

CHMN 516: Spiritual Formation

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CHMN 516: Spiritual Formation

Course Welcome

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Instructor Contact Information

Name

Phone

Email

Preferred contact method

Best time to contact / Office hours

Instructor Email Response Policy

Any course related email sent to the instructor will have a response either by email, phone, or through the LMS within 48 hours.

Course Description and Credit Hours

(3 credit hours) This course is designed to be a practical study of the concept of the spiritual life, its meaning, significance, and development. Various models of Christian spirituality are studied. Small groups, lectures, and time for solitude and silence will be part of this course experience. Students are encouraged to examine their own spiritual lives and learn about various models/guidelines for implementing a ministry of spiritual formation in the Christian community.

Your Professor's Additional Thoughts on the Course

We are all being shaped, all the time. It happens with our bodies. It happens with our opinions. It happens with our relationships. And it happens with our spiritual life. As soon as we talk about spiritual formation in an academic setting, we are in a risky place. We can talk in an historic, theological, academic way. But that is not adequate for those who are responsible for souls. We have to understand what it feels like to be formed. But that is not enough, for we have responsibility before God to care for the souls of others.

In seven weeks, we cannot accomplish everything in those spheres. We will, however, consider the roots and practices of formation. We will spend time living in the disciplines. And we will consider what it looks like to develop community that forms well the lives of the people involved.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

- Explore the process of Christian spiritual formation.
- Consider various practices that the church has used over the centuries to foster spiritual formation.
- Grow in understanding of our own spiritual journey and what steps are necessary for further growth.
- Examine how to apply and implement spiritual formation practices in the Christian community.
- Be challenged to see our own conformity to the likeness of Christ as the primary calling of life, one from which any and every other form of service to the Kingdom of God flows.

Required Textbook / Materials

- Willard, D. A. (1988, reprint 1999). *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. San Francisco: HarperOne.
Willard wrote a lot about spiritual formation and discipleship. This book was written as a companion to Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*.
- Howard, Evan B. (2018). *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker. 978-0801097805. This is a new book to the discipline of spiritual formation and provides a good overview.
- Peterson, E. H. (1993). *The Contemplative Pastor*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
Peterson has written about formation in several books. This one is the most focused.
- Barton, R. H. (2006). *Sacred Rhythms*. Downers Grove: IVP.
This book is a good practical study of a handful of disciplines.
- Swanson, J. C. (2013). *Lent for Non-Lent People*. Fort Wayne: Createspace.
I wrote this as a way to help people who are unfamiliar with Lent find benefit in being formed by the season.

Textbooks and other required course materials can be purchased from the [online campus bookstore](#).

Course Requirements

Any online course activities assigned to the course are performed within Canvas.

Additional web sites and related web-based activities, if assigned, will be accessed through the course or through web links provided for web sites located outside the course.

Final Grade Calculation

Grade Distribution

Assignment	Weight
Weekly Projects	40%
Rule of Life	20%
Formation Framework	40%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percent
A	100% - 94%
A-	< 94% - 90%
B+	< 90% - 87%
B	< 87% - 84%
B-	< 84% - 80%
C+	< 80% - 77%
C	< 77% - 74%
C-	< 74% - 70%
D+	< 70% - 67%
D	< 67% - 64%
D-	< 64% - 60%
F	< 60% and below

Netiquette Policy

In an online course, almost all your interactions with other people will be through the internet. This netiquette policy applies to all your interactions with the instructor and your fellow students, and you are expected to follow the guidelines outlined below.

Respect other people and be willing to share your ideas and thoughts in a respectful way. Simply, respect others' views. You may disagree with someone, but do so graciously and constructively. Pause before writing emails or posts when you are angry, and reread what you wrote carefully before clicking 'send.' Treat others the way you wish to be treated—with respect.

Do not post or communicate offensive or hateful content. Bethel University does not permit discussions that are obscene, harassing, sexually explicit, or derogatory toward individuals or groups. These will be deleted, and repeat offenders may be barred from future participation.

Do not post or share personal information. Do not post or share information such as addresses, telephone numbers, etc., and do not post or share someone else's personal information.

Learning Activities and Tests

Online Discussion

Class Participation

In the event of classroom meeting cancelation due to a campus scheduled holiday or severe weather, the scheduled class session will continue online. The following requirements are for online discussions:

The student will submit an initial discussion post per discussion topic. This initial discussion is a minimum of 250 words. This initial discussion post must include a level of detail, analysis and reflection related to the discussion topic. The student is expected to cite references to support their opinion. Any use of references must be properly cited using APA format.

