

COURSE SYLLABUS

SF212: Divine Encounters: Mapping Your Spiritual Life

Course Lecturer: John Worgul, PhD

Course Description

Welcome to *Divine Encounters: Mapping Your Spiritual Life*, a course designed to prepare you spiritually and emotionally as you begin your biblical and theological studies. You have a desire to know more about the Bible and to develop your relationship with God. Sometimes forward movement can occur most effectively after a backward look.

You will be invited in this course to create your personal life map. In this exercise you will think back on your life, focusing on various segments, and will recall certain relationships, events, influences, and insights that occurred during that time. As you review each life segment, you will begin to see that the hand of God has been at work at every step. Learning to recognize His encounters will equip and enable you to move deeper into your relationship with Him and with others.

Course Objectives

Many Christians desire spiritual transformation in their lives, but are mired in old patterns of thinking or are weighed down by unresolved issues in their lives. We believe that teaching that is transformative will include biblically accurate personal, emotional, and relational understanding. The teaching offered, the life-mapping project, and the interaction with a carefully selected mentor will combine to provide students with significant opportunities for self-reflection, for prayerful recollections, for relational growth, and for spiritual insights.

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Recognize specific ways in which God has been involved in your life and experiences.
- Identify ways in which God motivates through divine promises.
- Define *perfection* in the context of spiritual formation.
- Create a life map recounting significant relationships, events, and influences in your life from early childhood to the present.
- Develop a healthy relationship with a mentor who will walk with you in your ongoing spiritual journey.
- Articulate the concept of spiritual formation and state its ultimate goal.

Mentor

You will seek out a mentor to communicate with while you are working through this course. The mentor should be someone who:

- Shares your faith convictions, at least to the degree that the two of you can dialogue from a shared faith in God and in Scripture.
- Has traveled some part of the road ahead of you and can bring helpful experience and knowledge to your relationship. Stanley and Clinton define a mentor as “one who knows or has experienced something” and is able to strengthen your capacity to grow, develop or change. So look for someone who has some God-given resources like wisdom, information, experience, confidence, insight, etc.
- Is accessible. Seek to meet face-to-face once or twice during your time in this course and occasionally through email or by telephone.
- Understands that the relationship is a conversation, one that neither one of you should dominate. The mentor is not “the sage on the stage,” but your “guide alongside.” Choose someone who knows how to listen, but who also knows how to keep you from dumping a stream-of-consciousness outpouring that is not true conversation (dialogue).

Disclaimer

You are about to embark on a journey that is both spiritual and emotional. We at CUGN are equipped to help you focus on your spiritual development, but we are not trained as counselors or psychologists. Therefore, if, as you visit events and issues in your personal history, you encounter emotional and/or relational matters that need to be addressed, we strongly recommend that you seek out a pastor, a counselor, or a psychologist.

Your mentor will be walking with you on this journey. If you sense a need to resolve some life issues, perhaps your mentor can recommend a counselor with whom you can meet. We encourage you not to ignore these issues, but to address them, because often they are roadblocks to spiritual growth.

Accessibility

If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

Course Lecturer



John Worgul, PhD

Education:

- Dropsie College, PhD
- Westminster Theological Seminary, MAR
- Bethel College, Minnesota, BA

Teaching Career:

- Full time and adjunct professor, Seminary of the East (now Bethel Seminary)

Other Career Highlights:

- In addition to biblical studies, Dr. Worgul has a deep interest in spiritual theology and formation.

Course Texts

Note: As with any high-level educational experience, our students are encouraged to be exposed to and reflect on a variety of theological positions so they are well equipped for ministry. This is done in community with oversight of our faculty or with a local pastor. Thus, some positions reflected in the reading will not be in keeping with our ministry position or values. Please see our own statement of faith and ministry values on our ministry website.

Required:

Worgul, John. *Jacob; His Family and Yours*. Westminster, Maryland: John E. Worgul, 2011. (Available only as an ebook)

Recommended, but not required:

Kieda, Alyson. *Remembering and Writing: A Spiritual Journey Guidebook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Alyson Kieda, 2014.

Peace, Richard. *Spiritual Autobiography: Discovering and Sharing Your Spiritual Story*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998.

If you wish to order the Richard Peace textbook, you may use the CUGN online bookstore available on our website at cugn.org. For the Worgul book, go to Amazon.com for a digital download. Alyson Kieda's book is available for free, located in the Before You Begin section of the course.

For additional reading and research:

Books about Spiritual Autobiography:

Peace, Richard. *Pilgrimage: A Handbook on Christian Growth*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976.

Trent, John. *Life Mapping*. Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1994.

Examples of Spiritual Autobiography:

St. Augustine. *Confessions* (Many Editions).

Colson, Charles. *Born Again*. Old Tappan, NJ: Chosen Books/Revel, 1976.

Lewis, C.S. *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Years*. NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955. ISBN: 0-15-687011-8

Merton, Thomas. *The Seven Story Mountain*. NY: Harcourt, Brace, & Jovanovich, 1948.

Books on Spiritual Formation:

St. John of the Cross. *The Collected Works*, Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Orilio Rodriguez. Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1991.

The two books in this collection that are most directly relevant for this course are *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, and *Dark Night of the Soul*.

Academic Honesty

At CUGN, we believe all we do is “as unto the Lord” and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Quizzes and Exams: Any student found guilty of cheating on a quiz or exam will automatically receive a score of zero for that quiz or exam. A second offense will result in automatic course failure and possible disciplinary action and/or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of cheating.

Plagiarism: If a student’s work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar’s Office at registrar@cugn.org or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, interacting with other students (when possible), and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures to be listened to and/or read throughout the lessons of the course.

