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Snapshot of Course Requirements

MC/SF 501 requires timely completion of the following **four** course requirements:

1. Required Reading (20% of final grade)
2. Projects and Papers
   - Active Practice of Spiritual Disciplines (40% of final grade)
   - Instruments of Self-Understanding
   - Personal Assessment of Readiness for Ministry (20% of final grade)
   - Final Examination Paper: Case Study Analysis (20% of final grade)
3. Interactivity (required for course grade to be submitted to registration office)
4. Course Checkout/Reading Report (after you have finished all course requirements above)

Reading

First there is a **reading requirement**. Please stay current with your reading. The Course Outline provides a list of the reading required for each lecture. At times that will be difficult because of the pressure from other responsibilities in your life, but in order for you to get the most out of this class, it is vital that you do the reading as assigned. In this way you can then integrate what you learn from the reading with the lectures, with the discussions, and with your subsequent practice of the material. You will be asked to record the extent and the quality of your reading on the Course Checkout/Reading Report form.

Reading:

- [Richard Foster's *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*](https://example.com)

Now, allow me to introduce the textbooks. First, you have a choice between Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline* and Dallas Willard’s *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. By all means, the modern classic text of Christian spirituality in the Protestant world is Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline*. This fascinating Quaker began a renaissance within Evangelicalism in the 1970’s in the area of spirituality. Prior to that time we were a little self-conscious about talking about spiritual exercises or the development of our own spirituality, and we thank God for Richard Foster who came along and helped us to become willing to look at this terribly important part of our lives as Christian disciples. The book is full of practical exercises designed within a meaningful rationale. There are the inward
disciplines, the outward disciplines and the corporate disciplines. The inward disciplines are meditation, prayer, fasting and study. The outward disciplines are simplicity, solitude, submission and service. And finally the corporate disciplines are confession, worship, guidance and celebration.

You may wonder why, given the quality of Celebration of Discipline, that we have provided a choice of texts. Well, first of all, many have already read Richard Foster. Then, some who perhaps haven’t read Foster nevertheless have a good background in the exercise of the spiritual disciplines and may want a more theological approach to the subject. If that’s your interest, then Dallas Willard’s The Spirit of the Disciplines is for you. Dallas Willard is theoretical, but he is practically theoretical, and I think you will enjoy that book if it is your selection.

The other reading requirements of the course include Richard Foster’s Prayer: Finding The Heart’s True Home. He follows the framework of “inward, upward, and outward” in the prayer volume. You may find that you want to pause in this book much more often than time allows. Please don’t get discouraged. Rather, see this as an opportunity to have your appetite whetted, knowing that you can return to this rich resource again and again. This volume can be a valuable guide in developing your own prayer life.

The next book that we have is a relatively small paperback by Dennis Campbell entitled, An Invitation to Ordained Ministry: Who Will Go for Us? This is an extremely practical introduction to the meaning of Christian ministry. I think that you will be challenged as you read this book. Many students will begin to find the answer to that critical question— “God, have you called me into ordained ministry? And if not ordained ministry, then how have you called me into the vocation of your kingdom work?”

The next volume is Helmut Thielicke, A Little Exercise for Young Theologians. It is a small volume, only 41 pages long. Thielicke was a German theologian, pastor, professor, and administrator. Although this book was written in the 1950’s, it is as current today as it was when written. Thielicke says, as it were, “Here are the dangers of formal theological education and here are the opportunities while you’re doing your formal studies.” I wish I had had this little book when I went to seminary many years ago.

The next volume is Ken Swetland’s The Hidden World of the Pastor. Dr. Swetland has spent countless hours with individual pastors and with their congregations to become aware of immediate problems and how they’ve dealt with them. We can learn much through these case studies. The second reason for you to read Dr. Swetland’s book, besides learning the practicalities of ministry, is to learn a new methodology, which is called “case study.” Dr. Swetland will be teaching you that process in his lecture, and you’ll notice in the syllabus that there is a final examination in which you will do your own case study analysis.

The next required volume is Disciple Makers’ Handbook: Helping People Grow in Christ, edited by Alice Fryling. Jesus said, “Therefore go and make disciples.” There are two aspects to the Great Commission: making new disciples and nurturing mature disciples. This volume teaches us how to make true followers of Jesus Christ the Lord.

You will find a list of supplementary readings under "Resources" (left menu). Enjoy these readings as you have time. We hope that by becoming aware of these volumes during the course that you will look forward to reading many more of them in your continuing education, after this course and after seminary is completed, in the vocation that God has for you.

Projects and Papers

Active Practice of Spiritual Disciplines
There are two components to this part of the course. First, following the specific instructions given in the "Projects and Papers" module (click Modules on the left menu, then click Projects and Papers and Navigate to the "Active Practice of Spiritual Disciplines page) you will work through two volumes, focusing on your own individual practice of spiritual discipline. Then for one of these two volumes you will carry out a small group exercise. For a list of volumes you can use and specific instructions, again, see the Papers and Projects module by clicking on "Modules" in the left menu. You will also find the "Basis of Grading the Active Practice of Spiritual Disciplines," in the Papers and Projects module. Be sure to read through this material carefully to ensure that you complete all the required elements of the project.

