

CSP231: The Practice of Prayer



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We're delighted to have you study at RMC! Please note the following policies:

We try our best to ensure you get the most from the courses in which you are enrolled and welcome your feedback!

Online Courtesy

As beings created in the image of God, we all deserve to be treated with the utmost respect whether we are a facilitator or a student. Online courses give us the opportunity to encourage social interaction, relationship building and trust between participants which befits our status as image-bearers. Failure to show respect in course interchange, through emails, announcements, discussion forums or instant chat, whether in the form of racism, chauvinism or simple unkindness is ungracious and inappropriate for the health of Christian community. Where mutual respect exists, the possibility of learning is enhanced for all.

Therefore, please remember that there is a person behind every comment on the course website – when you respond, be gracious, give the benefit of the doubt and ask for clarification. Review your comments in the discussion forums for tone before submitting them – sarcasm and jokes often do not translate well in the online environment. Be sure your messages are clear – it is tempting to quickly write a response and submit it but this can lead to confusion if your thoughts are a bit jumbled – take time to polish your remarks. Remember that your comments, whether in emails or discussion forums can become public so act accordingly.

RMC Grading Policy

Grade GradePoint

A+	4.0	
A	4.0	A = Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	
B	3.0	B = Good - clearly above average performance with knowledge of the subject matter generally complete.
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	
C	2.0	C = Satisfactory — basic understanding of subject matter.
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	D = Inferior work which falls below the expectations of the course but which is of passing quality.
D-	0.7	
F	0.0	F = Failure to meet the minimum standards required for a passing grade.
P	Pass	P = Represents satisfactory work. Given only in courses specially designated for Pass /Fail grading.
IN		Incomplete
VW		Voluntary Withdrawal from a course before the course withdrawal deadline.

Grading Scale

A+ 97-100	A 93-96	A- 89-92
B+ 85-88	B 80-84	B- 76-79
C+ 72-75	C 67-71	C- 60-66
D 55-59	F 0-54	

CSP231: The Practice of Prayer
Rocky Mountain College
Credits: 3

Course Description & Purpose

Our soul's longing for the loving presence of God finds its rest in the context of prayer. In this place of rest, our task is to recover the centrality of prayer for the Christian life, with the objective of acquiring a practice of prayer that is organic and meaningful to our personal and vocational lives.

The Psalms and the Lord's Prayer provide the basic text for the journey toward establishing prayer as central orientation in the life of the believer. In addition, the works of spiritual writers from Christian tradition direct the Christian today toward the dynamics of the practice of prayer.

It is the intent of this course to draw from both the biblical text and devotional material in the pursuit of understanding prayer to the Creator God, who desires our undivided devotion, and to find a deeper understanding our ourselves and our prayerful place in the world.

Course pre-requisites: CSP130: Introduction to Christian Spirituality

Texts

Freeman, E. (2019). *The Next Right Thing: A Simple, Soulful Practice for Making Life Decisions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.

Karris, M. G. (2018). *Divine Echoes: Reconciling Prayer with the Uncontrolling Love of God*. Orange, CA, USA: Mark Gregory Karris.

Nouwen, H. (1981). *The Way of the Heart: Connecting with God through prayer, wisdom and Silence*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Ringma, C. & Dickau, M. (2015). *The Art of Healing Prayer: Bringing Christ's Wholeness to Broken People*. London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Smith, G. T. (2018). *Teach Us to Pray*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Plus one book choice from the list of possible books for the book review.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- *Describe & practice types of prayer, both historic and across traditions*
- *Describe three or more prayer tools*
- *Analyze best fit of prayer practices for their own life*
- *Communicate a nuanced understanding of prayers of intercession*
- *Describe the role of healing prayer in her/his own context*
- *Articulate their plan for the future of their prayer life*

Course Outline

Module	Topic	Time Expectations	Textbook Reading	Assignment Due	Discussion
1	Introduction to Prayer	15 hours	Smith, <i>Teach Us to Pray</i>	Book Review	What is Prayer?
2	Praying the Psalter	20 hours	-	Praying the Psalms Journal	-
3	Contemplation	4 hours	Nouwen, <i>The Way of the Heart</i>	History of Prayer Quiz	Debriefing <i>Lectio Divina</i>
4	Discerning Prayer	4.5 hours	Freeman, <i>The Next Right Thing</i> , chapters 1-6.	Reflection paper on Discernment	-
5	Emotions & Prayer	2.5 hours	Miller, <i>A Praying Life</i> , chapter 23.	Dark Night of the Soul Quiz	Emotions & prayer
6	Prayer & Missional Engagement	28 hours	Karris, <i>Divine Echoes</i>	Position Paper	-
7	Healing Prayer	23 hours	Ringma & Dickau, <i>The Art of Healing Prayer</i>	Research Paper	-
8	Conclusions	8 hours	Thomas, <i>Sacred Pathways</i> , chapter 1.	Prayer Plan	Defining Prayer

Course Requirements and Grading

Assignments in this course are described below. Course assignments are due at the end of the course.

