicating these key dynamics, we will explore the rich heritage of the Church in relation to a wide variety of spiritual practices, disciplines, etc.

The course also provides a historical framework for life-long learning and ministry in Christian Spirituality, and the selected readings cover a broad spectrum of Christianity.

The course will incorporate both theory and praxis, integrating head and heart.

Class Sessions (subject to change if necessary and/or salutary):

Session #1: A Theology of Spirituality (September 10)

Session #2, 2w, 3: The Dynamics of Identity and Vocation (September 17, 21/22, & 24)
How do we discern our God-given design and calling? What is the role of gifts in the Christian life? We will look at a history of vocation and the purposes of the Christian life. Session 2w is a small group workshop, modeling how to use life narrative analysis in congregations to help build community, identify gifting, etc.

Session #4: The Dynamic of Spiritual Warfare I: Identifying the Forms of Opposition (October 1)
Issues of spiritual warfare, sin, temptation, suffering, theodicy, core lies, and being equipped to respond to life’s challenges. Discussion: The Christian in Complete Armour

READING WEEK (October 8: NO CLASS)
Session #5: The Dynamic of Spiritual Warfare II: Equipping the Spiritual Arsenal (October 15)
Issues of spiritual warfare, sin, temptation, suffering, theodicy, core lies, and being equipped to respond to life’s challenges. Discussion: The Christian in Complete Armour

Sessions #6: The Dynamic of the Pursuit of Intimacy I: Early and Medieval (October 22)
We will trace the history of how Christians have spent their times alone with God. In doing so, we will examine, analyze, and critique case studies and/or “skill sets” related to mystical contemplation, monastic lectio divina, Pseudo-Bonaventuran meditation, icons, the Orthodox Jesus Prayer; discernment in relation to supernatural phenomena such as visions, interpretation of dreams; fasting, devotionals, Bible Studies, journaling, prayer, and the arts.

Session #7: The Dynamic of the Pursuit of Intimacy II: Reformation to the Present (October 29)
Continuing the description under Session #6.

Session #8: The Dynamic of Structure (November 5)
How does the way one structures one’s time relate to the depth of one’s relationship with Jesus Christ and the effectiveness of one’s ministry? We will study various models and concepts from history to explore how to avoid burnout, create space for spiritual growth, incorporate community, design a rule of life, observe Sabbath, keep on-track in ministry, etc.

READING WEEK (November 12: NO CLASS)

Session #9: Dynamic of the Imago Christi (November 19)
We will explore the roles that asceticism, suffering, spiritual disciplines, spiritual direction, preaching, resolutions, and community play(ed) in character formation and growth in holiness.

Sessions #10: The Dynamic of Worship (November 26)
We will examine various components of a composite, historically-informed worship service, exploring the dynamics that have been at play in corporate worship services throughout church history. The goal will be to provide for the possibility of a richer understanding and practice of worship both as an individual and for effective leading of corporate worship as part of spiritual formation.

Session #11: The Dynamics of Providence and Prayer (December 3)
We will trace a brief history of providence and intercessory prayer in the life of the Church, with special attention to nineteenth-century missions, aiming towards a greater awareness and appreciation of God’s gracious interventions in the lives of His children.

Session #12: Design Workshop (December 10) – for those who missed Sept 21/22 3-hour Workshop; may be used for lecture catch-up or make-up if needed.

Required Textbooks:


4. Choose one of the following for reading at least 200 pages from William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour:*
   a. *The Christian in Complete Armour* (Banner of Truth) – vol. 1 (9780851514567) – This is a modernized English, abridged version. You could purchase one volume ($8.49 on gcts.christianbook.com) and simply read 200 pages from it, or you could purchase all three volumes ($24.99 on gcts.christianbook.com; 9780851514567, 9780851515151, 9780851515601) and read sections from the various volumes.
   b. [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/gurnall/](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/gurnall/) - this can be read online or downloaded in pdf form. It is a full version in older English. Free.
   c. *The Christian in Complete Armour* (Hendrickson Publishers) 978-1598568851 – this is unabridged and not modernized and the print is rather small. $19.96


6. **Recommended Texts:**
   a. A. W. Tozer, *Pursuit of God* – ([available at Project Gutenberg as HTML](https://www.gutenberg.org/)). Plain text, or kindle). – also available second hand or in POD format

7. Possible additional cost: There is a suggested donation of between $5 and $10 for the off-campus workshop retreat location.

**Course Requirements:** Students who are taking the course for credit are expected to attend all the class sessions (including a 3-hour Design small group workshop), to complete the 1300 pages of required reading, to participate in and write an analysis of the Spiritual Life Log OR Zone exercise; to spend a retreat alone with God and write an analysis paper about it; write a Mallon history research paper (historical analysis of your own autobiography); and write a Design & Mission paper. (If you are doing the course for only CH credit and would prefer to substitute a 12-15 page church history research paper on some aspect of spirituality for the Mallon paper, please contact the professor).

