

Promoting Spiritual Formation Through Christian Education Online CE 750Z

Instructor of Record: [Stephen D. Lowe](#), Ph.D.
Elective. *Three Credit Hours*

Please be sure to read and familiarize yourself with ALL content in this syllabus and in the online classroom.

Welcome to the course, *Promoting Spiritual Formation Through Christian Education*. Although I can't give you a personal welcome, as I might do in my on-campus course, I do want to welcome you warmly to this vital learning experience. I want this course to be a significant and vital part of your seminary education. You are one of many students taking advantage of the alternative delivery of high quality theological education through our EDEN distance learning enterprise. This course is our recommended first course in the EDEN course lineup. I am available when you need me because we aren't limited by office hours or distance. You can contact me by email, fax (864.379.8887), or phone with voice mail option (864.379.8748). I look forward to getting to know you better as we progress through the course materials. Anytime you experience difficulty or have a question about course content or course requirements, please use one of the communication means identified above to reach me. I pray God's wisdom as you expose yourself to the study of his Word.

Steve Lowe



Email slowe@erskine.edu



Phone 864.379.8748



Fax 864.379.8887



Mail Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 668, Due West, SC 29639



Website http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics_Files/Faculty/SLowe.html

Please note: there is a processing fee associated with Incompletes.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Theories of human development are assessed in terms of their contributions to understanding and encouraging growth and development in the Christian life. Special attention is given to life span theories of faith, spiritual and moral formation and development, and to transformation in the life of the individual. The course focuses on the various components of Christian education ministry and how they can be utilized to facilitate the spiritual formation of those under our spiritual care.

COURSE PURPOSE

To understand the developmental patterns of spiritual growth through the lens of human formation across the life span so that those serving in Christian education ministry can learn how to facilitate spiritual development more effectively.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce the basic features of human development and biblical spirituality so that students can identify the essential ingredients of both and describe the relationship between the two.
2. To encourage students to distinguish and interpret the relationship between human development and spiritual formation.
3. To enable students to explain and to illustrate the essential features of spirituality out of their own experience and faith tradition.
4. To provide students an opportunity to utilize a basic knowledge and understanding of spiritual formation and human development by relating principles to concrete ministry situations.
5. To challenge students to develop and formulate their own theory of spiritual formation grounded in biblical constructs.
6. To promote the student's ability to critique the spiritual formation traditions of his/her own faith community and that of other faith traditions and select those that adhere most closely to the biblical model.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

You may use Erskine Seminary's Virtual Bookstore at www.ecampus.com/erskine to order your textbooks for this course. Please click the "Shop by Course" link to see if the books required for this course are listed under the courses shown. If they are not available on ecampus, you may order them from other online book distributors.

Nurture That is Christian, Wilhoit & Dettoni, (eds), 1995.

Dynamics of Adult Faith Development: Faith is a Verb, Kenneth Stokes, 1996.

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA AND SCALE

The following grading scale, from the Seminary catalog is used to assign a numeric value to each completed assignment. All scores are weighted equally. Your final grade is the average of each grade received; a letter grade will be computed on the basis of your average raw score using the following grade scale recently adopted by the Seminary faculty:

- A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.
- B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.
- C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.
- D Level Work = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

Erskine Seminary Grading Scale:

A	95-100	C+	84-85
A-	93-94	C	80-83
		C-	78-79
B+	91-92	D+	76-77
B	88-90	D	72-75
B-	86-87	D-	70-71
	F		0-69

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

FAQ's

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachment (unless otherwise notified).
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number. Failure to include this information will result in a returned assignment.

COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, "Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program." It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, "Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities." You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- Access to the Internet, preferably with high-speed internet

COURSE COMPONENTS

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through four learning components:

1. **Lecture Component:** Mastery of course content will be accomplished through the student's active listening and reaction to e-lectures (located in the online classroom) and summary paper covering the content of those lectures.
2. **Reading Component:** Exposure to the literature of the field relevant to the topic of this course will be accomplished through required readings as specified in this course syllabus.
3. **Reflection Component:** Students are expected to think critically and deeply about the subject matter of this course intellectually (theory) and pragmatically (practice). This is encouraged through a variety of writing assignments from which the student may choose. The student is expected to integrate in the writing requirements the various components of the course including audio lectures, required readings, and other unplanned learning encounters with the professor or other members of the class.

4. **Collaborative Component:** Students will post entries to an online journal in which they record significant insights about the journey and process of spiritual formation.

These four components will provide a well-rounded learning experience for the thoughtful and diligent student producing a time commitment of approximately 110 contact hours to complete the course, broken down as follows:

Lecture Component	30 hours (including summary paper)
Reading Component	40 hours (including reaction papers)
Reflection Component	40 hours (including all course assignments)
Collaborative Component	10 hours (including initial and response journal entries)

Please Note: Successful completion of this distance learning course will require that you set your own schedule and discipline yourself to stay on schedule. I recommend that you begin the course by listening to the e-lectures, answer the questions over each lecture, read the required texts, write or complete any written assignments, and post entries to the online journal. If you devote two hours per day to completion of course assignments you can complete this course in approximately two months.

ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT ONE: E-Lectures

Description: Master the content of course lectures by listening to all e-lectures. Write a one to two page critical reaction paper in which you highlight what you thought were critical issues or themes that surfaced during your exposure to the course lectures. Send your paper to me as an email attachment in Microsoft Word format and also post a copy to the indicated location in the online classroom.

ASSIGNMENT TWO – Reading Component

Description: Read *Nurture that is Christian*. Write a one-paragraph summary for each chapter in the book. When you are finished reading the book, write a one page, single-spaced critical reaction on one topic, issue or concept raised during the course of your reading. This is not to be a book review or a summary (you've done that already). Instead, this one page paper is to be an opportunity for you to cogently, concisely, and clearly set forth a critical response you had to something in the book. You may take exception with the author, you may agree with the author, or you may have read something that is not clear to you and you need an opportunity to think it through on paper. Please put the paper through several drafts before submitting it for grading.

Description: Read *Faith is a Verb*. Write a one paragraph summary for each chapter in the book. When you are finished reading the book, write a one page,

single-spaced critical reaction on one topic, issue or concept raised during the course of your reading. This is not to be a book review or a summary (you've done that already). Instead, this one page paper is to be an opportunity for you to cogently, concisely, and clearly set forth a critical response you had to something in the book. You may take exception with the author, you may agree with the author, or you may have read something that is not clear to you and you need an opportunity to think it through on paper. Please put the paper through several drafts before submitting it for grading.

ASSIGNMENT THREE – Reflection Component

Description: Write a 5-10 page critical integration paper in which you incorporate and synthesize the course lectures, the required readings, and your own faith experience as a Christian. The paper should be double-spaced and follow either Turabian or APA citation style. Your purpose in writing the paper is to identify the salient features of spiritual formation as you now understand them in light of your exposure to the concepts discussed in the course through the lectures and your thoughtful reading of required texts. The paper should demonstrate your ability to understand the spiritual formation process. Please provide evidence of your thorough familiarity with the required texts and the course lectures. Be sure to edit your work prior to submission.

ASSIGNMENT FOUR – Collaborative Component

Description: There is evidence to suggest that students who actively engage with others in an online environment earn higher scores than other students. Online discussions and interaction provide a rich and stimulating environment of collaboration, interaction, and community building. Students participating in online discussions tend to provide more thought-provoking comments, richly detailed responses, and insightful observations.

Each student will post an entry to the online journal each week. As the student completes the required reading for this course, listens to the e-lectures, or thinks through course-related issues, he or she will post an entry relating significant insights, questions, or challenges. This journaling process can also be part of the *process* of spiritual formation.

In order to facilitate community building, fellow students will respond each week to the journal entries as a way of encouraging each other and adding to the observations posted by their classmates. Additionally, peer mentors and/or the course professor will respond to selected entries. Retroactive posting will not be accepted. The following rubric may serve as a guide to assisting you in online postings.

Please note: Part of your grade depends on collaborative learning.

Online Discussion Rubric

	Wonderful!	Great!	Acceptable	Inadequate	Poor	Score
	A	B	C	D	F	
Stays on Task:	The student follows teacher's instructions and guidance.	Occasionally the student gets off task and gets back on task without the need of the teacher's assistance.	The student is on task most of the time and is responsive to guidance meant to bring the student back on task.	The student starts out following the specific instructions of the assignment but rapidly moves off subject.	The student is unresponsive to instructor guidance.	
The student participates in the discussion in timely and substantive ways.	The student posts to the online discussion 4 or more times with posts that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student posts to the online discussion 3 times with posts that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student posts to the online discussion 2 times with posts that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student posts to the online discussion 1 times with a post that is on task and contributes in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student has not participated in ways that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	
The student demonstrates a knowledge base from assigned texts.	The student's posts are clearly built on familiarity with and comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts are clearly built on familiarity with and limited comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts are clearly built on some familiarity with and comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts are built on some familiarity with and limited comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts demonstrate a lack of familiarity with and comprehension of assigned materials.	

The following module system is a syllabus management system that will help guide you in the completion of course assignments.

MODULE #1 – Lecture Component

All work for the first module should be completed four weeks from semester start date.

Week	Lectures	Assignments Due
1	E-lectures 1a-1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Online Journal
2	E-lectures 2a-2b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Online Journal
3	E-lectures 3a-3b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Online Journal
4	E-lectures 4a-4b E-lectures 5a-5b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Online Journal

MODULE #2 – Reading Component

All work for the first module should be completed ten weeks from semester start date.