Each student is required to reply to a minimum of two student initial posts. The reply post is a minimum of 100 to 150 words. This post must include a level of detail, analysis and reflection.

To receive the minimum points possible for a weekly discussion requires each student to post their initial discussion response on the regular night of the class session and two student reply posts by day four of the session – unless otherwise directed by the professor.

Post / Response Guidelines

In an online classroom the majority of discussion among class members will take place in the discussion forum. Online discussion forums are designed to allow the class to engage in a healthy dialog on the lesson topic or question being presented. However, for the dialog to remain productive Bethel University requires each person to conduct themselves in a responsible manner by following the simple guidelines below. These help to maintain a collaborative and congenial environment by reminding us all that, when we communicate online, we are still engaging real people.

Stay on the discussion topic. Be respectful of participants and their time by staying on-topic and not commandeering a discussion with vague or unrelated comments. Contribute productive information when participating in a discussion by stating a complete and logical idea or concept. The goal in the discussion is to delve into a topic and “learn,” so when you post a comment stay on topic and explain your point of view.

Access the discussions several times in the weekly sessions to remain current and active in the discussion.

Do not post copyrighted material without the expressed, documented permission of the copyright holder or following proper source citation of the information, just as you would when writing an essay or term paper. Cite a source if you use it.

Contact your instructor if you have any questions.

Major Projects

1. **Personal Spiritual Retreat.** The assignment is to spend one full day (at least an 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. type of time frame) in personal retreat. Get off by yourself to read, reflect, meditate, pray, think about life, ministry, etc. Reflect on our class time – readings, discussions, etc. Use some of the disciplines and practices we have discussed to connect with God and take stock of your life. Type a 5-6 page, double-spaced reflection of your time of retreat. Include where you went, what you did, how this time impacted your spiritual life, insights, etc. You should also include ways in which our class (time together, readings, etc.) have influenced your spiritual formation and future ministry (synthesize your learning and make application to your life. However, I understand that your schedule may not permit this timing. My suggestion is then to complete the retreat as late in the duration of the course as possible. Submit this assignment as a Microsoft Word document as an upload in Canvas by midnight Saturday of Week 5.
2. **A Framework for Spiritual Growth in Specific Community.** For your final project, I want you to identify a group of people. I want you to write a definition of spiritual formation for them: what does it mean in that community to be formed in the likeness of Christ? And then you will outline a sequence of events and experiences that will help

that shaping happen. In education terms, this is a scope and sequence. This project will be started in class and will be explained more clearly. Submit this assignment as a Microsoft Word document as an upload in Canvas by midnight Saturday of Week 7.

3. **Rule of Life.** In the course of the course, you will develop a Rule of Life and discuss it with others in the class. At the end of the course, write your final draft of your rule and a two-page discussion of ways that you will follow it, including observations from keeping a time log for four weeks in the course. Submit this assignment as a Microsoft Word document as an upload in Canvas by midnight Saturday of Week 7.

Bethel University Policies and Resources

To view all Bethel University policies and information, please review the [Student Handbook](#).

Online Attendance

Online attendance is recorded each time that you log into the learning management system. The academic week is seven days for an online session and is based on the night the class normally meets (i.e. if the class meets on Monday night then the online session will be from Monday night through Sunday night of the following week). To receive full credit for attending online, you must login AND one of the following items must be completed as directed by the instructor:

- Submit an academic assignment.
- Submit a quiz or exam.
- Participate in a posted online academic discussion.

Note that the following actions will not count as attendance:

- Logging into class without active participation does not constitute attendance.
- Work done in a lab or other outside environment will not count toward online attendance.
- Assignments completed the week after the online assignment is due will not count toward attendance for the previous week.

Students are strongly encouraged to log into the course a minimum of three days during the week the course is “online” in order to understand the subject fully and to be successful in class.

An online absence is counted the same as an in-class absence.

Late or Make Up Work

It is important for students to submit work on time as scheduled in the class. This allows the instructor time to grade the material and provide feedback if necessary. Circumstances may interfere with the ability to submit an assignment on time. However, as a student you agree to take the class and therefore agree to submit work on time.

Students are encouraged to work ahead to avoid late assignments. Please communicate with your professor promptly if you have extenuating circumstances that may contribute to a late assignment.

Assignments (excluding discussion questions) will be accepted late, subject to a 10% deduction off the earned grade per day late (24-hour period), for up to 3 days. No assignments will be accepted after 3 days. Discussion posts and responses that are not posted by the due date will receive 0 points and are not accepted past the due date.

All work must be completed and submitted by the end of Week 7 of the course. No work will be accepted after the last day of the course.

Class Cancellation / Weather Policy for Online Courses

In the advent of in-classroom meeting cancellation due to a campus scheduled holiday or severe weather, the online course schedule will be maintained. Campus closures do not affect the online course schedule.

Plagiarism

Any act of deceit, falsehood or stealing by unethically copying or using someone else's work in an academic situation is prohibited. A student found guilty of plagiarism will receive an "F" for that paper, assignment or exam. The professor will have an interview with the student and submit a written report to the Program Director or Coordinator for the area in which the student is enrolled. If a second offense should occur, the student will be required to appear before the professor, the director and the vice president for adult and graduate studies. At this point the student's continuation in the course and academic career are in jeopardy. Students are encouraged to refer to the Bethel Library's [online help for proper citation](#).

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that provides civil rights protection for people with disabilities. Bethel University is compliant with equal access laws and requests students with disabilities. The Center for Academic Success (CAS) is located in the lower level of the Miller/Moore Academic Center.

If you have a disability, or think you have a disability, please make an appointment by calling Disability Services at the Center for Academic Success at (574) 807-7460 or (574) 807-7462 or email academicsuccess@betheluniversity.edu.

Bethel's website offers more detailed information under CAS. Please check out the [Student Guide for Disability Services](#).

Information Technology Help Desk

The Help Desk is open Monday-Thursday from 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., during the fall and spring semesters, and 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. during the summer (starting May 1). Hours may vary on holidays and breaks.

Contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@bethelcollege.edu or by calling (574) 807-7777.

Library

Bethel's Bowen Library offers a range of resources and services, both online and physical, to all students enrolled at Bethel University. All online resources are available at the [library website](#).

Almost all periodicals and journals are available online, and there is a wide selection of e-books available as well. Off-campus access to these resources requires an active Bethel login account. For assistance in locating information, librarians are available to answer questions via email ([Ask a Librarian](#)), phone, or in person during regular business hours. For physical resources, students are able to use the [library catalog](#) to locate books and resources that are held either by Bethel or any other library. Students may use the catalog to request books from another library and have them delivered to the Bowen Library.

Students may also go to any [PALNI](#) library or to Notre Dame or Holy Cross and check material out in person with a valid student ID. PALNI is a consortium of several academic libraries in Indiana of which Bethel is a member; some nearby member libraries include Saint Mary's, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Goshen, and Grace. In addition, physical books and journals, the Bowen Library provides study spaces, computers, and printers (included a web print station) to all students.

Syllabus Acknowledgment

Enrollment in this course is considered an acknowledgment that the student will review and follow the course syllabus and additional university policies as stated within the student handbook, university catalog and student information provided by the university through the campus website.

This syllabus is not a legal contract, but serves as a general outline for the semester. The professor reserves the right to make adjustments to the course as the need arises.

Course Outline

Module One: Entering the formation conversation

Learning Objectives

- Describe the implications of formation being a process rather than a point.
- Discuss the elements of Christian, spiritual, and formation.
- Compare definitions of Christian Spiritual formation.
- Participate in a long read with reflection.
- Respond to the interaction of identity, mindset, and diachronic/synchronic theology in formation.
- Respond to the Diogenes Allen framework for evaluation.

Devotional: Swanson, chapter 1

Discuss: Before you do any other assignment, take five minutes to answer this question:

What kind of person would you like to be known as in five years?

You can't talk about jobs. We've got no control over that. If you and I were friends and in five years we met someone new, how would you want me to introduce you?

A great example of this, by the way, is Paul's introduction of Tychicus in Colossians 4.

"Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts." (Colossians 4:7-8 ESV)

He's got three characteristics that Paul finds worth noting, three nouns and three adjectives. "Beloved brother." Faithful minister." "Fellow servant." These are things that many of us would love to be true of us.

So take five minutes. Answer the question. And then enter your answer in the discussion.

After you have posted yours, take time to respond to the answers of two other people. If you know them from other courses, affirm what they have identified. If you don't know them, suggest a person from Scripture who resembles what the person is describing.

Discuss: After watching the Allen presentation on comparing spiritual theologies, choose one writer or speaker that you know well and answer the first two questions that Allen poses. What does that person say is the goal of the spiritual life? And what do they say is the path to the goal?

Read: Willard Foreword-42 and Howard, Chapters 1 and 2

Write and upload: On one page, SINGLE-SPACE, answer three questions.

