



## Course Syllabus: Rooted in God Fall 2019

### Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The final course syllabus will be available by the first day of class, though changes may be made to accommodate the needs of the class.

#### ***Course Identification***

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Course Number: WYP2636HS  
Course Name: Rooted in God: Personal Prayer as the Soil for Ministry  
Location: St. John's Convent, North York  
Dates and Times: Thursdays 7 :00– 9:30 pm

#### ***Instructor Information***

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Instructor: Rev. Dr. Sr. Constance Gefvert E-mail: [cj@ssjd.ca](mailto:cj@ssjd.ca)  
Office Hours: Before or after class each week and by appointment at other times

#### ***Course Prerequisites or Requisites***

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None.

#### ***Course Description***

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“Rooted in God” focuses on personal contemplative prayer as the “the one thing needful” for a personal relationship with God, and the essential soil out of which healthy and effective ministry grows. Including both theory and practice, the course covers Biblical teaching on prayer; the contemplative tradition arising from the early desert fathers and mothers; spirituality, theology and psychology of prayer; and various Christian traditions of prayer including lectio divina, Ignatian prayer, other forms of scripture prayer, centering prayer, Christian meditation, and the awareness examen. The course concludes with suggestions for planting and growing a prayer-based ministry for a parish or other context in which the student hopes to minister.

#### ***Course Methodology***

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Prayer involves our whole lives, and so we will use many methods to learn and practice forms of contemplative prayer

- Lecture: occasional direct input from the instructor especially when new topics are introduced
- Practicum: each time a form or way of prayer is introduced, we will practice it in class, and suggestions will be given for practicing at home.
- Class discussion: both in plenary and in small groups

- Use of visual and artistic media: film, art, music
- Reading and watching: students will learn from a variety of writers on prayer both in writing and occasionally via the internet or DVD
- Sharing ideas and reflections with one another between the Saturday classes, via the Discussion Board

**Spiritual Direction.** Every student should have a spiritual director or pastor to whom they have access as needed. Very often material will come up in prayer that needs to be shared and that needs the insight and discernment of another. The Instructor cannot play this role for students, because spiritual direction cannot be mixed with the process of evaluation and grading.

**Course Outcomes**

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COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
<b>By the end of this course, students</b>	<b>This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:</b>	<b>This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe’s statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)</b>
• will have learned some traditional and contemporary forms of contemplative prayer;	Lectures, practicum, readings	<b>MTS: 3.2</b> <b>MDiv: 3.1, 3.2</b>
• will have an understanding of the importance of spiritual practice for grounding a healthy ministry;	Lectures, practicum, readings, discussion	<b>MTS: 3.2</b> <b>MDiv: 3.1, 3.2</b>
• will have a commitment to continue some form of contemplative spiritual practice as they continue and grow in their active ministry	Practicum	<b>MTS: 3.2</b> <b>MDiv: 3.1, 3.2</b>

**Required Course Texts** (available for purchase at the Convent Bookroom, or on line)

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David Benner, *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer* (Downers’ Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2015)  
 Marie-Helene Delval, *Images of God for Young Children* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010)  
 Henri Nouwen, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria, 2007)  
 Yushi Nomura, *Desert Wisdom: Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Mary Knoll, NY: Orbis, 2002)  
 Eric Jensen, *Ignatius Loyola and You: Learning to Become a Reflective Christian* (TO: Novalis, 2018)  
 Pennington, M. Basil, *An Invitation to Centering Prayer* (Ligouri, MO: Ligouri Press, 2001).

## ***Class Schedule***

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### NOTES:

- 1) Topics subject to change in response to the evolving needs and interests of the class.
- 2) We will explore Praying with the Labyrinth one evening in September when the weather is nice.

### ***Sept. 12***

#### ***Class 1***

#### ***Preparation:***

Read *Images of God for Children* (this involves mostly enjoying the beauty of a children's book that has significant meaning for adults, as the best children's books do!)

