

**MS 3XE3/6XE6 Spiritual Formation in the Church  
SYLLABUS Fall 2011**

**McMaster Divinity College**  
**Phil C. Zylla, D.Th.**  
**Office #: 215**

Fall 2011 (Term 1)  
Tuesdays 1:30-3:20 p.m.  
3 units/6 units

**Biography:**

Dr. Phil Zylla is Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at McMaster Divinity College. Prior to this Dr. Zylla served for six years as Principal of the Associated Canadian Theological Schools of Trinity Western University. His recent book, *Virtue as Consent to Being* explores the use of Jonathan Edward's construct of virtue from a pastoral theological perspective. Dr. Zylla was active in pastoral ministry in the Canadian context for over 18 years as a Senior Pastor. He lives in Ancaster with his wife Melodie and daughter, Chelsey. Dr. Zylla enjoys soccer, squash, poetry, and watching sunsets in the desert.

**Course Description:**

This course will examine how Christians mature in faith, develop as disciples, and live out the values of the Kingdom of God. Careful attention will be given to the research on faith development, discipleship, and the church as community. Participants will be challenged to reflect on, dialogue with, and develop actions plans for the spiritual formation and discipleship of the congregation.

Participants will explore the nature of spiritual formation and discipleship in the context of a faith community. The problems and complexities of spiritual formation and discipleship will be examined with a view towards strategic proposals for the participant's own context. Assumptions regarding spirituality and spiritual formation will be uncovered and fresh paradigms for the postmodern context will be developed in dialogue with other course participants. The course design assumes a high level of commitment to the development of strategic proposals for spiritual formation in the participant's own ministry context.

**Course Objectives:**

***Knowing***

1. Participants will expand their knowledge of resources for the framing of fresh paradigms of spiritual formation and discipleship in the church.
2. Participants will learn to think theologically about discipleship and spiritual formation.
3. Participants will gain insight into the complexities of spiritual formation in the context of the faith community.

***Being***

4. Participants will examine their own assumptions with regards to the nature of spiritual formation and discipleship in the church.
5. Participants will reflect on their own role as spiritual guides in the process of discipleship and spiritual formation in the church.
6. Participants will refresh their own spiritual practices of communion with God.

***Doing***

7. Participants will develop a biblical paradigm for spiritual formation in their unique context.
8. Participants will explore ways to enable the spiritual life of their primary spiritual community.
9. \*Advanced Degree participants will prepare and deliver a 40 minute graduate level lecture in class.

### **Required Course Textbooks:**

DeSilva, David A. *Sacramental Life: Spiritual Formation Through the Book of Common Prayer*. Downer's Grove, Illinois.  
Greenman, Jeffrey P. and Kalantzis, George *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*.  
Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2010.  
Mulholland, M. Robert *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993.  
Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.

### **Recommended Texts:**

Lawrenz, Mel *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.  
Wilhoit, James C *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.

### **COURSE OUTLINE and TOPICS**

#### **Tuesdays 1:30 – 3:20 pm**

September 13, 2011	The Task of Spiritual Formation in the Church
September 20, 2011	The Myth of Discipleship
September 27, 2011	Theology of Community
October 4, 2011	Toward a Theology of Church Health
October 11, 2011	Developing a Contextual Paradigm for Spiritual Formation
October 18, 2011	Cultivating Virtue in the Congregation
October 25, 2011	The Spiritual Life of the Ministry Leader
November 1, 2011	Conflict and Spiritual Tension in the Church
November 8, 2011	Discerning Core Values in the Congregation
November 15, 2011	Preaching and Teaching as Spiritual Formation
November 22, 2011	MA/Ph.D. Lectures
November 29, 2011	MA/Ph.D. Lectures
December 6, 2011	A Theology of Spiritual Formation and Discipleship in the Church

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

### **Assignment # 1:**

**Book Response 5 pages MS 3XE3 - 20 % 6XE6 – 10%**

As a primer on the theme of spiritual formation in the church read, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Choose one chapter to interact with and write a response (5 pages) to the content of this chapter. Your response should include: a brief summary of the content (1 page), an analysis of the author's working assumptions of spiritual formation (2 pages), and your own theological reflections on this theme in your own ministry context (2 pages). Due Date: September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

