Course Description

This is a reading course in Christian devotional literature, designed to stimulate spiritual growth in seminarians by means of first-hand acquaintance with selected portions of great Christian literature.

As an independent study, the largest portion of this course consists of reading classic devotional and inspirational works. These texts consist of a few modern works and many historic works that are important milestones in the history of Christian devotion.

Course Texts

Please note: Except for the first two, nearly all of these books are available in multiple editions and translations. Therefore I have not listed specific publication data or ISBN numbers. Please use the edition that is readily available to you. If you do not wish to purchase copies of these books, most of them are available for free online or can be found in a public library.

These books will introduce you to devotional literature and its place in the life of a growing Christian:


These books are the devotional classics we will be studying:

Athanasius. The Life of Antony.

Augustine. Confessions.

Gregory the Great. Life of Our Most Holy Father St. Benedict.
Saint Patrick. *Confessions*.

a Kempis, Thomas. *The Imitation of Christ*.

Luther, Martin. *A Simple Way to Pray*.

Bunyan, John. *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Fenelon, Francois. *Let Go*.


Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

Thompson, Francis. “The Hound of Heaven.” This is a poem that is readily available online.


**Course Requirements**

1. **Summaries**  
   For the first two books in the class (Goggin and Whitney), write brief papers summarizing the content of the books. Each chapter should be summarized in no more than 1-2 paragraphs.  
   **Due dates for summaries are listed in the schedule.**

2. **Reflections**  
   After reading each of the assigned texts, write a reflection paper of two to three (2-3) double-spaced pages describing the spiritual insights you gained from the reading. These papers are **not** to be summaries of the texts read. They are to consist of your reflection on and reaction to the reading as you describe how you were spiritually moved by it. Of course, it may be necessary to provide some description of the passages or ideas that were particularly important to you.  
   Each paper is expected to have information at the top of the first page identifying yourself and the text covered by it.  
   **One reflection is due every week, by midnight on Tuesday, as specified in the schedule below.**

3. **Paper**  
   After completing all of the readings, write a seven (7) page double-spaced paper synthesizing all of the information gleaned from the readings and using it to create a plan for your future devotional life. In as much detail as you are able to envision, describe the specific actions and habits that you intend to implement in your life to bring you into greater spiritual communion with God. You may also include in your paper a calendar or chart of your devising that demonstrates how your plan can be enacted.  
   **This paper is due by midnight on the Thursday of finals week.**


Course Grades
Summaries 14%
Reflections 72%
Paper 14%

Course Policies

1. **Deadlines**
   You are expected to adhere to all deadlines without fail. **Late work is automatically worth zero points.** You have been informed of the various due dates well in advance and are expected to meet them regardless of personal impediments that may arise immediately before something is due. Deadlines are a fact of life. You can choose to plan ahead so that you meet them, or you can be content with the mediocrity of last-minute work. Either way, you still have to be on time.

2. **Academic Integrity**
   The sanctity of truth is central to those who believe in a God who cannot lie and who forbids false witness. Academic honesty is the application in the academic world of the sanctity of truth. A student who submits work as part of the requirements for a course thereby asserts that the student personally has done that work exclusively for that course. The student is asserting that the thoughts are the student's own original work unless credit is explicitly given to sources via citation. The student is asserting that the words written are the student’s own original work unless words are enclosed in quotation marks. Academic dishonesty is falling short of these standards. It includes, but is not limited to: cheating, submitting work which was prepared by another person, not giving credit on papers to sources, not quoting properly, and submitting without approval work originally prepared by the student for another course. Students found engaging in academic dishonesty will be subject to various disciplinary measures.

3. **Syllabus Disclaimer**
   During the course of the term the professor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Goggin and Strobel, <em>Reading the Christian Spiritual Classics</em></td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>September 15</td>
<td>Whitney, <em>Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life</em></td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>September 22</td>
<td>Athanasius, <em>The Life of Antony</em></td>
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<td>September 29</td>
<td>Augustine, <em>Confessions</em></td>
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<td>October 6</td>
<td>Augustine, <em>Confessions</em></td>
<td>Reflection</td>
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<td>October 13</td>
<td>Saint Patrick, <em>Confessions</em></td>
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<td>October 20</td>
<td>a Kempis, <em>The Imitation of Christ</em></td>
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<td>October 27</td>
<td>Luther, <em>A Simple Way to Pray</em></td>
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<td>November 3</td>
<td>Bunyan, <em>Pilgrim's Progress</em></td>
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<td>Fenelon, <em>Let Go</em></td>
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<td>Edwards, <em>The Life and Diary of David Brainerd</em></td>
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<td>November 24</td>
<td>Wesley, <em>A Plain Account of Christian Perfection</em></td>
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<td>December 1</td>
<td>Thompson, “The Hound of Heaven”</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
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<td>December 8</td>
<td>Bonhoeffer, <em>The Cost of Discipleship</em></td>
<td>Reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paper</td>
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