

COURSE SYLLABUS

SF508: Foundations of Spiritual Formation II: The Disciplines of Life

Course Lecturer: Gordon T. Smith, PhD

Course Description

Welcome to *Foundations of Spiritual Formation II: The Disciplines of Life*, an online graduate-level course designed to help you grow in intimacy with God and to mature in your spiritual life and relationships.

How is spirituality formed both in private and in community? This course explores the meaning of biblical Christianity and its relation to faith and practice, giving special attention to spiritual formation through prayer, meditation, and personal disciplines. The lectures form a paradigm of spiritual growth and maturity that will affect both the individual and the church.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Develop a functional definition of spiritual formation.
- Foster a growing desire for knowing and serving God.
- Practice key spiritual disciplines such as discerning prayer, meditation on Scripture, and holy living.
- Place a high value on spiritual growth for yourself and those you teach.

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



Gordon T. Smith, PhD

Education:

- Loyola School of Theology, the Ateneo de Manila University, PhD
- Canadian Theological Seminary, MDiv

Teaching Career:

- Academic Vice President, Regent College
- Dean, Regent College
- Associate Professor of Spiritual Theology, Regent College
- Researched key studies in Christian living, including the Lord's Supper, Christian Spirituality, and Christian Community
- Theology instructor, Canadian Theological Seminary
- Theology instructor, Alliance Biblical Seminary in the Philippines

Other Career Highlights:

- President of reSource Leadership International
- Pastor in Canada and the Philippines
- Member, the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association, the American Academy of Religion, and the Overseas Council Network, an international leadership training consortium

Publications:

- Numerous publications, including *A Holy Meal: The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church*, *The Voice of Jesus: Discernment, Prayer and the Witness of the Spirit*, *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion and Authentic Transformation*, *Listening to God in Times of Choice*, and *Courage and Calling*

Online Professor

Within two weeks of your registration for the course, CUGN will assign one of its faculty members as the online professor. Once your online professor has been assigned, (s)he will be introduced and will guide you through the 8-week study. Your online professor will be available to you by email and can, at set times, be available by video chat or other real-time technology.

The following will be done by the online professor in order to stimulate student involvement and to facilitate effective learning:

- Evaluate and assign grades to all coursework.
- Answer questions that may arise.
- Issue your final grade.

For additional help as you work through this course, please read *Succeeding in Your Online Course*, which is provided at the end of this syllabus.

Course Texts

Required:

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. San Francisco: Harper SanFrancisco, 1991.

Recommended, but not required:

Lovelace, Richard. *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979.

Textbooks can be ordered through our online store at CUGN.org, through your local bookstore, or through your preferred eReader when available.

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 you in learning and processing information, and applying the learning to your life. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials 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.
- **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.

Discussion Forum

Students are required to respond to questions posted in the course and are encouraged to read and respond to the posts of other students.

Reflection

Through blogging, CUGN provides many opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned, what they believe, and where they are challenged. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth and transformation.

Course Requirements

This course consists of a mentor relationship, readings, audio lectures, discussion forums, contemplative exercises, and blogging. The information regarding these course components and expectations is as follows:

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" information available in the Week 1 Assignments 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. The assignments in this course are not meant to be studied in detail but perused for purposes of understanding and discussion.

AUDIO LECTURES

The lessons in this course feature audio lectures each approximately 40 to 50 minutes in length and delivered by Dr. Gordon T. Smith. These instructional lectures are required and can be listened to as many times as needed. The written text of the lecture as well as a guided outline to assist in note taking are made available in PDF format.

DISCUSSION FORUMS

Discussion questions related to each week's lectures are integrated into the weekly course requirements. You are required to post your own original response to each question in the Discussion Forum. Each response should consist of two to three well-developed paragraphs. In addition, your online professor may comment on your posts, and you should be prepared to respond to those comments.

CONTEMPLATIVE EXERCISES

Each week you will be asked to engage in a specific personal spiritual activity that will invite you to put into practice a discipline or thought process designed to enable spiritual growth. You will be asked to make entries in your blog related to these exercises and to provide a validation of completion of your contemplative exercises at the end of the course.