### **Assignment # 2:**

**Paradigm Review 5 pages MS 3XE3 - 20 % 6XE6 – 10%**

Read Henri J.M. Nouwen's, *Reaching Out*. In this volume Nouwen offers us a model for developing a paradigm for spirituality. Write a 5 page analysis of Nouwen's paradigm with regards to its usefulness for our course theme: spirituality and discipleship in the church. Explore carefully the structure of this paradigm noting its usefulness as an example of how to develop a template that is both consistent with a broader theological vision and flexible enough to adapt to specific contextual realities. Tease out the core aspects of a paradigm using Nouwen's book as a guide. Due Date: October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

### **Assignment # 3**

**Classic Spiritual Writings 5 pages MS 3XE3 - 20 % 6XE6 – 15%**

Select and read a key volume from a historic spiritual author to engage on some aspect of the course theme of spiritual formation in the church. Prepare a devotional (5 min.) exercise (2 pages) to present in class along with a three page summary of the core elements of the spiritual writer using the following template:

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY: 1 page

Name of Author:

Lived where and when:

Key Information: - studied; - key influences; -primary writings; continuing influence today

DEVOTIONAL: 2 pages From the text of this spiritual writer and your reflections on them present to the class a devotional exercise. In your handout include instructions of how to do this exercise in another ministry context: ie. church congregation, ministry event, home group, spiritual retreat, etc.

KEY CODE: 1 page - key words, phrases, ideas, delineate the main continuing influence of this author/book

REFLECTIONS: 1 page - How does the writing of this author contribute to the wider questions of spiritual formation of the congregation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Due Date: sign up on the first day of class for a slot on a Tuesday to present in class.

### **Resources:**

1983 *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Ed. Gordon S. Wakefield. Philadelphia: SCM Press.

1990 *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. Eds. Richard J. Foster, James B. Smith. San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers.

- 2001 *An Anthology of Devotional Literature*. Thomas S. Kepler. Indiana: Evangel Publishing House.
- 2007 *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries*. Gerald L. Sittser, Downer's Grove, Illinois.
- 2005 *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, Arthur Holder ed., Blackwell Publishing, UK.

**Assignment # 4**

**Final Ministry Paradigm 12-15 pages MS 3XE3 - 40 % 6XE6 – 15%**

Using Henri Nouwen's book as a model, develop a paradigm of spiritual formation and discipleship that will serve your ministry context. This 12-15 page project should:

- a. outline the framework for strategic proposals for spiritual formation and discipleship in your ministry context.
- b. Integrate the critical analysis of the core themes explored in the course and in the reading material.
- c. demonstrate how this paradigm will be used in your own ministry situation.

Due Date: December 6, 2011

**Assignment # 5 MS 6XE6 only MA/PhD Advanced Degree Assignment**

**30 pages and guest lecture**

**MS 6XE6 only – 50%**

In addition to the other assignments in the course read an additional 1200-1300 pages (8 volumes) related to one core aspect of spiritual formation in the church. Prepare a 30 page paper on the approved theme and modify the paper for a lecture presentation (40 min.) to be shared with the class in one of the final sessions.

Due Date: November 15, 2011

**\*\*Sign up with Dr. Zylla for a class presentation on either Nov. 22nd or Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011\*\***

**Late Papers: Late papers will be docked 1% each late day. (Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances such as extended illness, etc.)**

**Spacing: All assignments are to be double-spaced.**

**Contacting the Instructor:** Dr. Phil C. Zylla

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**College Style for Submission of Written Work:**

All written work—unless informed otherwise by the professor—is to be submitted in accordance with the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses*, available on the McMaster Divinity College web-site.

**Statement on Academic Honesty:**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g. failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at [www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php](http://www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php).

**Gender Inclusive Language:**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

**READ ON Bookstore:** Textbooks are available from READ ON Bookstore, Room 218 at MacDiv. Books may also be ordered from other sources such as READ ON Bookstore, 100 – 304 The East Mall, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2; Phone: 416-622-2934; Fax: 416-622-2308; Email: [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca)

**Disclaimer:** This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up until the first day of class.