

SPIR 244: PRAYER AND PRAYER METHODS:
Prayer and our journey toward God
Summer 2021

SPIR 224 # 30342

Class Time: S 6/12, 6/26, 7/10 9am-3pm
W 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Begins W 6/9, ends W 7/14
Zoom format for all classes

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Human life is one long movement toward God.
Prayer is the moment when we become more aware of the nature of the journey.
(Michael Casey, *Toward God*, Liguori, 1996, 9)

First, let's say something quite simple about prayer, something very self-evident
which is at the very beginning of prayer and which we usually overlook:
in prayer we open our hearts to God.
(Karl Rahner, *The Need and the Blessing of Prayer*, 1997,2)

Course Description: SPIR 244:

Everyone is called to the immediacy of God's self-presence. Prayer is one of the ways by which a person can open oneself to the Transcendent. An openness to an encounter with God involves active work for a person.

This course is an introduction to Christian prayer, asking: What is prayer? How does one deepen in a relation with the Mystery of God? What happens when we pray? And what are ways of prayer, the development of a prayer life, methods for meditation, for contemplation? How does prayer lead one to serve others, to contribute to the beloved community?

To navigate in our contemporary world, the course introduces and explores the a rich legacy of Christian spiritual practices over the ages, considering what we might reclaim and reinterpret for our times, and also provides theological grounding necessary to evaluate and critique prayer practices. This course offers students opportunities to consider one's experiences of God, to explore various prayer practices, personal and communal, and to consider how one might apply practices in their own ministry. Each class will include a practicum on a specific prayer form.

Program and Course Learning Objectives: The GPPM Program learning objectives for this course stipulate that by the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of prayer and articulate a broad historical and theological literacy of what constitutes prayer tradition (**GPPM objective, 1A**) (1st reflection paper)
2. Employ historically informed knowledge of the tradition to assess theological positions & pastoral issues. (**GPPM Objective, 3A**)
 - a. Describe traditional and contemporary methods of prayer and its stages of development;
 - b. Think, speak and write critically about various contexts and developments of prayer methods, including Centering Prayer, Lectio (2nd reflection paper, panelist)
3. Demonstrate a depth of practical and theoretical knowledge in applying various prayer practices in their personal lives as well as in the lived experience of the Christian faith and the work of pastoral ministry (Personal journal/Project/Research paper) (**GPPM Objective, 2A**)

Preparing for Class

Journal

Purchase a journal, *one that you are comfortable writing in*. Can be as simple as a composition book, one with blank pages, pages you can keep in a binder, or an artistic one.

Course Camino Website

On “Camino,” the SCU online learning management portal, you will find all course materials: syllabus, class preparation guidelines, readings, discussion posts, writing rubrics, grade summaries. Every class session has an overview page on Camino. This page gives session information, the readings, background information on the topic, and the assignments.

Prior to class: For Saturday online classes, reading and assignments found on Camino should be completed and posted, if required, by Friday at 3:00; for Wednesday online classes, if short quiz or writing response required, should be posted on Camino by 3:00 that afternoon.

Questions, Lecture, Student-led discussions or panels.

Classes will generally begin with an introduction, move on with a brief praxis and, lecture or close reading directed by the professor, Q&A session, followed by a reflection on a specific reading led by a student or a student team and then conversation among us on how this topic focuses, deepens or contests your understanding of prayer, spirituality and ministry, and a discussion how this material could be useful to ministry in your faith community.

Course Requirements

Student's Self Evaluation (20% of course grade). Daily personal prayer (20 -30 minutes per day, five days a week); keeping a personal prayer journal five days a week; reading required texts and preparation for class; regular attendance, attentive and active participation in class. See Camino for guidelines (3A)

Instructors Evaluation (80% of course grade)

- Preparation and participation 20 pts.
- Journal reflection papers. Guidelines & rubrics on CAMINO (3A) 30 pts.
- A final theological paper of 12-15 pages (2A), either 1) developing a prayer course that you can teach in a parish or other ministry situation; or 2) an in depth reflection of your journey in prayer through the course, based on your journal entries and accompanied reading. 30 pts.

Submit proposal on CAMINO, 7/5

Fifteen minute presentation on Wednesday, 7/14
Final paper due, Sunday, 7/18

Course Texts:

Keating, Thomas. 2020. *Intimacy with God*. A Crossroad Book.

Martin, James. 2021. *Learning to Pray*. HarperOne.

All other course materials and exercises will be provided to students through our course page on Camino.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Guidelines for class preparations on CAMINO.

W 6/9 What is Prayer?

Readings: Martin. Chapters 3-6. 56 pgs.

S 6/12 The Nature of Prayer: Toward God

Toward God

Readings: Steinmetz. "Thoughts on the Experience of God in the Theology of Karl Rahner: Gifts and Implications," *Lumen et Vita*, VI. 2. 2012, 1-15. C

Rahner: Rahner: On Movement, 53-56; Opening the Heart, 71-74 in *Karl Rahner: Spiritual Writings*. 2004. Ed. Philip Endean. NY: Orbis Bks. C.