- **Audio-based teaching**
The primary course content will be delivered via audio lectures, including the full transcript of each lecture. A guided outline to assist you in note taking is also made available in PDF format.
- **Multisensory learning**
Because the primary teaching information is provided in audio and PDF text documents, students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.
- **Readings and other media**
Reading from the required textbook will be assigned to students each week.

Interaction

Whether sitting in a traditional classroom or studying from a distance, students benefit from interaction and collaboration with other students. In order to meet this need in distance theological education, CUGN offers structures and resources to encourage effective community interaction in this course.

Response Time

This forum fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion. Students are required to respond to relevant questions posted by the instructors; students are also encouraged to read and respond to the posts of fellow students.

Blog

The reading assignments ask students to record their thoughts in a course blog. Blog entries can be viewed only by the student and by the site administrator, and are not graded. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth and transformation.

Course Requirements

In order to receive credit, the student must complete the course requirements within a 90-day period. Those requirements include:

- Listening to and/or reading the audio lecture for each lesson
- Establishing a mentor relationship
- Reading the assigned text for each lesson
- Participating in and meeting all requirements of the Response Time Forum (see details below)
- Completing a Life Mapping project
- Keeping a blog in response to reading assignments

Additional information about these requirements is provided below.

AUDIO LECTURES

Each of the lessons in this course features an audio lecture of approximately 20 minutes in length delivered by Dr. John Worgul, a long-time professor with a focus on spiritual formation. These instructional lectures are required and can be listened to as many times as needed. The written text of the

lectures as well as guided outlines to assist in note taking are made available in PDF format. There are five lectures in this course.

MENTOR

This course requires that you seek out a mentor in your community with whom you can communicate by e-mail and/or telephone and with whom you can meet face-to-face at least twice during the course. The purpose of this mentoring relationship is to enable you to assimilate the teaching in this course into your life and ministry. Further definition of the mentor's role in this course can be found in the Mentor Requirements section, available in the Before You Begin section of the course.

READING

Study assignments covered in this course should be read in the context of the lesson in which they are assigned. In addition to the required textbook, you may be asked to read supplementary materials.

RESPONSE TIME FORUM

Discussion questions related to each lesson's lectures are integrated into the weekly course requirements. In order to obtain credit for the course, you must visit the Response Time Forum for each lesson of the course, and your attendance will be validated by your posts. You are required to post responses to all of the questions provided in the lesson's Response Time Forum. Each response should consist of two to three well-conceived paragraphs.

LIFE MAPPING PROJECT

You will develop a Life Map by reflecting upon and writing about your personal history as you recall events, relationships, and influences in various time segments of your life. Upon completion of your Life Map, you will submit a project write-up, of approximately 500 words, describing the project and the mentoring experience, and the benefits you sense you gained from both. More guidance concerning the project can be found by downloading the Life Mapping Project Instructions, found in the Before You Begin section of the course.

REFLECTION

You will be required to keep a blog during this course. Your blog, which can be found in the Before You Begin section of the course, is available for recording thoughts and reflections as you go through the course. Blog entries can be viewed only by you and the site administrator. At the end of the course, you will be asked to validate that you have completed the blogging requirement. The purpose of the blog is to help you reflect on what you are learning, what you believe, and where you may be challenged in your thinking and your life by what is studied in this course. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth.

Course Grading

This course is offered for your personal and spiritual enrichment. Though it may be a required course for your program of study, this is a pass/fail course. No letter grade will be issued and the course will not be included in calculating your grade point average.

OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before credit is awarded to any student.

Lesson Topics and Assignments

Lesson 1:

- Listen to Lecture One.
- Read Worgul, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Complete a blog entry.
- Participate in the online Response Time Forum.
- Identify and contact your mentor.
- Read Life Mapping instructions and/or view instructional video.

Lesson 2:

- Listen to Lecture Two.
- Read Worgul, Chapters 2 and 3.
- Complete a blog entry.
- Participate in the online Response Time Forum.

Lesson 3:

- Listen to Lecture Three.
- Read Worgul, Chapters 4 and 5.
- Complete a blog entry.
- Participate in the online Response Time Forum.

Lesson 4:

- Listen to Lecture Four.
- Read Worgul, Chapters 6 and 7.
- Complete a blog entry.
- Participate in the online Response Time Forum.
- With the help of your mentor, complete your Life Map.

Lesson 5:

- Listen to Lecture Five.
- Read Worgul, Chapters 8 and 9.
- Complete a blog entry.
- Participate in the online Response Time Forum.
- Submit summary paper concerning Life Map.

Upon completion of the course:

- Complete and submit course evaluation.
- Submit required validation forms.

Personal Reflection and Evaluation

The following guidelines may be of help to you as you prepare to make blog entries throughout the course.

To integrate academic studies with the walk of faith, you are asked to reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what has been learned. These questions may help to guide your reflection process.

Step 1: Review

Think about the material you have studied in the course. Then ask these questions: What are two things you learned that you did not know before this study? What, if anything, in the course made you look at the church or something in the Bible in a new way?

Step 2: Assess

Think about your life, both past and present. Given the insights or understanding that you gained in this course, what changes do you need to make in the way you think or behave?

Step 3: Apply

What specific steps will you take in order to put these positive changes (from Step 2) into practice in your life?

Step 4: Record

Write your responses to the above reflections in your blog.

Notes Regarding This Syllabus

This syllabus is designed to provide learners with an overview of the course. Specific assignments are contained in each lesson.

Individuals taking the class for academic credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to add additional reading requirements and to alter the syllabus to meet their accreditation requirements. Students seeking academic credit should check with their academic institution for details.