1. ***Book review.*** Write a 1500 word book review based on a book of your choosing from the provided list of options. This book review will require that you demonstrate that you have read the whole book and also include your assessment of the ideas presented by the author, including whether or not their perspective on prayer is helpful in deepening your own prayer life. Note that you do not have to agree with the author. See the appendix for the list of book options. Your essay should include three sections, a summary of the book. Second, a critical assessment of the ideas presented by the author -- their value or shortcomings. Third, a personal reflection on the impact of the author's ideas on your prayer life. **15% of final grade**
2. ***Praying the Psalms prayer journal.*** For this assignment, you will pray the whole book of Psalms in a period of 30 days. You will keep a journal, in whatever format you find easiest - a paper notebook, a sketchbook full of mind maps, a digital file - and as you pray, take the time to reflect and journal. *Be sure to leave yourself at least 30 days to complete your assignment before the due date.* To demonstrate you have completed this assignment and receive credit (1) you will be required to upload 5 journal entries. *Everything shared for your assignment will be kept confidential.* (2) Please complete a 150-word statement about what you found most meaningful about praying the Psalms, **15% of final grade**
3. ***History of Prayer Quiz.*** Complete the online quiz based on the History of Prayer module. **5% of final grade**
4. ***Reflection Paper on Discernment.*** Write a 2-page reflection paper recalling a time when you made an important decision. Reflect on the role of prayer in your decision (even if it was absent from your process). Reflect also on anything you would do differently if faced with a similar decision again. **5% of final grade**
5. ***Dark Night of the Soul Quiz.*** Complete the online quiz based on the Dark Night of the Soul module. **5% of final grade**
6. ***Position paper on Intercessory Prayer.*** Write a 1500 word position paper outlining your researched and self-reflective opinion on the role of intercessory prayer. Your main text to interact with will be Mark Karris and his book *Divine Echoes*. After reading Karris' book in its entirety, reflect on your own position and whether you find his argument compelling or necessary for a healthy posture of intercessory prayer. **15% of the final grade.**
7. ***Research Paper on Healing Prayer.*** Write a 1500 word research essay on Healing Prayer. Your starting place for this paper will be the textbook *The Art of Healing Prayer* by Charles Ringma & Mary Dickau. After reading the textbook, research the history and practice of healing prayer and reflect on the place of healing prayer in your own context. **20% of final grade**
8. ***Personal Prayer Plan.*** Create a prayer plan. This 1000 word assignment and can take the form of an essay or outline form with a significant amount of description. Now that you

have reflected on prayer throughout this course, what practices, experiments or ministries are taking shape in your imagination? How would your life look with these prayer practices integrated into your daily, weekly or annual rhythms? Describe at least four prayer practices including your assessment of personal fit, your plan to implement the practice and your assessment of the impact this practice will have on your life. **20% of final grade**

RMC uses APA style for all courses. Our latest style guidelines are available on our website (rockymountaincollege.ca under “Resources” – “RMC Writing Support”)

Technical Competencies

Students will be required to utilize basic skills in computer and internet use.

Facilitator Expectations of Students

What is expected of the student who wishes to succeed in this course.

- Effective time management
- Regular participation in discussions;
- Regular logging in to course webpage to:
 - check due dates
 - keep up with readings/videos
 - check messages and announcements
- Seek feedback or clarification from facilitator regarding questions about assignments, extensions, technical difficulties etc.
- Ability to communicate effectively in writing
- Ability to regularly access the internet

Student Expectations of Facilitators

What students can expect from you.

- Prompt response to email messages
- Clear communication about your availability for consultation
- Timely turnaround for assignment grading
- Constructive feedback on assignments
- Regular communication
 - Weekly announcements
 - Personal emails
 - Bulletins about recent advances in the field of study
 - Live chat sessions

Bibliography

Brueggemann, W. (2008). *Prayers for a Privileged People*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Freeman, E. (2019). *The Next Right Thing: A Simple, Soulful Practice for Making Life Decisions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.

Gunther, M. (1998). *The Practice of Prayer*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications.

Haley Barton, R. (2012). *Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups*. Downers Grove, IL, IVP Books.

Jersak, B. (2003). *Can You Hear Me? Tuning in to the God Who Speaks*. Abbotsford, BC: Fresh Wind Press.

Karris, M. G. (2018). *Divine Echoes: Reconciling Prayer with the Uncontrolling Love of God*. Orange, CA, USA: Mark Gregory Karris.

Miller, P. (2009). *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Nouwen, H. (1981). *The Way of the Heart: Connecting with God through prayer, wisdom and Silence*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Peterson, E. (1989). *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Ringma, C. & Dickau, M. (2015). *The Art of Healing Prayer: Bringing Christ's Wholeness to Broken People*. London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Smith, G. T. (2018). *Teach Us to Pray*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Teresa of Avila. (1989). *The Interior Castle* (Peers, E.A.Trans.). New York, NY: Image Books.

Thomas, G. (1996). *Sacred Pathways: Discovering Your Soul's Path to God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

von Balthasar, H. (1986). *Prayer* (Harrison, G. Trans.). San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press.

Appendix A: Book review options

Choose one book from the following list to complete your book review assignment. See the bibliography for full citation of the available books.

Margret Gunther, *The Practice of Prayer*
- a practical guide to different prayer practices

Brad Jersak, *Can You Hear Me? Tuning in to the God who Speaks*
- reflections on listening prayer with lots of concrete examples

Eugene Peterson, *Answering God*
- wisdom on the Psalms and prayer from a pastoral heart

Walter Brueggemann, *Prayers for a Privileged People*
- reflections on how to pray from a position of privilege (*available online - see module for a link*)

Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*
- the historical classic on prayer from 1577 which uses the metaphor of a castle to guide the reader through the idea of encountering God intimately (*available online - see module for a link*)

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer*
- a dense book on prayer and contemplation, a more advanced option