

The Divine Conspiracy PM 771Z

Professor: [Stephen D. Lowe](#), Ph.D.
Visiting Professor: Dallas Willard, Ph.D.
Three Credit Hours

Welcome to the course, *Divine Conspiracy (EDEN)*.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

CONTACT INFORMATION



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Website:
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Course Description:

This video-based online course lays out the divine conspiracy of God's intervention into human history. Drawing upon a textual analysis of the Sermon on the Mount and the New Testament teaching on the Kingdom of God, the course offers a unique conception of what authentic discipleship as taught by Jesus really means. The course proposes a "curriculum for Christ-likeness" that gives students a ministry model for making disciples.

Course Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to examine the meaning of authentic Christian faith and discipleship in content and practice in the context of God's purpose for human existence. It therefore will guide the student into a holistic understanding of discipleship and Christian spirituality.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will explore the connection between coming to know God and knowing God as an integral part of every aspect of our existence.
2. Students will explore the teaching of Jesus on discipleship and the implications of those teachings for encountering culture.

3. Students will evaluate the implications of traditional ways of presenting the gospel for Christian discipleship.
4. Students will compare and/or contrast positions espoused by Dallas Willard and those of the reformed tradition.

RESOURCES

All course materials must be purchased by the student prior to the drop date for the semester of enrollment for this course. Failure to purchase materials by this drop date will result in an automatic withdrawal from the course by action of the seminary Registrar. Please consult the latest edition of the seminary catalog for the drop dates for each semester. All course materials must be purchased by the student and cannot be borrowed or purchased from another student.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Rice, Howard L. 1991. *Reformed spirituality: An introduction for believers*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Willard, Dallas. 1998. *The divine conspiracy: Rediscovering our hidden life in God*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND ARTICLES

Alexander, Donald L., ed. 1988. *Spirituality: Five views of sanctification*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1954. *Life together*. Translated by John W. Doberstein. New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers.

_____. 2003. *Discipleship*. Edited by Geoffrey B. Kelly and John D. Godsey. Translated by Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 4. Edited by Wayne Whitson Floyd. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Chan, Simon. 1998. *Spiritual Theology: A systematic study of the Christian life*. Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press.

Collins, Kenneth J. ed. 2000. *Exploring Christian spirituality: An ecumenical reader*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Demarest, Bruce A. 1998. New dimensions in spirituality & Christian living. In *New dimensions in evangelical thought: Essays in honor of Millard J.*

Erickson, ed. David S. Dockery, 374-93. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

George, Timothy, and Alister McGrath, eds. 2003. *For all the saints: Evangelical theology and Christian spirituality*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Gundry, Stanley N., ed. 1987. Counterpoints Series. *Five views on sanctification*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Issler, Klaus. 2000. The Spiritual formation of Jesus: The significance of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' Life. *Christian Education Journal* 4 (2): 5-24.

Laney, J. Carl. 1989. Abiding is believing: The analogy of the vine in John 15:1-6.

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Willard, Dallas. 1998. Spiritual disciplines, spiritual formation, and the restoration of the soul. *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 26 (1): 101-09.

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; **remember that you also must complete each part of the Professional Assessment requirements in order to pass the course.** 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:

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

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.

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)
- High-speed access to the Internet

COURSE OVERVIEW

Assignment One: DVD Lectures and Discussions by Dallas Willard

Assignment Two: Weekly Online discussions

Assignment Three: Critical Response Papers

Assignment Four: Book Review

Assignment One – DVD Lectures and Discussions

Place the DVD of Divine Conspiracy into your computer's DVD drive and follow the installation instructions. After installation you will see an opening screen that outlines the 12 lecture series you received. Note that there are twelve lectures numbered one through twelve. Online discussions (Assignment Two below) will be focused on the content in each of these twelve lectures. Each week, weeks one through twelve, student must listen to and view the e-lectures and following question and answer times. The software shows both the video and the corresponding manuscript of the lecture. The software automatically moves the screens simultaneously through the outline of the lecture, the text of the manuscript, and the videoed lecture. There will be no video lecture for the 13th week.

Assignment Two – Online discussion

Questions for discussion will be posted each week for 13 weeks. Discussion should be a response to the posted question by the instructor in the context of other posts made by fellow students in the class who have already posted responses. In order to facilitate collaborative learning opportunities, students will respond **weekly** to the guided discussion question posted in the online classroom for this course. **Retroactive posting will not be accepted.** **Additionally**, students will respond to at least one fellow classmates' discussion board posting. Your response should include feedback and interaction related to the weekly discussion question or responses. Participation in these online discussions should include thoughtful and perceptive comments related to the posting.

Assignment Three – Critical Response Papers

Retrieve and read each of the following articles. Over the course of the semester, each student will write three 2-3 page critical response papers on their selection of six of the following articles. Papers are due at the end of the 4th, 8th, and 12th weeks of the semester. In these papers the student is to respond to the content of the article in an evaluative analysis of the article. The articles can be retrieved by copying the Web address and

pasting it into the address bar of a browser such as **Microsoft Internet Explorer**.

[Idaho Springs inquiries concerning spiritual formation.](#)

[Spiritual formation in Christ: A perspective on what it is and how it might be done.](#)

[How does the disciple live?](#)

[The human body and spiritual growth.](#)

[The key to the keys of the kingdom](#)

[Kingdom living.](#)

[Live life to the full](#)

[On the texture and substance of the human soul](#)

[Personal soul care](#)

[Rethinking evangelism.](#)

[Who is your teacher?](#)

[Why bother with discipleship?](#)

[Your Place in This World](#)

Assignment Four: Book Review

Read the two required textbooks and write a brief review of the books as if you were writing for the Christian Education journal. Go to the following web site:

(http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/CYE_BookReviewGuidelines.htm) and use the guidelines in the writing of this review. This review is due at the end of the semester. The book review must be no longer than 2000 words and no shorter than 1000 words.

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 in your resources located in the online classroom for this course.

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

RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

Seminary Policies Pertaining to Language

1. Language about God and Humanity: Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

2. Form of Written Work: For the research paper, students are required to follow the form and style guidelines found in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition). These guidelines are summarized in the Erskine Seminary document “Style and Form Standards for all Master’s-Level Programs,” available at the link listed on p. 1 of this syllabus.

3. Plagiarism: Any student who commits plagiarism is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal. See the academic section of the Catalog for complete information.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: Following is a list of books upon which the teaching of this class in some way is based. All citations in this syllabus are in Turabian’s parenthetical and reference list style.

Alexander, Donald L., ed. 1988. *Spirituality: Five views of sanctification*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

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- Behm, Johannes. 1967. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 5. ed. by Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 800-814. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
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- Benson, Bob, Sr., and Michael W. Benson. 1989. *Disciplines for the inner life*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.
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- _____. 1970. *Psalms: The prayer book of the Bible*. Translated by James H. Burtness. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers.
- _____. 1977. *The cost of discipleship*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc.
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