1. *How would you describe this course to your high school sophomore nephew? Just based on what you know.*
2. *What gap in your heart or mind or training would you love for this course to fill? As you read Willard, does your gap align with his nearly 30-year old critique? (Be as honest with yourself as you can be.)*
3. *Howard asks "Think back to a time in your life that you would say was spiritually formative. What happened? What was that like? Can you identify some of the elements of Christian spiritual formation in that event or season?"*

Do: Starting Week 1, keep the attached time chart (where you will record your stewardship of time) **for two weeks**—You should record what you actually do (or have done), not what you would hope to have done. No great detail is required – just the basics of how you use your time. (For example, you don't have to identify who you are having conversations with, only "conversation". Likewise, you can use "At Work" "At Home" "on Facebook" "Marathon training" "recovery" and similar words. I will upload a sample on Canvas.)

Watch: [The Power of Believing You Can Improve](#)

Watch: Mini-lecture on Identity

Watch: Mini-lecture on Diogenes Allen

Module Two: Who are you?

Learning Objectives

- Describe the concept of spiritual temperaments and be able to identify their own.
- Develop a draft rule of life.
- Drawing on Willard, consider implications on formation of what it means to be human.
- Identify and respond to concerns about spiritual formation.
- Introduce the concept of scope and sequence.

Devotional: Read Swanson Chapter 2

Read: Willard, Chapters 4, 5, 6

Discuss: Write five group discussion questions based on Willard which you will use to help us discuss the text. Share them in Canvas. Then answer two questions from others.

Read: Howard, Chapters 3-5

Read: Barton, Chapter 9

Watch: Mini-lecture on the six routines.

Write: Using Barton's template as a guide, type up a tentative rule of life that you will follow for the duration of the class. Upload to Canvas.

Watch: Mini-lecture on Spiritual Temperaments

Complete the spiritual temperaments worksheet. Use the tally form to gather your results. Submit them to the professor.

Watch Todd Wilson presentation from the Center for Pastor Theologians 2018 conference.

Watch mini-lecture on final project worksheet.

Module Three: Practicing Practices

Learning Objectives

In this week, we will go two directions. In one, we'll be experiential, practicing some spiritual practices and reflecting on them. The other is evaluative, reading about a particular life and then considering the implications of using models and teachers.

- Experience and reflect on select spiritual practices.
- Describe Paul's way of Christian living, starting from Willard's analysis.
- Reflect on the challenge and value of using "my story" in learning and leading formation.

Devotional: Read Swanson, Chapter 3

Read: Willard, Chapter 7

Read: Barton, Chapters 1-8

Read: Howard, Chapter 6

Write: At the end of each chapter in Barton is a practice. Engage in five of the eight practices for a period of time. Type a 1 paragraph, single-spaced reflection about your experience with each of the practices you engage with, and one paragraph explaining why you didn't use the other three. Submit this assignment as a Microsoft Word document as an upload in Canvas

Do: Starting at the beginning of week 3, use your Rule of Life draft to live for two weeks. Of course, practices that happen on a frequency of less than a month may not happen. But try it out for two weeks.

Watch: Mini-lecture on Story.

Watch: [The Holy Spirit and Positive Psychology in Spiritual Formation](#)

Watch: Video introduction to long reads of scripture.

After watching the mini-lecture "Long Reads", do your own long reading of scripture. With a group of more than four people and less than twenty, read the whole Sermon on the Mount. (You can download it from Canvas if you would like. That manuscript has no headers or verse numbers) Practice it once or twice out loud so it feels comfortable to read and listen to. Then read it out loud to the group.

After you have read it, ask them to reflect with you. Ask these questions slowly, waiting for responses. 1. What did you see as you were listening? 2. What did you hear as you were listening? 3. What did you like most? 4. What did you like least? 5. What did you learn about God? 6. What do you want to remember?

In Module 4, you will discuss what you learned from this activity.

Discuss: Dr Tan talks about a point of disagreement with Dr Willard. Explain their disagreement and then briefly respond to why you lean toward one or the other. Then respond to two other comments. 2. Identify one of the practices in Barton that helped you and one that you skipped. Briefly describe WHY it helped and why you skipped it. Then comment on two other posts engaging with why your experiences may have differed.

Module Four: Participating in the care of souls

In week four we begin turning from reflecting on ourselves to accepting God-given responsibility for others. Peterson talks about this as the "care of souls". We'll begin evaluating a community to work with in the final project.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the concept of "care of souls" and contrast it to other models of pastoral leadership.
- Describe ways to approach Scripture (Lectio divina, lectio continua, oral reading).
- Develop a working definition of spiritual formation.