#### ***Topics:***

Introduction to the course  
The nature of prayer & images of God  
The relationship between the contemplative life and healthy ministry

### ***Sept. 19***

#### ***Class 2***

#### ***Preparation:***

Read *Opening to God*, Introduction

#### ***Topics:***

Examen prayer (awareness reflection)  
Praying with scripture: introduction

### ***Sept. 26***

#### ***Class 3***

#### ***Preparation:***

Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 1 – More Than You Can Imagine

#### ***Topics:***

Lectio Divina and Visio Divina (including icons)

### ***Oct. 3***

#### ***Class 4 (off-site excursion to be announced)***

#### ***Preparation:***

*Henri Nouwen, Behold the Fair Beauty of the Lord*

#### ***Topics:***

*Art and Icons*

### ***Oct. 10***

#### ***Class 5***

#### ***Preparation:***

Paper One due

Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 2 – Preparing for the Divine Encounter

#### ***Topics:***

The Anglican rosary, Marian rosary & other prayer beads  
The Jesus Prayer

### ***Oct. 17***

#### ***Class 6***

#### ***Preparation:***

Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 3 – Lectio Divina and Four Classic Prayer Paths

#### ***Topics:***

Prayer in scripture, the early church and the desert tradition

### ***Oct. 24***

#### ***No Class – Reading Week***

### ***Oct. 31***

#### ***Class 7***

#### ***Preparation:***

Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 4 – Prayer as Attending

Read *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* [and Mothers!]

#### ***Topics:***

*The Desert Tradition of Prayer*

### ***Nov. 7***

#### ***Class 8***

#### ***Preparation:***

Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 5 – Prayer as Pondering

#### ***Topics:***

Read *Ignatius Loyola and You*  
Ignatian Discernment

- Nov. 14**            **Class 9**  
*Preparation:*    Paper 2 Due  
                           Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 6 – Prayer as Responding  
*Topics:*            Ignatian Gospel contemplation
- Nov. 21**            **Class 10**  
*Preparation:*    Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 7 – Prayer as Being  
                           Read *An Invitation to Centering Prayer*  
*Topics:*            Centering Prayer and Christian Meditation
- Nov. 28**            **Class 11**  
*Preparation:*    Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 8 – Life as Prayer, Prayer as Life  
*Topics:*            Rhythms of Life / Claiming your Spiritual Practice
- Dec. 5**              **Class 12**  
*Preparation:*    Read *Opening to God*, Chapter 9 – Transformational Prayer  
*Topics:*            Student final presentations
- Dec. 14 (Sat.)**    Final paper due (submit by e-mail)

## **Evaluation**

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### *Learning Covenant:*

- Each student will sign a Learning Covenant which includes self-evaluation as a significant part of the course grade. Students should feel comfortable with and committed to a form of evaluation in which the student himself or herself honestly evaluates those course components that cannot be measured directly by the instructor (private prayer, reading, and journaling).

### *Prayer, Reading, Class Participation, Occasional Quizzes (20% of course grade – evaluated by student and instructor)*

- Daily personal prayer, 45 minutes per day, 5 days per week
- Keeping of a personal prayer journal, 5 days per week
- Reading of the required books and preparation for class
- Regular class attendance and participation in discussions
- Occasional quizzes on reading material

### *Papers and Presentations*

- Two short papers reflecting on your reading and experience of prayer (20% each)
- Final class presentation: a teaching session on one form of prayer (20%)
- Research paper or evaluation of one of the primary sources behind one of the various forms of prayer that we study in the course (20%)

## **Grading System**

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR	Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
NCR	Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
SDF	Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEG	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

**Writing Style:** The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

**Submitting Papers:** All papers should be submitted by e-mail (in Word 2010 or later version) or in PDF format. Title page, page breaks, etc. should be formatted clearly so I can print easily!

### **All Papers**

- should be double-spaced, using 11- or 12-point font and standard 1" margins
- should include page numbers (starting with page one of your paper)
- should have an unnumbered title page with student's name and college, course name and number, title of the paper, and date submitted
- should be free of errors in grammar and spelling
- should have clear references: when you refer to scripture, quote it – don't assume I know what Luke 4:17-18 means and don't expect me to look it up. As a former Methodist I'm quite good at identifying scripture from chapter and verse numbers but not perfect! (Same is true with the hymn book.)

More detail on the papers and class presentation, as well as a bibliography, will be presented at the first class.

## **Course Website**

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This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>. Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask the assistant registrar Jeff Hocking ( email [jhocking@wycliffe.utoronto.ca](mailto:jhocking@wycliffe.utoronto.ca)) for further help.

## **Policies**

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**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

### **Assignment Extensions**

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = "standing deferred") beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar's office.

**One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.**

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges ([http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library\\_Archives/Theological\\_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm](http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm)).

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of *Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).