

## **BCS5540 Spiritual Formation in the Black Tradition (4 credits)**

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY/Cleveland

Fall Semester, August 30-December 16, 2021

September 10,11; October 8,9,15,16; December 3,4

Fridays & Saturdays (6pm-9pm//8:00am-4:00pm)

Instructor/Crystal Walker, D.Min.

Email: cwalker3@ashland.edu

Phone 216-431-5468 (o); Fax 216-431-1989

### **I. Course Description**

This course explores primary and secondary sources in the African American religious experience in an effort to uncover indigenous material that reflects a distinctively Black spiritual formation tradition. Students will explore different genres - slave narratives, conversion narratives, call narratives, prayers, sermons, art - as well as the life and works of selected personalities. In addition, this course may include a seminar, workshop and/or retreat as part of the modalities of delivery. This course is graded pass/fail.

### **II. Student Learning Outcomes**

This course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes and requirements of the traditional semester course format.

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical and responsible interpretation and use of Scripture in the Black Church context informed by the integrative prayer the Black Church tradition.
2. Explore the varieties of prayer exercises throughout the Black Church Tradition.
3. Demonstrate a critical understanding and relevant use of the theology of the Black religious experience in various contemporary settings.
4. Demonstrate the use of music, scripture and theological reflection with the varieties of prayer used throughout the Black Church tradition in preparation for personal and corporate practice of prayer.
5. Not access in this course.

### **III. Course Requirements**

#### **A. Required Textbooks**

Nowden, Henri. 1981. *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. ISBNo[‘ 0345463358

Vennard, J. *Embracing the World: Praying for Justice and Peace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003. ISBN 0-470-39076-X

Washington, James Melvin. *Conversations with God: Two Centuries of Prayers by African Americans*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. ISBN 0-06-092657-0

Thompson, Marjorie J. 2014. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life. 3rd edition*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. ISBN 978-0664239244

Hayes, Diana. *Forged in the Fiery Furnace: African American Spirituality*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012. ISBN 978-1-57075-472-2

## B. Assignments/Assessments of Student Learning

1. **Reading/Journaling:** Read the material assigned daily, one prayer from *Conversations with God* and pray daily each week keeping a dated journal specifying what you read, which book you read from, page numbers and any personal experiences you encountered during that time. You must journal 4 of the 7 days each week. Each journal reflection must be at least 2 pages. Journals must be brought and turned in each day of class and will be returned the same day for continued journaling.
2. **Group Presentation:** Reflective Prayer Group Presentation: Each Student will be assigned a group and will create a reflective prayer session integrating music, scripture and prayer. Each group will do to reflective prayer presentations.
3. **Individual Oral & Written Presentation:** Each student will present an oral and 2-5 page written devotional reflecting on a selected prayer from *Conversations with God*. Each student will do a summary/review on an assigned chapter(s) from each of the assign readings with the exception of *Conversations With God*.
4. **Oral Journal Presentation:** Each student will present oral reflections from their journal of their spiritual journey from the start of the course to the last day of class. The oral reflections should highlight the intersection of your ministry involvement with your personal experiences from your daily prayer time, the reading material, reflective prayer, retreat experiences from the class.

## C. Calculation of Grade

Assessment	Learning Outcomes	Percentage of Final Grade
Assigned Reading/Journaling	2,3	30%
Group Presentation	1,4	30%
Individual Oral/Written Presentation	1,2,3	30%
Journal Presentation	2,3	10%

#### IV. Course Schedule

<b>Class</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Lecture/Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignments</b>
Week 1	August 30-September 4	Solitude	Readings: Nowden pgs.1-14 Thompson Chapter 1 Washington, Prayers Hayes Section 1
2	September 6-11	Reflective Prayer	Readings: Nowden Pgs. 1-14 Continued Washington, Prayers  Assignments: Summary, Nowden Devotional, Washington Journal Due
3	September 13-18	Silence	Readings: Nowden, Pgs.15-22 Thompson, Chapter 2 Washington, Prayers Hayes Section 2
4	September 20-25	Solitude	Readings: Nowden 23-40 Thompson Chapter 3 Washington, Prayers Hayes Section 3
5	September 27-October 2	Silence	Readings: Nowden 41-66 Thompson Chapter 4 Washington, Prayers Hayes Section 4
6	October 4-9	Group/ Reflective Prayer	Readings: Vannard Chapter 1 Thompson Chapter 5 Washington, Prayers  Assignments: Summary, Vennard Devotional, Washington Journal Due Group Reflective Prayer

