Course Description:

In this course we will learn about spiritual practices for daily living by reading and discussing spiritual classics, primarily from the Christian tradition. All of the books are still in print, many centuries after they were written. Through a careful examination of the texts, we will explore how spirituality is expressed differently over time, noting the diversity inherent in the author’s time period, denomination, gender, culture and race. How can this book deepen our spiritual lives in today’s world? Every class will have a workshop component where specific spiritual practices will be explored.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will be able to describe a wide variety of spiritual practices and their biblical roots.
2. Students will be able to identify how contexts shape spiritual practices.
3. Students will explore their own spirituality by sampling a variety of practices, and reflecting on them.
4. Students will develop analytical skills by summarizing the thought of complex and deep theological works.
5. Students will develop the ability to discuss a book for maximum insight, with an emphasis on careful listening, and formulating questions.

Required Reading Materials:

Texts:
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. 
Brother Lawrence. *The Practice of the Presence of God.*
Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.*
Frankl, Victor. *Man’s Search for Meaning.*
Guyon, Jeanne. *Short and Easy Method of Prayer.*
John of the Cross. *Dark Night of the Soul.*
Loyola, Ignatius. *The Spiritual Exercises.*
Sales, Frances de. *Introduction to the Devout Life.*
Stonechild, Blair A. *The Knowledge Seeker—Embracing Indigenous Spirituality.*
*The Cloud of Unknowing.*
Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited.*
Vanier, Jean. *Becoming Human.*

**Articles:**


**Evaluations:**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classic Book Analysis</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Every class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Practices Reflection</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative Contemporary Book Review</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>December 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Assignments:**

#1. Classic Book Analysis (40%)

Goal: To demonstrate the ability to analyze and concisely articulate the meaning of a book about spirituality.

Due Date: Weekly from September 13 to November 22 (excluding October 11)

Length: strict maximum 250 words per week

Each week, you will choose ONE of the two assigned books to analyze.

Your paper will address only these two questions:

What is spirituality for this author, as demonstrated in this book?
What spiritual practices do they recommend?
Do not fall into the trap of summarizing the book chapter by chapter.
You are encouraged to only read the text itself, and come up with your own analysis.
This is not a research paper, and no contextual remarks about the work are required.
Very short quotes from the book (one sentence) may be helpful.
Each week our discussion of the two books will be informed by the papers you have written.
The papers will be handed in after our discussion in class.

#2. Comparative Contemporary Book Review (40%)
Goal: To demonstrate your ability to analyze the meaning of a book on spirituality, and place its ideas in historical context with other spiritual literature. You will have a chance to share about your book in the last class of the semester.
Due Date: December 6 (one week after our last class)
Length: 2000-2500 words
Choose a spiritual book written after 1970 that has influenced your life. In this paper you will:
i. Summarize the structure of the book, giving background about the author and their context, such as their age, gender, race, denomination, culture, and geographical location. (2 pages)
ii. Reflect on the book, as you have been doing in the Classic Book Reflection (1 page)
iii. Compare and contrast your book with the other books we have read (4-6 pages)
   -- Do you see a similarity in organization to any of the other books we have read?
   -- Do you see a similarity in theme?
   -- How does your book reflect its contemporary context (world events, currents ideas)?
   -- Are there spiritual dilemmas or practices present in your book that are not covered in the classics? Be specific.
iv. Describe why this book has meant so much to you. (1 page)

#3. Spiritual Practices Reflection (10%)
Goal: To deepen spiritual life, and to ground discussions about spiritual practice in lived experience.
Due Date: November 29
Length: 750 - 1000 words
At the beginning of the course, you will be given a list of spiritual practices. Choose one or two spiritual practices that are new to you, and do them faithfully for the duration of the course. You can do them both the whole time, or consecutively; six weeks for one, and six weeks for another. In this paper you will reflect on that practice, comparing and contrasting it to others you have learned about or practiced. You will not be marked on the spiritual insight you gained, but rather on your ability to discuss whether or not this practice worked in your life, and why. We will share insights from this reflection on the last day of class.

#4. Class Attendance and Participation (10%)
Being present and participating in class discussion and activities is essential for the pedagogical method of this course. Students are expected to come to class having read the required reading for the day, with readiness to discuss them. Participation is assessed not by how much you talk,
but rather by how present you are in the discussion as a listener and a participant. If you are unable to make the class, please let the instructor know by email if you will be absent. If you miss three classes, even for unavoidable reasons, an alternative assignment may be assigned to make up for the class time.

