

PM105 CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WITNESS Syllabus

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of biblical principles and practices that govern true Christian life, from its inception to its destiny, with emphasis on the Mission of God, the sufficiency of the divine provisions, and the heart condition necessary for conversion, holy living, and evangelism. 3 hours credit.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Rationale: The expanded statement of purpose of Dallas Theological Seminary states, "Dallas Theological Seminary encourages the development of Godly character... and is committed to fulfilling the mandate of Jesus to make disciples of all nations." This course is designed to instill in students a vision for evangelism and spiritual growth along with practical skills needed to carry out these ministries.

A. Cognitive Objectives. As a result of taking this course, the student will have articulated:

1. The Story of the Bible along dispensational lines and its role in defining the gospel, evangelism and spiritual life. (Demonstrated through in-class exercises.)
2. The disabling nature of sin and the challenges it presents to evangelism and spiritual growth. (Demonstrated through Spiritual Life papers and a written gospel presentation.)
3. The nature and necessity of grace for the Christian Life. (Demonstrated through Spiritual Life papers and a written gospel presentation.)
4. The role of the Holy Spirit in conversion and in the battle against the Flesh. . (Demonstrated through in-class exercises and written assignments.)

B. Affective Objectives. As a result of taking this course, the student will have:

1. Increased personal confidence in engaging non-Christians in discussions about spiritual matters. (Demonstrated by on-the-street interactions.)
2. Increased personal desire for the rule of God on this earth. (Acquired throughout the course and demonstrated on the Spiritual Disciplines and an Integration paper.)

C. Behavioral Objectives. As a result of taking this course, the student will have:

1. Addressed how the Flesh has opposed evangelism and spiritual growth in the student's own life. (Demonstrated in Spiritual Life Paper #3 and Reports on Spiritual Conversations assignments.)
2. Explained and practiced personal disciplines that support/encourage the spiritual life. (Demonstrated by practice of selected disciplines.)

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008. 240 pages.

Jones, Barry D. *Dwell: Life with God for the World*. Downers Grove: IVP. 2014. 228 pp.

Smith, James K.A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 240 pp.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments: Each student will complete the assigned course reading according to the schedule below. (The "Reading Assignments" will be worth 10% of the final course grade.)

B. Written Assignments

1. **Spiritual Life Papers:** The student will write 3 brief papers in which he/she articulates course concepts in basic, straight-forward (non-technical, non- theological) language and apply those concepts in practical situations. Each of the assigned papers is designed to show that the student understands the specific issue studied and can apply the material within the contexts of life and ministry. The specific instructions of each paper are found in Addendums 1-3 (see below). (Each “Spiritual Life Paper” is worth 10% of the final course grade.)
 2. **Written Gospel Presentation:** The student will write his/her story of how he/she came to a place to trust in Jesus Christ in language that a non-Christian can understand. This evangelistic personal testimony should be written so that the listener (non-Christian) can clearly understand how a person can place his/her trust in Jesus Christ. Make sure that the Gospel is included. The person listening to the testimony should be viewed as a lost person. (The “Written Gospel Presentation” is worth 10% of the final course grade.)
 3. **Spiritual Conversations with Non-Christians:** The student will conduct six personal interactions with non-Christians according to the instructions given in Addendum 4 (see below). (Each “Spiritual Conversation” is worth 5% of the final course grade.)
 4. **Course Integration Paper:** The intention of this assignment is to allow the student to identify the key themes/insights gained from the course in its entirety and to reflect upon how those themes/insights might inform the student’s own life and ministry. The paper should be 7 pages in length and should identify and discuss 3 to 5 key themes or insights from the course readings, lectures, assignments, and devotionals. The paper should conclude with a discussion (approximately 2 pages) of the implications of these themes/insights for the student’s own spiritual life and witness in the world. (The “Course Integration Paper” is worth 15% of the final course grade.)
- C. **Memory Work:** Each student will memorize **Romans 6:1-14** in the translation of the student’s choice (including a foreign language). If the student has memorized this passage in other memory programs, one of similar length and subject matter must be substituted with the professor's approval. To evaluate this assignment, each student must *write out* the selected passage. The student will grade his/her own assignment. 1/2 point from a possible 100 deducted for each error (excluding punctuation errors) to determine the assignment grade. (The “Memory Work” assignment is worth 5% of the final course grade.)