Devotional: Read Swanson, Chapter 4

Read: Peterson, pp 15-66 (But for sure, 53-66)

Read Howard, Chapters 7-9

Write: Using the Final Project worksheet, complete questions 1-8. Submit this assignment as a Microsoft Word document as an upload in Canvas by midnight Saturday. (The worksheet is available on Canvas).

Write: Complete the Allen Spiritual Life worksheet for the community you are working with.

Read: Lectio Divina

Discuss: Describe your long read. Who was there, when did you do it. and then, in 2-3 sentences, describe how it felt to listen for that long and how people responded. Suggest what you would do the next time you read that way. And then comment on the posts from two other people.

Discuss: How have you seen a pastor demonstrate an understanding of caring for souls, as Peterson describes it? Be sure to reference Peterson in your description 2. After completing

a long-read of scripture in a group, wrote a brief response to the experience. What did you hear from others in that group? What did you hear yourself? What would you like to do the next time? Then, respond to the posts from two other people.

Module Five: Going away and coming back

In Module five, there is a mixture of reflecting on a time of retreat and reflecting on structuring experience for others. So we'll be talking about how individual differences, cultural differences, theological differences, personality differences can and should contribute to the shaping of a spiritual formation process.

Learning Objectives

- Identify and discuss approaches to measuring spiritual formation
- Assess a community's understanding of the spiritual life.
- Reflect on an 8 hour personal spiritual retreat.

Devotional: Read Swanson, Chapter 5

Read Peterson, pp 95-128

Read Howard, Chapters 10-12

Submit: The retreat reflection

Discuss: On page 210 in Howard, question 3 asks "How do we reconcile the tension between the contemplative life and the active life?" and then he asks several related questions In 2 paragraphs, give your answer to that question at this point in the course. And then respond to the answers of two other people

Module Six – Help me with these people

This week you will be wrestling with the application of all the course concepts to your final project. You will be helping each other with that process. And you will reflect on how others have thought about working with congregations in this way.

Learning Objectives

- Provide thoughtful coaching for others developing frameworks for formation.
- Reflect on your own experience of formation, including in this course.

Devotional: Read Swanson Chapter 6

Submit and Discuss: Upload the answers to questions 9-13 from the Final project worksheet to Canvas. You will be assigned to groups of 2-3 by the instructor. Read the answers from the other people in your group and make 6-7 specific words of affirmation, questions of clarification, and/or suggestions of actions or resources to the other members of your group. The goal of your responses is to help their framework be more helpful in accomplishing the goals that they are establishing

Watch: Video interview with Bill Lepley

Watch: Mini-lecture: How to help each other.

Write: On one page, single spaced, write a response to question 1 on page 245 in Howard. As you think about how to answer, reflect on the conversation with Bill Lepley, considering your own experience of being formed and then the ministry you have offered to others

Do: Do another long reading of scripture. With a group of more than four people and less than twenty, read the letters to the churches from Revelation. This time, have different people read. Tell them, "after each letter is read, pause for thirty seconds before the next one." (You can download it from Canvas if you would like. That manuscript has no headers or verse numbers). After the reading, ask them to reflect with you. Ask these questions slowly, waiting for responses. 1. What did you like most? 2. What did you like least? 3. What did you learn about God? 4. What did you learn about people. 5. What do you want to remember?

In Module 7, you will discuss what you learned from this activity.

Module Seven – What I hear you saying is

In this module, you will wrap up both your recommendation for yourself (Rule of Life) and your recommendation for a specific community (your final).

Learning Objectives

- Complete the drafting of a personal rule of life based on reflection and testing.
- Complete "A Framework for Spiritual Growth in Specific Community".
- Reflect on their own progress.

Devotional: Read Swanson, Chapter 7

Read Peterson, 129-151

Due: Framework for Spiritual Growth in Specific Community on Saturday by midnight

Due: Rule of Life on Saturday by midnight

Discuss: In 3 paragraphs, tell your colleagues what you think you understand about formation, what you still wish you understood, and what you are ready to start and stop doing over the next 6 months to help you grow. Then offer encouragement and counsel to two other people.

Discuss: Describe your long read from the letters to the seven churches. Who was there, when did you do it? And then, in 2-3 sentences, describe how it felt to listen for that long and how people responded. Suggest what you would do the next time you read that way. And then comment on the posts from two other people.

Watch: The last lecture