Course Schedule:

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Spiritual Practice Workshop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sheldrake, “Chapter 1: What is Spirituality?”</td>
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<td>In-class readings:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>St. Augustine, <em>Confessions</em> (397-400) OR</td>
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<td>St. Benedict, <em>The Rule of St. Benedict</em> (ca. 530)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Spiritual Journaling</strong></td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Anonymous - <em>The Cloud of Unknowing</em> (ca. 1350-1400) OR</td>
<td><strong>Silence and Solitude</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>OR St. Benedict, <em>The Rule of St. Benedict</em> (ca. 530)</td>
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<td><strong>Silence and Solitude</strong></td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Thomas a Kempis – <em>The Imitation of Christ</em> (1418) OR</td>
<td><strong>The Examen</strong></td>
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<td>OR Ignatius Loyola – <em>The Spiritual Exercises</em> (1522-1524)</td>
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<td><strong>The Examen</strong></td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>St. Teresa of Avila - <em>The Interior Castle</em> (1577) OR</td>
<td><strong>Devotional Reading</strong></td>
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<td>OR St. John of the Cross – <em>Dark Night of the Soul</em> (ca. 1578-1591)</td>
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<td><strong>Devotional Reading</strong></td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Frances de Sales – <em>Introduction to the Devout Life</em> (ca. 1593-1622)</td>
<td><strong>Varieties of Prayer</strong></td>
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<td>OR Jeanne Guyon – <em>Short and Easy Method of Prayer</em> (1682)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Varieties of Prayer</strong></td>
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<td>Oct</td>
<td><strong>No class (Tues. schedule make-up day)</strong></td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Brother Lawrence – <em>The Practice of the Presence of God</em> (ca. 1692)</td>
<td><strong>Using your body in spiritual practice</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>OR Hannah Whitall Smith – <em>The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life</em> (1875)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Evelyn Underhill – <em>Practical Mysticism: A Little Book for Normal People</em> (1914)</td>
<td><strong>Music and art as spiritual practice</strong></td>
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<td>OR Victor Frankl – <em>Man’s Search for Meaning</em> (1946)</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Dietrich Bonhoeffer – <em>Life Together</em> (1939)</td>
<td><strong>Community as a Spiritual Practice</strong></td>
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<td>OR Corrie Ten Boom (with John and Elizabeth Sherrill) – <em>The Hiding Place</em> (1971)</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Richard Wurmbrand – <em>Tortured for Christ</em> (ca. 1967) OR</td>
<td><strong>Service as a Spiritual Practice</strong></td>
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<td>OR Catherine de Hueck Doherty -- <em>Poustinia</em> (1975)</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Annie Dillard – <em>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</em> (1974)</td>
<td><strong>Nature as a Spiritual Practice</strong></td>
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Week | Readings | Spiritual Practice Workshop
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OR Blair A. Stonechild – *The Knowledge Seeker* (2016)
12. Nov 29 Favourite Contemporary Spiritual Books | Wrap-up and Reflection

**UWaterloo Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Arts: [Academic Integrity website](#) University of Waterloo: [Academic Integrity Office](#)

**Notes**

**Citations and Plagiarism**
Your sources must be fully documented, according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). The latest edition is available online. Please use the notes and bibliography system rather than the parenthetical author/date system. Using undocumented quotations from published sources, or submitting work that is not your own will have serious ramifications for your academic career.

**Tardy Assignments**
Punctual submission of assignments is expected. Late assignments will be accepted only if you have talked to the instructor ahead of time for an extension. Marks may be deducted for assignments that are over one week overdue.

**Confidentiality**
In the course of our discussions as we explore pastoral caregiving, the students or instructor may wish to share stories of a personal nature. It is expected that personal stories you hear in class will not be repeated outside the classroom without the express permission of the person who told the story.

**The Land on Which We Meet:**
We acknowledge that we are located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and the Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo and Conrad Grebel University are situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers (six miles) on each side of the Grand River.

**Other sources of information for students:**
**Mental Health Services** aim is to provide holistic programming and services to help you lead a healthy and balanced life. We strive to provide a secure, supportive environment for students of all orientations and backgrounds. Students suffering from problems with anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, attention, obsession or compulsions, relationship difficulties, severe winter blues, etc., may make an appointment by phone or in person. Appointments are usually available within two days of initial
contact with one of our medical doctors. All contacts are completely confidential. Phone 519-888-4567 ext. 32655.

For students with learning differences: The AccessAbility Services (AAS) office, located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the ASS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Counselling Services: Counselling Services provides free confidential counselling, in both individual and group sessions, with qualified professionals to help registered students, faculty and staff with personal concerns, educational career decisions, and strategies to studies and exams: www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs, ext. 33528, NH Room 2080.

The Writing Centre: Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence. Make an appointment or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre