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

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.
CH/MC 591: Dynamics of Spiritual Life

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Hamilton campus
Fall, 2013

Course Instructor: Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Class Meeting Time: Thursdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Contact Information: TBA in class

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 (September 12): A Theology of Spirituality

Session #2 & 3 (September 19 & 26): The Dynamics of Identity and Vocation
How do we discern our God-given design and calling? What is the role of gifts in the Christian life? After reviewing the history of vocation and the purposes of the Christian life, we will explore how life narrative exegesis can help identify gifting and calling.

Design Workshop (3-hour session September 27 or 28, morning or afternoon)

Session #4 & 5 (October 3 & 10): The Dynamic of Spiritual Warfare: Identifying the Forms of Opposition
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 17): No Class

Session #6 & 7 (October 24 & 31): The Dynamic of the Pursuit of Intimacy
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, devotional, Bible Studies, journaling, prayer, and the arts.

**Session #8 (November 7): The Dynamic of Structure**
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 14): No Class**

**Session #9 (November 21): Dynamic of the Imago Christi**
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.

**Thanksgiving (November 28): No Class**

**Sessions #10 (December 5) The Dynamic of Worship**
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 (December 12): The Dynamics of Providence and Prayer**
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.

**Required Textbooks:**


2. Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith, eds., *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups* (HarperOne, Rev. ed., 2005). 978-0060777500 - $11.49 on gcts.christianbook.com – 400 pages. – Read in total, preferably one selected reading at a time. This reading fits with the dynamic of the Pursuit of Intimacy with Christ.

3. A. W. Tozer, *Pursuit of God* – *(available at Project Gutenberg as HTML, Plain text, or kindle).* – also available second hand or in POD format – Read in its entirety.

4. Read at least 200 pages from William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour* (Banner of Truth) – vol. 1 (9780851514567) – Please read before session #5, for we will discuss it during the class. This reading fits with the dynamic of Spiritual Warfare.

**Recommended Text:**


**Course Requirements:** Students who are taking the course for credit are expected to attend all the class sessions and the 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 13-15 page church history research paper on some aspect of spirituality for the *Mallon* paper, please contact the professor).

You may read the texts before the class, if you’d like, but the written assignments and retreat 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. 1300 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. [If you would prefer not to write about your own life, please speak to the professor about possible alternatives, such as writing about someone else’s life, or writing a church history research paper.]

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. [If you would prefer not to write about your own life, please speak to the professor about possible alternatives, such as writing about someone else’s life, or writing a church history research paper.]

4. **Retreat:** Spend a full day (at least 7 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. **Design workshop** - Attend 3-hour Design small group workshop (on campus or in Ipswich) on Friday, September 27 or Saturday, September 28. (For students who cannot attend the workshop on those dates, there may be a make-up session later in the semester on campus.)

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 half a point per unexcused missed hour being taken off of the final grade. More than six *unexcused* missed hours may result in failure of the course. Official auditors and those doing the course pass/fail must attend at least 9 of the 11 class sessions.

**Final Due Date for all assignments:**
All written work will be due on the final day for written work (as set by the Registrar). If, due to an emergency, you need an extension beyond that date, please contact the Registrars' office before the deadline.

Please place work in the box outside Dr. Adams’ office or mail work (postmarked on or before the due date) to:
Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
130 Essex St.
S. Hamilton, MA  01982.
Please enclose a large self-addressed stamped envelope so that your papers may be returned to you.

**Grading Percentages:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design &amp; Mission</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallon Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 hour Retreat &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log /Zone Analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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 30
Writing *Mallon* Paper 28
Writing *Design* Paper 23
Retreat & Analysis 9
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.