View: McColman, Carl. Five Key Words to Understand Christian Mysticism. C (4 minutes)

Prayer, social conscience and social responsibility

Readings: Sunderman. Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day on Prayer, Conscience & Christian Social Responsibility: A Comparative Study, 11 pgs. C

Excerpts from Dorothy Day's Writings: Lord, Teach Me to Pray, 1. C

Excerpt from Thomas Merton: The Merton Prayer. 1 C.

Practicum: Praying with scripture

W 6/16 Praying with the Psalms:

Readings: Brueggemann, (2014) Introduction to the Book of Psalms, 1-7; the Counter World of the Psalms, 8-35. C

Practicum: Praying with the Psalms

S 6/20. First Reflection Paper Due

W 6/23 How do I know It's God? What happens when you pray?

Readings: Martin. Chapters 10 and 11

Casey. Models of Prayer and Short Prayers from *Toward God*, 78-99 C

Keating, Chapter 8

Practicum: "Look at your stirrings . . ." from The Cloud of Unknowing

S 6/26 Contemplative practices: Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer, both personal practices and to apply in ministries

What is Centering Prayer?

Readings: Keating, Chapters, 2
Practicum: Centering Prayer

Lectio Divina

Readings: On Lectio Divina. Contemplative Outreach website. C
Keating, Chapter 7
Reference: Four Approaches to Lectio Divina. C
Practicum: Lectio Divina

W 6/30 Topic gender and cultural prayer questions/practices

Readings. TBA, but including Charismatic prayer C

S 7/ 3 Second Reflection Paper due.

W 7/7 Praying with Nature

Readings. Martin, Chapter 15
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin C
Practicum: Praying with Nature

S 7/10 Prayer as Transformation: labyrinth, pilgrimages, journeys

Toward God, Prayer and Divinization

Readings: Clare of Assisi on prayer. C
Thurman on prayer. C
Theresa of Avila on prayer. C
Practicum: Visio Divina Simon and Jesus

The Dark Night

Readings: Selections from John of the Cross. C
Fitzgerald. From Impasse to Prophetic Hope: Crisis of Memory. C

W 7/14 How will you go forward toward God?

Readings: Martin, Chapter 16 and 17

SU 7/18 Pastoral Application Project due on or before

Grading Policy Santa Clara's grading scale indicates that an A is reserved for work that is "excellent." Please note that an "A" does not reflect "sufficient" or even "full" engagement with the material: it is reserved for *truly exceptional work*. B correlates to "good," and a C to "adequate." You should not expect to receive an A or a B for cruising through the class with "adequate" work. These grades require consistent levels of diligent,

thoughtful attention and excellent work on papers and exams. Be proud of passing grades. They indicate that you have done hard work well!

Grading Scale

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|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|
| 93.5-100 | A | 86.7-89.9 | B+ | 76.7-79.9 | C+ | 66.7-69.9 | D+ |
| 90.0-93.4 | A- | 83.3-86.6 | B | 73.3-76.6 | C | 63.3-66.6 | D |
| | | 80.0-82.2 | B- | 70.0-73.2 | C- | 60.0-63.2 | D- |

Attendance Policy If you are ill, or something unavoidable comes up, or, email me in advance. Make the most of our time together, come prepared, having completed all the readings and assignments on time, and ready to engage. You are allowed one unexcused absence with no impact to your grade. Unexcused absences of two or more result in one whole letter-grade deduction each (i.e. B to C). If you miss three classes (30% of our meetings), it will not be possible to pass this class.

Use of Technology in & Recording of Class Cellphones should be turned off during class, and laptops may only be used for Zoom and authorized collaborations or for viewing course readings.

Video Recording Policy The Student Handbook prohibits video- or audio-recording or streaming of private, non-public conversations and/or meetings, inclusive of the classroom setting, without the knowledge and consent of all recorded parties. If you require the recording of classroom lectures, discussions, simulations, and other course-related activity for a documented disability, make arrangements through Disabilities Resources (see below) and discuss this with the instructor. If for some reason other than disability you would like to record the class, please seek the permission of the instructor first, and then of the class.

Academic Integrity The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of – and commitment to – a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

You are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. Violations include plagiarism, cheating, outsourcing, and destruction of library or other materials needed for a course. Students found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will, at the least, receive zero points for the piece of work concerned. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see www.scu.edu/academic-integrity.

Disabilities Resources If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact the Office of Accessible Education (OAE), Benson 216, <http://www.scu.edu/oae> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through the OAE, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations.

While I am here to assist you in any way I can, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from OAE. The OAE will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). OAE must be contacted in

advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The OAE would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. **For more information, you may contact OAE at 408-554-4109.**

Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, SCU provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. In addition, the Office of Accessible Education will provide reasonable accommodations for pregnancy related impairments that impact major life activities.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX) SCU upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, tell someone immediately. For more information, please consult the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy at <http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb> or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043, bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethic>