7	October 11-16	Group/Reflective Prayer	Readings: Vannard Chapter 2 Thompson Chapter 6 Washington Prayers  Assignments: Summary, Thompson Devotional, Washington Journal Due Group Reflective Prayer
8	October 18-23	Silence	Readings: Vannard Chapter 3 Thompson Chapter 7 Washington Prayers Hayes Sections 5
9	October 25-30	Silence	Readings: Vannard Chapter 4 Thompson Chapter 8 Washington Prayers Hayes Section 6
10	November 1-6		Readings: Vannard Chapter 5 Thompson Chapter 9 Washington Prayers Hayes Section 7
11	November 8-13	Group/Reflective Prayer	Readings: Vannard Chapter 6 Thompson Chapter 10 Washington Prayers
12	November 15-20	Prayer	Readings: Vannard Chapter 7 Washington Prayers Hayes Section 9
13	November 22-27	Prayer	Thompson Chapter 11 Washington Prayers
14	November 29-December 4	Reflective Prayer	Assignments: Summary, Thompson Devotional, Washington Journal Due Group Reflective Prayer
15	December 6-10	No Class	
16	December 13-18	No Class	

## V. LIFELONG LEARNING

Recommendations for Lifelong Learning: There are an enormous number of books, articles videos, seminars being produced by African American scholars today. See the McCreary Center website for video lectures and course, links, course offerings, seminars, etc. See the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute and the American Academy of Religion for numerous African American scholar presentations, both national and global.

## VI. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OR REFERENCES

See extensive bibliography in selected readings

### Seminary Guidelines

#### A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy

Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary's core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one's own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one's own capabilities to achieve one's fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the *Student Handbook*.

#### B. ATS Grading Scale

Grade	Quality	Percent	Description
A	4.0	97-100	Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.
A-	3.7	92-96	
B+	3.3	89-91	
B	3.0	86-88	Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.
B-	2.7	83-85	
C+	2.3	80-82	
C	2.0	77-79	Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.

C-	1.7	74-76	
D+	1.3	71-73	
D	1.0	68-70	Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.
D-	0.7	65-67	
F	0.0	Below 65	Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.

### **C. Attendance**

According to the Student Handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected, unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than six class hours will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade, audit or withdraw from the class, or be penalized otherwise at the discretion of the professor.

### **D. Attendance Reporting:**

Students are required to participate in a course related activity in the first and third weeks of the course. Students may be administratively withdrawn from the course and/or may lose financial aid benefits if a qualifying activity has not occurred between the student and the course work or faculty within the first three days of the course. Simply logging into a course online via the Learning Management System (LMS) is not considered a qualifying activity.

Student non-participation during the first 8 days of a course may initiate the administrative course withdrawal process. Student non-participation, mid-course, for 14 consecutive days may also initiate the administrative course withdrawal process.

According to policies and procedures set forth by Ashland University's Department for Veterans' Services, AU will grant any service member requiring more than a 30-day leave a release from coursework. Contact the Office of Veterans' Services for more information regarding this process.

### **E. Accessibility Resources and Accommodations**

It is Ashland University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please contact the Student Accessibility Center at [419-289-5904](tel:419-289-5904), or send an email to [au-sac@ashland.edu](mailto:au-sac@ashland.edu). The Student Accessibility Center office and the course instructor will work together in order to establish accommodations and to meet your learning needs.

### **F. Ashland Multiliteracy Center (AUMuLit Center)**

The AMuLit Center can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing assignments in your graduate Seminary classes. Masters and doctoral qualified consultants can advise you online or in person. For more information [click here](#).

- Receive one-on-one feedback from an AMuLit Center graduate consultant on any project that involves communication - essays, speeches, group presentations, lab reports, poster presentations, and much more!
- Our default type of appointment for graduate students is conducted asynchronously via email. In other words, after you make an appointment through our online scheduler (WOnline), you attach a draft to the appointment, then within 48 hours of the scheduled appointment, one of our consultants reviews your paper and emails you feedback. We also offer synchronous (live) appointments via Zoom by request.
- To schedule an asynchronous email appointment, go to [www.ashland.mywconline.com](http://www.ashland.mywconline.com) (you will need to register for an account the first time you use the scheduler).
- To schedule a synchronous (live) Zoom appointment, please email us at [amulitcenter@ashland.edu](mailto:amulitcenter@ashland.edu).

Visit our graduate services webpage for more information -

<https://www.ashland.edu/administration/graduate-online-adult-center-academic-support/resources-students/graduate-writing-consultation>