REFLECTION

You will be required to keep a blog during the 8 weeks of this course, posting *at least once per lesson*. Your blog entries will consist of your response to the Personal Reflection Question found in each lesson's Class Time. Blog entries can be viewed only by you and CUGN faculty, unless you wish to make them available to anyone else taking the class. 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.

DUE DATES

Each week of the course begins on Monday at 12:01 a.m. EST and ends on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. EST. Unless noted otherwise, all assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. EST on the Sunday of the week in which the assignment is due. For example, if an assignment is due during Week 2, you must complete and submit it by 11:59 p.m. EST on Sunday, the last day of Week 2. It is at your online professor's discretion to penalize late work.

Course Grading

All coursework must be completed and turned in to your online professor within five days of the end of Week 8. Please note that it is at your online professor's discretion to penalize late work.

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Online Participation | 40% of Course Grade |
| Contemplative Exercises | 30% of Course Grade |
| Blog | 10% of Course Grade |
| Reading | 10% of Course Grade |
| Mentor Meetings | 10% of Course Grade |

Grades will be issued within two weeks of the end of the course.

Weekly Topics and Assignments

Week 1:

- Take the Moodle tutorial for online instruction.
- Listen to the following lecture: *True Spirituality: Knowing and Loving God*.
- Read Preface and chapters 1 and 2 from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #1.
- Record an entry in your blog.
- Identify and contact your mentor.

Week 2:

- Listen to the following lecture: *Prayer and Discernment I*.
- Read chapters 3 and 4 from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #2.
- Record an entry in your blog.
- Have first meeting with your mentor.

Week 3:

- Listen to the following lecture: *Prayer and Discernment II*.
- Read chapters 5 and 6 from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #3.
- Record an entry in your blog.

Week 4:

- Listen to the following lecture: *The Integration of Heart and Mind*.
- Read chapter 7 from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #4.
- Record an entry in your blog.

Week 5:

- Listen to the following lecture: *The Christian Mind and Heart*.
- Read chapter 8 from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #5.

- Record an entry in your blog.

Week 6:

- Listen to the following lecture: *Suffering and the Christian*.
- Read chapter 9 from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #6.
- Record an entry in your blog.

Week 7:

- Listen to the following lecture: *Disciplines of the Spiritual Life I*.
- Read chapter 10 from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #7.
- Record an entry in your blog.

Week 8:

- Listen to the following lecture: *Disciplines of the Spiritual Life II*.
- Read chapter 11 and the Epilogue from *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
- Participate in the Discussion Forum.
- Complete Contemplative Exercise #8.
- Record an entry in your blog.
- Have final meeting with your mentor.

Week 8 Follow-Up:

- Complete and post all reflective blog entries.
- Complete Discussion Participation, Blog Completion, Reading Completion, Mentor Meetings, and Contemplative Exercise Validations.
- Complete and submit course evaluation form.

Notes Regarding This Syllabus

This syllabus is designed to provide learners with an overview of the course. CUGN will provide specific instructions related to assignments for each lesson, specific discussion question postings, and interactive involvement with all students.

Succeeding in Your Online Course

1. Remember that this is a full semester's study completed in eight weeks. Therefore, expect that there will be a significant time commitment needed in order to complete all the requirements.

2. If you have any questions about the Moodle learning environment, the course requirements, schedule, or assignments, please contact the online professor who is ready and willing to help you have a successful online learning experience.
3. Technological problems may occur. Be sure to have a back-up plan in case of computer failure or late arrival of textbooks.
4. Before you post a comment or a response to another student's comment, be sure you have read the material and listened to the lectures related to the topic under discussion.
5. Think about how you can promote additional discussion by the comments you post.
6. When you post, respond directly to the question under consideration and express your points clearly and concisely, making only one main point per post.
7. If you find sources related to the topic being discussed, please share them with the class.
8. Practice good "netiquette": Disagree respectfully, stay on point, and don't post anything that is derogatory or inflammatory.
9. Enjoy, learn, challenge, and be challenged!