



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

Course Identification

Course Number : WYP2636HS
Course Name: Rooted in God: Personal Prayer as the Soil for Ministry
Campus: St. John's Convent, 233 Cummer Ave. (south of Steeles and west of Bayview)
Dates and Times: 5 Saturdays (see schedule below), 9 am - 4:30 pm (including lunch break)

Instructor Information

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Sr. Constance Gefvert Teaching Assistant:
E-mail: cj@ssjd.ca E-mail:
Office Hours:

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

None.

Course Description

This course focuses on personal contemplative prayer as the "the one thing needed" for a personal relationship with God, and the essential soil out of which healthy and effective ministry grows. Including both theory and practice, the course will explore Christian contemplative traditions of prayer, and each class will include a practicum focussing on different forms of prayer. The course will conclude with suggestions for planting and growing a prayer-based parish ministry.

Course Methodology

Prayer involves our whole lives, and so we will use many methods to learn and practice forms of contemplative prayer

Lecture: Occasional direct input from the instructor especially when new topics are introduced

- Practicum: Each time a form or way of prayer is introduced, we will practice it in class, and suggestions will be given for practicing at home.
- Class discussion: Both in plenary and in small groups
- Use of visual and artistic media: film, art, music
- Reading and watching: Students will learn from a variety of writers on prayer both in writing and occasionally via the internet or DVD

Course Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
• will have learned some traditional and contemporary forms of contemplative prayer;	Lectures, practicum, readings	MTS: 3.2 MDiv: 3.1, 3.2
• will have an understanding of the importance of spiritual practice for grounding a healthy ministry;	Lectures, practicum, readings, discussion	MTS: 3.2 MDiv: 3.1, 3.2
• will have a commitment to continue some form of contemplative spiritual practice as they continue and grow in their active ministry	Practicum	MTS: 3.2 MDiv: 3.1, 3.2

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God* (to be read before the first day of class)
- Roberta Bondi, *To Pray and to Love: Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church* (Augsburg Fortress, 1991)
- Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart: An Introduction to Centering Prayer* (Bloomsbury, 2006)
- Margaret Silf, *The Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality* (Loyola Press, 1999)
- Margaret Guenther, *At Home in the World* (Seabury, 2006)

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask Thomas Power for further help.

Class Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to change the discussion topics and practicum exercises in response to the evolving needs and interest of the class. The dates for assigned readings and papers will not be changed.

Week 1 (January 9) Preparation: Read Brother Lawrence
Topics: The practice of the presence of God

The nature of prayer & images of God
The relationship between the contemplative life and healthy ministry
Praying with scripture (lectio divina), awareness reflection
Aids to prayer: the labyrinth

Week 2 (January 30) Preparation: Read Silf

Topics: Prayer as a journey of discernment
Ignatian imaginative prayer
Aids to prayer: prayer walking.

Optional Class (February 13): Playing and Praying with Art

Week 3 (February 20) First Paper Due

Preparation: Read Bondi
Topics: Prayer in scripture and the early church
The desert tradition
Aids to prayer: the rosary.

Week 4 (March 12) Précis of the Final Paper Due

Preparation: Read Keating
Topics: Recovery of the contemplative tradition
Christian Meditation and Centering Prayer
Aids to prayer: icons and other art forms.

Week 5 (April 2) Second Paper Due

Preparation: Read Guenther
Topics: Rhythms of Life / Claiming your Spiritual Practice
Aids to prayer: Spiritual Direction
Planting and Growing the Seeds of Prayer in a Parish or other Ministry.

Final Papers Due: April 12

Evaluation

Requirements

Student's Self-Evaluation (20% of course grade)

- Daily personal prayer, 45 minutes per day, 5 days per week
- Keeping of a personal prayer journal, 5 days per week
- Reading of the required books and preparation for class
- Regular class attendance and participation in discussions

Instructor's Evaluation (80% of course grade)

- Two short papers reflecting on your reading and experience of prayer
- A final paper of 12-15 pages, developing a prayer course that you can teach in a parish setting or other ministry situation.

Grading System

Letter Grade

Numerical Equivalents

Grade Point

Grasp of Subject
Matter

A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR	Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
NCR	Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
SDF	Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEG	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Reflection Papers

The first should be 2-3 pages, and the second approximately 4. These are best written in the week before the class in which you will be submitting them, reflecting back on your prayer journal from the past weeks. Their purpose is to reflect theologically on your experience of prayer. The following questions will help you prepare

for the paper, but the paper itself should not simply be a series of answers to the questions. There should be a theme, a purpose statement, and a sense of cohesion overall.

Read back over your prayer journal, and highlight anything that particularly strikes you.