If you want to do work before the class begins, you are encouraged to start reading Sittser and Foster. The written assignments will require knowledge that you will gain during the class sessions, so please wait until the course before embarking on them.

1. **Reading Report:** Students need to submit a bibliography with brief annotations, listing all reading done for the class. Please total the pages and write the total at the end of the list. 1200 pages minimum.
Building on the work you have done for and during the class sessions, describe and analyze your
design, purpose, vision, and mission. Detailed instructions will be given during the course.

3. Mallon history research paper (Life Narrative Analysis). Building on the work you have
done for and during class sessions, write a history paper analyzing the key themes or core
spiritual dynamics of your life up to the present. Analyze major themes, defining moments,
lessons learned, etc. The paper should be 15-20 pages long, double-spaced, 12 pt. font. It will be
graded on the basis of the quality of thought, insight, analysis, excellence of writing, and clarity
of structure and expression. Include as an appendix your Life Narrative Analysis Diagram.
More instructions will be given during the course.

4. Retreat: Spend a full day (at least 10 hours) alone with the Lord, putting into practice what
you are learning in the course that fits with your theological framework and conscience. The
assignment will be assessed on the percentage of hours completed and the attainment of a
satisfactory level of thoughtfulness in the analysis involved in the written report. Please indicate
the number of hours completed. (2-3 pages). More instructions will be given in class.

5. Attend 3-hour Design small group workshop (in Ipswich) on September 20 or September 21.
(Please contact professor if you will need a ride from campus. For students who cannot attend
the workshop on those dates, there may be a make-up session on-campus on December 10 during
the regular class hours.)

6. 21-Scenes chart or Spiritual Disciplines Log: For at least six consecutive weeks, each
student will be required to do one of the following:

a. Each week, fill in (or review) a 21-Scenes chart that organizes the week to come. More
directions will be given during the class.

OR

b. Keep a log recording elements of his/her spiritual life. One intention of the exercise is to help
provide accountability in order to assist students in developing healthy habits in maintaining
spiritual disciplines. More directions will be given in class.

With either assignment, at the end of the time, students will write an analysis of their experience.
The 2-3 page analysis should be submitted on the Final Due Date. The log and/or zone charts do
not need to be submitted.

6. Class attendance - may be taken into account, with one point per missed, unexcused session
being taken off of the final grade.

Final Due Date for all assignments:
All work will be due on the final day for written work. (This is the date in the academic calendar
assigned by the Registrar). If, due to an emergency, you need an extension, please contact the
Registrars' office before the deadline.
If mailing your work, please mail it to:
Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
130 Essex St.
S. Hamilton, MA 01982.
Please enclose a large self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like your papers returned to you somewhere other than your campus mailbox.

Grading Percentages:
- **Design & Mission**: 20%
- **Reading**: 20%
- **Mallon Research Paper**: 40%
- **Log /Zone Analysis**: 10%
- **10 hour Retreat & Analysis**: 10%

The grades of the Mallon paper and Design & Mission assignments will be averaged, with the Mallon paper weighted twice as heavily as the Design & Mission paper. If all other work is done completely, the two-paper (Mallon and D&M) grade will stand. If other assignments are incomplete, the final grade will be reduced proportionately.

Estimated Hours:
- **Class sessions & workshop**: 36
- **Writing Mallon Paper**: 24
- **Writing Design Paper**: 18
- **Retreat & Analysis**: 12
- **Reading**: 43
- **Log/Zone Analysis**: 2
- **TOTAL**: 135

Grading Scale (from Catalog)
"Grade A is given for meeting with conspicuous excellence the demands which can fairly be made in relation to the requirements of the course. These demands would normally include unusual accuracy in fact, completeness in detail, perfection in form of work, independence of method, grasp of the subject as a whole and constructive imagination.

Grade B is given for exceeding the minimum of satisfactory attainment and for meeting certain aspects of the course with excellence.

Grade C is given for attaining satisfactory familiarity with the course and for demonstrating at least some ability to use this knowledge in a satisfactory manner.

Grade D is a passing mark but indicates unsatisfactory control over the material.

Grade F declares that the course has been failed.

- **Plagiarism** is considered a serious academic offense at GCTS. Please follow guidelines at http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html.
- **Internet Usage**: Students are required to refrain from accessing the internet or playing computer/cell phone games, etc. at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. “Surfing the web,” checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class sessions.
• **Intellectual Property / Privacy Rights:** To protect the professor’s intellectual property rights with regard to classroom content and to protect the privacy of the professor and other students, students are required to refrain from audio, photographic, and video recording of classes, as well as audio, video, photographic, and written publication (including internet posting and broadcasting) or live transmission of classroom proceedings.