V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Class Participation

Regular class attendance promotes interactive learning between the professor and students, helps the professor to monitor student progress with pastoral concern, and develops the necessary spiritual discipline of living under the authority of another as unto Christ Himself. Therefore, every student is expected to attend and participate in each class period (as appropriate).

B. Late Assignments

In a learning environment it is far better to do work late rather than not at all. Late assignments, however, will be subject to a grade penalty. (In cases of personal emergency, the student should contact the professor for arrangements to fulfill the requirement as soon as possible. The professor may choose to waive the penalty in such cases at his discretion.)

C. Absences

Attendance at each class session is expected. As stated in the student handbook, no more than two weeks, or four absences may be missed without grade penalty. For each unexcused class session beyond four, the final course grade will be lowered. One additional unexcused absence will result in a reduction of one-half a letter grade (i.e., A to A-), two absences will lower the grade an additional step (A to B+), etc.

D. Language and Style

All written submissions should be carefully proof-read and should consistently follow Turabian style where appropriate.

All written submissions should strive to use gender-inclusive language. While this has become standard academic practice, this request is not merely an attempt at “political correctness.” As a gospel-shaped, gospel-centered community of learning, we have compelling reasons to think, write, and speak in such a way as to ensure that none are either intentionally or inadvertently excluded by our use of language. Consider using “humans,” “persons,” “humanity,” or “humankind” rather than “man” or “men” when referring to human beings in general. Consider alternating between the use of “he” and “she” as generic pronouns or substituting the use of the plural (“they,” “them,” “their”) when appropriate.

E. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

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|-----------|---------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| A+ | 99-100 | B+ | 91-93 | C+ | 83-85 | D+ | 75-77 | F | 0-69 |
| A | 96-98 | B | 88-90 | C | 80-82 | D | 72-74 | | |
| A- | 94-95 | B- | 86-87 | C- | 78-79 | D- | 70-71 | | |

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

DTS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

| DATE | SUBJECT | ASSIGNMENT |
|------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 8/29 | Syllabus and Course Preview | |
| PART 1: GOSPEL | | |
| 8/31 | The Vision and Mission of God | Jones: Intro |
| 9/5 | The Quest to Be Like God: Imaging His Glory and Holiness in Ruling the Earth | Jones: Chapter 1 |
| 9/7 | The Quest to Be Like God: Imaging His Glory and Holiness in Ruling the Earth, Part 2 | |
| 9/12 | The Failure of the Quest: Humanity in Adam | Jones: Chapter 2 |
| 9/14 | The Failure of the Quest: Humanity in Adam, Part 2 | Spiritual Life Paper #1 |
| 9/19 | Grace & the Work of Christ as Essentials to Accomplishing the Quest | Smith: Intro, Chapter 1-2 |
| 9/21 | Grace & the Work of Christ as Essentials to Accomplishing the Quest, Part 2 | |
| 9/26 | The Quest Begins in Faith, Continues in Faith, and Ends in Sight | |
| PART 2: WITNESS | | |

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|--------------------------|---|---|
| 9/28 | I Once Was Blind, But Now I See: Communicating the Gospel with Clarity | Keller: Complete text |
| 10/3 | Bearing Witness: Discipleship and the Mission of God | Written Gospel Presentation |
| 10/5 | Peculiar People: The Missional Spirituality of the Early Church | Spiritual Conversations #1-2 |
| 10/10 | Peculiar People: The Missional Spirituality of the Early Church, Part 2 | |
| 10/12 | Patterns and Practices of Missional Living | Smith: Chapter 3 |
| 10/17 | Patterns and Practices of Missional Living, Part 2 | Spiritual Conversations #3-4 |
| PART 3: FORMATION | | |
| 10/19 | The Sin-Breaking Process (Romans 6) | Romans 6:1-14 Memory Assignment |
| 10/24 | Deliverance from Law (Romans 7) | Spiritual Life Paper #2 |
| 10/26 | The Sinfulness of Sin & The Problem of the Flesh | |
| 10/31 | Unmasking the Flesh: Our Signature Sins | |
| 11/2 | The Ministry of the Spirit, Part 1 | Jones: Chapter 3-4 |
| 11/7 | The Ministry of the Spirit, Part 2 | |
| 11/9 | The Grammar of the Disciplines | Jones: Chapter 5; Spiritual Life Paper #3 |
| 11/10-14 | No Class: Reading Week | |
| 11/17-21 | No Class: Thanksgiving Break | |
| 11/28 | Discovering the Disciplines, Part 1: Prayer | Jones: Chapter 6 |
| 11/30 | Discovering the Disciplines, Part 2: Scripture | |
| 12/5 | Discovering the Disciplines, Part 3: Worship | Jones: Chapter 7; Smith: Chapter 4-5 |
| 12/7 | The Spiritual Life of a Ministry Leader | Jones: Chapter 8-9 |
| 12/12 | Summary and Review | Jones: Chapter 10, Conclusion; Spiritual Conversations #5-6 |
| 12/17-21 | FINALS WEEK – NO CLASS | DUE: Integration Paper |