- Where did God seem most present to you? most absent?
- What has your experience felt like?
- How do you feel now that you are re-visiting your journal?
- What has been interesting, helpful, heart-warming? dry, boring, fearful?
- What metaphor comes to mind when you think back over your prayer experience?
- What understandings and images of God are reflected in your journal?
- What understanding of human nature and yourself is reflected in your journal?
- Has your image of God changed as a result of your prayer?
- Has your understanding of prayer changed?
- How about the connection between your prayer and your ministry?
- Are you drawn to change anything in your practice and understanding of prayer as a result of this reflection?
- What other observations might you make about your experience of prayer?

See the handouts (to be distributed) on “Theological Reflection” and “Reflective Language” for help in writing your paper.

Final Paper

This should be between 12 and 15 pages, and will present a plan for a parish workshop in prayer (or a course in another ministry context – e.g., chaplaincy, school, camp or conference centre). It may focus on one type of prayer or prayer tradition, or on prayer in general. It may take place over a weekend, on the course of several weeks (e.g. a Lenten study), or over several nights in a given week (as in a parish mission)

The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate what you have learned in this course and also to design a practical workshop that will allow you to transfer the learning from this course to others in ministry – a way of helping lay persons nurture their spiritual growth and ground their ministry in a personal relationship with God. It should include:

- description and rationale for the course;
- biblical and historical background of the kind of prayer you are teaching
- resources (books, art, music, journal articles) for developing your course
- a brief outline of the workshop / course series, including a brief agenda or “lesson plan” for each session
- each session should include instruction in prayer as well as practicum (actual in-workshop practice in prayer) – you will want to include really practical suggestions that participants can continue to practise at home and that will help deepen their ongoing prayer life
- consider including in the workshop music, ritual, liturgy, other resources to aid in achieving your objectives

The final papers must show what students have learned in the class, and must be designed to help people pray more. The paper should NOT be just a re-run of this course. Choose a specific form of prayer to develop in more depth, or a distinctive setting, or add something new. Use material from at least one source not used in class, in some creative fashion.

The 12-15 pages develop the theme of the course, present the historical / theological / biblical background, and outline the actual sessions. Handouts and supplementary material are in addition.

A one-page proposal for the final paper will be due at the fourth class. It should include:

- the title of the workshop you are designing, and the topics to be covered
- the audience
- the number of sessions & length of each
- resources to be used

All Papers

- should be double-spaced, using 11- or 12-point font and standard 1" margins
- in all matters of documentation, should follow the most recent edition of Kate Turabian, *A Guide for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Please don't make up your own documentation system.
- should have a cover page with student's name and college, course name and number, title of the paper, and date submitted
- should be free of errors in grammar and spelling
- when you refer to scripture, quote it – don't assume I know what Luke 4:17-18 means and don't expect me to look it up. As a former Methodist I'm quite good at identifying scripture from chapter and verse numbers but not perfect! (Same is true with the hymn book.)

If you want to e-mail me any papers: The cost is ten cents per page.

Policies

Spiritual Direction. It is assumed that every student in the course has a spiritual director or pastor to whom they have access as needed. Very often material will come up in our prayer that we need to share and that needs the insight and discernment of another. The Instructor cannot play this role for students, because spiritual direction should not be mixed with the process of evaluation and grading.

Learning Covenant. Each student will sign a Learning Covenant which includes self-evaluation as a significant part of the course grade. Students should feel comfortable with and committed to a form of evaluation in which the student himself or herself honestly evaluates those course components that cannot be measured directly by the instructor (private prayer, reading, and journaling).

Suggestions for Daily Prayer Time. Plan to devote 45 minutes a day, 5 days a week for your personal prayer, and an additional 15 minutes for reflecting in your Prayer Journal – see below.

The purpose is to help you learn forms of contemplative prayer – that is, prayer that deepens your personal relationship with God and allows your roots “to go deep into the soil of God's marvellous love” (Eph. 3 from *The Living Bible*).

Your prayer time needs to be in solitude and silence. You can go anywhere (your bedroom, living room, outdoors, a church or chapel) as long as you can be assured of silence and not being interrupted.

Each day should include:

- Preparation: You might use some meditative music to help you centre and focus, or go for a brief meditative walk to “come down” if you have been working or studying before your prayer time. Have your Bible open and the passage you want to use marked ahead of time. A candle, icon, picture, or other “holy object” may also help you focus. Another way to focus is to quietly observe your breathing for a few minutes and let your body relax into the chair you are sitting in.

- Listening to the Word: spend 10-15 minutes with the scripture passage you have chosen.
- Practicing: spend 30 minutes or so using one or more of the prayer forms we are learning in class.
- Reflecting: After your prayer time, stand up and stretch or walking around the room. Pick up your journal (and maybe a cup of coffee or tea) and reflect on your prayer experience in your journal.

More suggestions will be forthcoming during the class. As with any relationship, time must be devoted to our relationship with God if it is to grow and flourish, and flexibility is required to meet the needs of circumstances or challenges that each day brings.

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

Bibliography

List here any bibliographic resources that will be helpful to students, both within the course and for further study.