Instruments for Self-Understanding
The next part of the class provides instruments for self-understanding. In order to minister to the needs of others, those in ministry must have a clear understanding of their own personal dynamics, both spiritual and psychological. To assist in this process of developing self-understanding, the student will complete designated psychological tests to be purchased through the Gordon-Conwell BookCentre: (1) Combining 14 Spiritual Gifts with the 4 (DISC) Personality Types, and (2) Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. Please complete and score these tests prior to Section 5. (Please note: for this requirement the personality tests above have replaced the Ministry Match Assessment.)

Paper: Personal Assessment of Readiness for Ministry
The third part of the class is a **paper on personal assessment of readiness for ministry**. At the end of the semester, you will have the opportunity to write your own reflection on how ready you are for ministry and how you can continue to prepare yourself for ministry while in seminary. For specific instructions and a detailed explanation of what should be included in this paper, please see the "Projects and Papers" module, which you can access by clicking on "Modules" in the left menu.

**Final Paper: Case Study Analysis**

The fourth requirement for this course, which serves as a final examination, is actually a paper—more specifically, a **case study analysis paper**. During the course you’ll be taught how to understand yourself, especially in relationship to others, through the use of case studies. Dr. Swetland will lecture early in the term on the theology of ministry and will give you an introduction to case study analysis. For your final paper, you will choose one of two case studies and write an analysis in light of what you have learned about yourself during this course and how you see yourself relating to others as a leader. The exercise is intended to be integrative in nature, bringing together what you have learned from Spiritual Formation for Ministry, other classes, and the general theological and biblical truth and ministerial skills you have gained. The paper should be approximately 3-5 pages, again single-spaced with double spaces between paragraphs. For more details about and the specific requirements for this paper see the "Projects and Papers" module, which you can access by clicking on "Modules" in the left menu.

**Submitting Assignments**

Assignments can be submitted electronically through the Drop Box tool in Sakai. On the left menu, under "Project Tools," select "Drop Box." To add a file, click "Add" and upload from there.

Some guidelines for this process:

- Paper submissions should be in either .doc, .docx or .pdf format.
- Submitting your work through drop box is considered a formal (and final) submission. Nothing further will be needed on your part.
- All submissions are time/date stamped and will be retrieved by the Semlink office and routed to your professor for grading.
- Assignments may be returned to you electronically, in most cases through your Sakai drop box or via email. If your assignment was graded by hand, it will be scanned and delivered to you as a PDF file.
- Remember to use a full heading, including your name, professor, course, and date.

Please let the Semlink office know if you have any further questions about electronic submission. semlink@gordonconwell.edu or 978-646-4144.

**Interactivity**

As a member of the Association of Theological Schools, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary recognizes the value of interactivity in distance learning and complies with the standards for accreditation set by ATS which include interactivity as a compulsory component of any distance learning program that wishes to continue granting credit for its courses. The purpose of Semlink interactivity is to enhance learning by providing an online environment for students to engage meaningfully and substantively with professors, teaching fellows, and other students in order to achieve an enriching and academically challenging distance learning experience.

There are two interactivity requirements for this course:

1. **An online discussion forum**: converse with other students and with instructors on the Semlink forum. You are required to participate four (4) times in the discussions relating to your area of study. To ensure successful completion of this requirement, please complete your participation in the discussion forums at least one week prior to your course due date. This will allow sufficient time for you to resubmit any responses if necessary.

2. **Email-based conversation** with your Semlink teaching fellow. You are required to email a total of three (3) times, including your original response to the conversation starter. Please allow a minimum of one month to complete this conversation to allow time for the teaching fellow to respond. Allow five business days for a response to each of your submissions.

To begin your interactivity (and for more details about this requirement), see the Interactivity section under Modules. This section will explain in more detail what is expected for this requirement.

**If you fail to complete the interactivity requirements, you will fail your course.**
### Grading

Your final grade for the course will be computed on the following basis:

- **Self Reflection Paper**: 40%
- **Readiness for Ministry Paper**: 20%
- **Case Study Paper (Final Paper)**: 20%
- **Reading Report**: 20%
- **Interaction**: Completion Required

### Course Outline

#### Learning to Love God: The Spiritual Disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Other Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td>Schutz</td>
<td>Introductory Letter</td>
<td>Watch the first half of the video included with the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Meaning and Practice of Spiritual Formation</td>
<td>Schutz</td>
<td>Campbell, <em>An Introduction to Ordained Ministry: Who Will Go For Us?</em> Thielicke, <em>A Little Exercise for Young Theologians</em></td>
<td>Choose 2 of the 3 options for active practice of spiritual disciplines, one to use by yourself alone and the other within your small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A Theology of Ministry and Introduction to Case Study Analysis</td>
<td>Swetland</td>
<td>Swetland, <em>The Hidden World of the Pastor</em></td>
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<th>Section</th>
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<th>Other Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Prayer Life of a Minister</td>
<td>Borgman</td>
<td>Foster, <em>Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home</em></td>
<td></td>
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#### Learning to Love Ourselves: Personal Insight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Other Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Self-Assessment</td>
<td>Pendleton</td>
<td></td>
<td>You will need both personality type tests completed and scored prior to this section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Readiness for Ministry and Pressures in Ministry</td>
<td>Swetland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete the self-tests included in the Appendix</td>
</tr>
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#### Learning to Love Others: The Church and Larger Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Other Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Required Reading</td>
<td>Other Assignments</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Dynamics of Discipleship</td>
<td>Gibson</td>
<td>Fryling, <em>Disciple-Makers' Handbook</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>What in the World is Worldliness?</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Planning for Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Schultz, et al.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Watch the second half of the video included in the course materials.</td>
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