

CL 560 History & Theology of Christian Spirituality

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Course Description

Focuses on the history of Christian spirituality, examining the theological assumptions that have shaped that history.

Direction Module One: History, Theology, and Models of Spiritual Direction

Course Objectives

What will students know when they leave class?

- Demonstrate a grasp of the history of Christian spirituality
- Familiar with major figures in the development of Christian Spirituality
- Able to describe the theological issues at play in that history
- Possesses a knowledge of the history of spiritual direction

What will students be able to do?

- Introduce others to the history of Christian spirituality
- Able to introduce others to the major figures at play in that history
- Able to explain the theological issues at stake in that history
- Able to position their own view of spiritual direction in conversation with the history of direction

What will be key values, attitudes, habits and/or commitments promote in the course

- Alert to the varied nature of Christian spirituality
- Aware of the significance of context
- Sensitized to varied genius of Christian spirituality

Texts

Mursell, Gordon, ed. *The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two thousand years, from East to West*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001. ISBN-13: 978-0800632892, Price, used: \$11.84 / new: \$72.89

Please note: The prices listed above are as posted at Amazon.com

Attendance & Participation

Given the nature of the course material, attendance is essential. Students are expected to prepare and participate in class discussions. Taking notes will be important for completing other assignments.

Journal

Each student will be required to keep a journal. Each entry should be a minimum of two type-written pages: One entry for each reading assignment from the text. The entry should record items from the reading that provoked questions or insights. It should not be a summation or outline of the reading. The journal, in its entirety is due at the end of the semester. The journal should be submitted as a single document with each entry clearly labeled. The journal must be complete and conform to the requirements in order to receive credit. 15% of the assessment will be devoted to the journal.

Assessment

Integrative Essays

Each student will be required to complete two integrative essays. Each essay will address a question drawn from the material and students will be expected to respond, drawing in an integrative fashion on the reading and class material. The essays should not quote material from either source at length, but students will be required to demonstrate a familiarity with the reading and course material (citing the relevant author, title, and page numbers or dates).

Each essay must be between 6 to 8 pages in length (typewritten, double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12 point font). The essays should draw critically and thoughtfully from the material, but advance an argument, not simply summarize, list, or report on what was heard or read. N.B.: The language “critically and thoughtfully” is chosen intentionally here. These are analytical essays and language involving how the student “feels” about the material is not germane. Note, too, that these assignments will only be manageable if students remain current in their reading and actively participate in the class. 85% of the assessment is devoted to the student’s work on these essays.

Classroom Expectations

Class sessions will be synchronous and held on Zoom, Wednesdays, 2 to 4pm CST.

Please plan to use both audio and video for the duration of the session.

Students for whom English is a second language will be expected to submit their work on the date due and have an additional week to submit an edited version of their work.

All assignments are due at class time on the date designated in the calendar.

Taking notes will be essential to this class, both as a means of integrating the material and as a means of incorporating classroom discussion into the assignments.

Calendar: Topics, Readings, and Due Dates for Assignments

February 3: Jesus and the Origins of Christian Spirituality

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 9-30.

February 10: The Early Church Fathers

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 31-72.

February 17: Ash Wednesday, No Class

February 24: Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Spirituality

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell.

March 3: Saints and Mytics of the Medieval West

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 89-124.

March 10: The Eastern Christian Tradition

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 125-150.

March 17: The Russian Spirit

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 151-164.

March 24: The Protestant Tradition in Europe

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 165-200.

March 29-April 5: Spring Break, No Class

Mid-term Integrative Essay due April 6, 5pmCST.

April 7: Catholic Saints and Reformers

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 201-244.

April 14: The Anglican Spirit

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 245-274.

April 21: The Protestant Tradition in America

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 275-304.

April 28: Spiritualities of the Twentieth Century

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 305-365.

May 5: Spirituality in the New Millennium

Reading for Journal Entry: Mursell, 366-367.

May 12: Concluding Conversation

Final Integrative Essay and Completed Journal due May 20, 5pmCST.