

**Promoting Spiritual Formation Through Christian Education
CE 750**

Elective. Three Hours

Please note: This course may be taken in place of Spiritual Formation CE 551

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Class meets Tuesday evening 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Room TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students are enabled to acquire a basic understanding of the dynamics of spiritual formation so that they can more effectively promote the spiritual well-being of those under their spiritual care. The course examines the Biblical teaching on spiritual formation, as well as developmental models that one understands of the spiritual development process. Students are encouraged to think critically about how to best facilitate spiritual formation in the Christian home, the Christian school, and through the educational ministries of the Church. Particular attention is paid to the implications of the Search Institute study on Christian Education Effectiveness as it relates to the construct of spiritual maturity.

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 in themselves and others 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.

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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.

COURSE COMPONENTS

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

1. **Presentation Component:** Critical course concepts and precepts will be presented by the professor, guest speakers, and students.
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.
4. **Online Component:** Students are expected to enroll in the online classroom for this course. In order to get a satisfactory grade for this portion of the course, you will need to make weekly postings of your own and respond to my questions and to other student postings. There are plenty of opportunities for you to interact with other students who are taking this course. You are required to post at least one weekly contribution and to respond to one other student's post each week. No post hoc contributions will count toward your grade for this portion of the course.
5. **Evaluation Component:** Students take a comprehensive final examination. The exam tests knowledge of core course concepts and reading by responding to a series of essay questions.

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA AND SCALE

The following grading scale, from the Seminary catalog is used to assign a numeric value to each lesson submitted. 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:

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

General grading criteria will conform to the following expectations for all course submissions:

- 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.

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 the Registrar's Office. According to institutional policy, professors are not permitted to notify students of their grade in a course. This can only be done through the Registrar's Office.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

The Required Textbooks listed below may be ordered from the Erskine Theological Seminary Virtual Bookstore at www.ecampus.com/erskine from January 4, 2008.

Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation, M. Robert Mulholland, The Upper Room, 2001

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Faithcare: Ministering to All of God's People Through the Ages of Life, Daniel O. Aleshire, The Westminster Press, 1988.

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It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian, Tod E. Bolsinger, Brazos Press, 2004.

The Ecology of Spiritual Formation, Steve & Mary Lowe, 2007. This paper was written for the National Consultation on Spiritual Formation funded by a generous grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. This paper may be found in the online classroom for this course and is provided free of charge.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment One: Keep a written (can be electronic) journal of your spiritual progress during the course of the semester. Ideally you should make contributions to your journal on a daily basis but you should make at least weekly contributions. Set aside a set time each day or each week to write in your journal. If you prefer hand writing your journal, you may find the blank journals offered at Books-a-Million or Barnes & Noble to be ideal for your purposes. Your written reflections should focus on the ways in which God is molding and shaping you as a Christian in all of the six dimensions of whole person transformation mentioned in class. **Due Tuesday, April 29 at the scheduled class meeting time.**

Assignment Two: Participate weekly in the online classroom by responding to the Going Deeper question and by responding to at least one other student's posting. In addition, you are encouraged but not required to contribute some resource that you have used previously or discovered during the course of the semester that you think would be beneficial to the rest of the class. This may be a written document, sermon, article or book. It may also be a web site or an online sermon or talk someone has given that is *relevant to the content of the course*. It might even be a YouTube video or a music video that connects to our course topic. Get the information/resource to me and I will see that it gets added to the online classroom resource section. An *Online Discussion Rubric* is provided for you in this syllabus which tells you in advance what criteria I will use to evaluate your online participation grade.

Assignment Three: Read *Shaped by the Word* by Mulholland. This book should be read first during the first three weeks of the course. I will be covering similar material in class that lays a biblical theology of spiritual development. Once you are finished reading the book, take the online quiz over the book. You must score at least an 80/C before the grade will be counted toward your final grade in the course. You may re-take the quiz as often as necessary in order to reach this minimum score. Once you have scored above the minimum score you may not take the quiz again. **Due by February 26 at class time.**

Assignment Four: Read *The Ecology of Spiritual Formation* by Lowe & Lowe. This should be the second required text that you read for the course. You will find an electronic version of this article in the online classroom. In fact, you should read this article during that portion of the course in which I present my ecology of spiritual development paradigm. Once you are finished reading the article and feel that you have mastered the content of the manuscript, you may take an online quiz located in the online classroom and follow the same procedures outlined above. **Due by Tuesday, March 24 at class time.**

Assignment Five: Read *It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian* by Bolsinger. 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. **Due Tuesday, April 14 by class time.**

Assignment Six: Read *FaithCare* by Aleshire. Using this book as well as the other resources provided in this course, design a *Spiritual Development Ministry Map* that will guide you in facilitating the spiritual development of each age/stage segment in a typical congregation (children, youth, adult, older adult). Explain the unique developmental needs of each age/stage and how you will go about personally and programmatically meeting those needs through Christian Education ministry. When you are finished share this model with one other student who will be assigned to you by the professor. The other student will give you constructive feedback on how you might go about improving the model. This should be done using the "track changes" function in Microsoft Word. You should send me a copy of the document you designed as an email attachment and the other student will send me a copy of the edited document as an email attachment. **Both are due by Tuesday, May 6 at class time.**

Assignment Seven: Take a final comprehensive essay exam over course presentations and course readings. Taken during the final exam hour as scheduled by the Registrar.

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 weekly or more times with posts that are on task and contribute in a sustentative way to the posted question.		The student posts to the online discussion 3 times with posts that are on task and contribute in a sustentative way to the posited question.		The student posts to the online discussion 2 times with posts that are on task and contribute in a sustentative 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 sustentative way to the posted question.		The student has not participated in ways that are on task and contribute in a sustentative 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.		

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Relevant Institutional and Class 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 page 36 of the current Seminary Catalog.
2. 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.
3. Any late project will be automatically reduced by one letter grade regardless of reason. *Please make this class a high priority and keep ahead of projects in order to compensate for the exigencies of ministry and life.*
4. Seminary policy regarding drop/adds. I understand that once I have completed, signed, and submitted my registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a BINDING CONTRACT, and my billing will be based on this registration. I further understand if I decide not to take this class, a "drop/add" form must be completed, including securing 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. My normal office hours are posted on my office door in Reid Hall for each semester. However, there are times when I will not be in my office during those posted hours. If you need to see me or speak with me, please send me an email (slowe@erskine.edu) or leave me a voice mail on my office phone (379.8748)
6. 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.

Select Bibliography

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Bruce Waltke on Spirituality:

<http://www.bible.org/galaxie/journals/sample/jets/8589/31a02.htm>