Week	Lectures	Assignments Due
5	E-lectures 6a-6b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Read <i>Nurture that is Christian</i>. • Chapter summaries • Online Journal
6	E-lectures 7a-7b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Listen to the lectures again but this time have the questions before you. • Read <i>Nurture that is Christian</i>.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries • Online Journal
7	E-lectures 8a-8b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Read <i>Nurture that is Christian</i>. • Chapter summaries due. • Online Journal
8	E-lectures 9a-9b E-lecture 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Read <i>Faith is a Verb</i> • Chapter summaries • Online Journal • Write 1-2 page critical reaction paper to e-lectures
9	Read <i>Faith is a Verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Faith is a Verb</i>. • Chapter summaries • Online Journal
10	Read <i>Faith is a Verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Faith is a Verb</i>. • Chapter summaries due. • Online Journal

MODULE #3 – Reflection Component

All work for the third module should be completed thirteen weeks from semester start date.

Week	Assignments Due
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Integration Paper • Online Journal
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Integration Paper • Online Journal
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Integration Paper • Online Journal
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration Paper due this week. • Online Journal

WRITING THEOLOGICAL PAPERS

The seminary has produced a [Writing Theological Papers](#) document that guides a student through the process of producing a high quality theological paper. It is included as part of the materials for this course located in the online classroom and is part of your Student Handbook provided by the seminary.

Please edit your paper for typographical errors, misspelled words, stylistic miscues, and grammatical mistakes. The paper should be double-spaced and constitute original work written for this course only and cannot include material previously used in another course or for another purpose. Please read over the notation regarding the seminary policy on plagiarism included at the end of this syllabus. Your use of the work or thoughts of another without proper citation and acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism. **Content found at an Internet web site is construed to be copyrighted material written and produced by another person.** Undocumented wholesale use of words from an Internet web site passed off as the student's own work in a research paper of this sort constitutes plagiarism and will be considered a violation of the seminary plagiarism policy. Students who are determined to have violated the seminary's policy on plagiarism will receive a grade of zero for the paper, will not be allowed to re-submit another paper, and will have a written record of the violation added to their permanent student record. Further violations of the seminary's plagiarism policy could result in temporary or permanent dismissal from the seminary.

Please visit these websites for more information about plagiarism:

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

<http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html>

RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

1. From the Seminary Catalog, "the grade of 'I' or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" normally is given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing all course requirements. If a grade of "I" is given for a course the remaining course work must be submitted for grading prior to the final date established in the current Seminary Catalog. Otherwise, the grade of "I" automatically becomes a grade of "F." For further details, please read the current Seminary Catalog.
2. Any late assignment will be automatically reduced by one letter grade regardless of reason. *Please make this class a high priority and keep ahead of assignments in order to compensate for the exigencies of ministry.*
3. Inclusive Language Policy. The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.
4. Once you have completed, signed, and submitted a registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a BINDING CONTRACT, and business office billing will be based on this registration. If you decide not to take this class, a drop/add form must be completed, including securing the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.
5. **Plagiarism, defined as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, is a clear violation of the Erskine Seminary Honor Code as set forth in the *Student Handbook* and *Seminary Catalog*. It is also a clear violation of the will of God in regard to taking something that belongs to someone else without his/her permission. The penalty for an infraction of the plagiarism policy is severe and may potentially**

result in the permanent dismissal of a student from the seminary. If you have any questions concerning the appropriate use of referenced sources, please contact me prior to submitting your work for grading.

Suggested Steps to Course Completion

1. Listen to the audio lectures seeking to gain a foundational knowledge and overview of the course. You might do this while driving in your car or working on a project in your workshop. Just listen for enjoyment and general understanding.
2. Listen attentively and actively while taking notes either electronically or by hand. Seek to grasp a deeper level comprehension of the subject matter presented in the lectures. While listening, have your Study Guide Questions before you and make note of information as you listen to the lectures.
3. Read the required texts for this course. Begin by reading any introductory sections (preface, introduction, foreword). Note the flow of the text and the subjects that will be covered. Read any background or biographical material that may be on a dustcover. Break your reading into manageable chunks. Avoid trying to read the textbook at one sitting or in protracted reading binges. Optimal learning takes place when reading is done in smaller segments with short breaks between reading sessions. Highlight important sections or words with colored markers so that you can easily find them when you return to the text at a later time. You may find that determining the book's total number of pages and dividing by 30 will give you an ideal number of pages to read per day over a month thus providing smaller segments to read. If you wish to read the book at a faster rate, simply substitute a lower number in place of the 30-day figure used above.
4. Using your reading notes, identify one issue or topic of importance or significance to you as you read your required text. Take this topic or theme and expand upon it in your Reflection Memo.
5. Complete your reflection or project assignments. If you intend to propose your own assignment, please be sure to have it approved prior to the start of the assignment.

Grades for the course will be processed as quickly as possible. If you have not received written notification of your final grade for the course after a month has elapsed, please contact me using one of the communication means identified at the beginning of this syllabus.

If you have any questions or encounter any difficulties while taking this course, please contact me immediately so we can get any problems resolved quickly and get you back to your scheduled pace for course completion.

Bibliography

(The following bibliography is formatted according to APA standards, a departure from the seminary-required Turabian style.)

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Bruce Waltke on Spirituality:

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