Addendum 1: Spiritual Life Paper #1

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to develop your understanding of the demanding nature of God's holiness for all human beings in such a specific way that you can explain it to someone with limited understanding or background.

Preparation

First, read the article by Dyrness (provided) and consult at least one other scholarly article on the subject of holiness, for example, an article in a dictionary of theology or a systematic theology. (PLEASE NOTE: ignore all definitions and discussions of holiness that deal with the believer's holiness as derived from his/her identification with Jesus Christ. These are not relevant to our purpose here.)

Second, choose one of the characteristics of God's personality: compassion, grace, love, jealousy, justice, mercy, patience, pity, anger. Imagine with as much detail as possible in very concrete detail how this characteristic would appear in your life if you were as perfect as God created and requires you to be. (NOTE: Avoid any discussion or mention of the holiness given to believers by God through Jesus Christ.)

Synthesis

Write a four-page (maximum), typed, double-spaced paper in two parts.

Part 1 (two page maximum)

First, for the characteristic you imagined above (e.g, holy love, holy justice, holy anger, etc), describe at least one hypothetical situation in as much detail as possible how this would be displayed in this situation from your life. Offer specific, concrete details for the situation.

Part 2 (two page maximum)

Second, explain "holiness" as God's nature and requirements to a young person who has no religious background so that he/she could understand it. HINT: imagine explaining it to a ten-year-old child.

Addendum 2: Spiritual Life Paper #2

Purpose

The object of this paper is to clarify your understanding of Romans 6:1-14 by crystallizing your language concerning the key concepts in this chapter and then exploring its significance.

Preparation

First, read the course notes from Dr. Ralston on Romans 6:1-14 and pay special attention to the key terms used by Paul for his discussion in this passage, specifically the following:

- *sin* as distinguished from *sins*;
- the significance of *continue* in Romans 6:1;
- the concept of *death* in Romans 6:2;
- the meaning of *baptized* in Romans 6:3; t
- the referent of *old self* (or better, *old man*) in Romans 6:6.

Second, survey the treatment of Romans 6:1-14 in one of the following types of commentaries: (a) a multivolume (i.e. more than one volume) Bible commentary series (e.g. the ten-volume *Expositor's Bible Commentary*); (b) a single volume commentary devoted to the book of Romans (e.g. Schreiner or Moo); or (c) a specialized work on this section of Romans (e.g. John Stott's *Men Made New*).

Writing

Write a four-page (maximum), typed, double-spaced paper in two parts.

Part 1 (two page maximum)

Note the source of the reading you did in preparation for the writing.

Offer a one-sentence definition in your own words for each of the terms above.

Use your definitions to write a one paragraph paraphrase of Paul's teaching and argument in Romans 6:1-14. (Note; paraphrase means that you employ your own words to write it and not those terms or expressions appearing in the Biblical text.)

Part 2 (two page maximum)

Apply your paraphrased understanding of Romans 6:1-14 to one of the following situations. Help your friend deal with his/her struggle and questions through the discussion and application of Paul's teaching in Romans 6:1-14 as presented in class and paraphrased in Part 1 of this assignment. (Use only Romans 6:1-14 as the basis for your counsel. You may relate other passages of scripture to the problem, but only as the texts support Paul's presentation in Romans 6:1-14. But be warned: while another biblical writer may use the same/similar language, this does not mean they are referring to the same concept. It's too easy to link texts because of some superficial resemblance or prejudice.)

Case Study 1

A Christian friend confides to you a deep struggle to control sexual lust in his/her life. No matter what your friend does nothing brings freedom from the sense of bondage and overwhelming guilt. The pain is overwhelming. Your friend asks, "Why can't I stop thinking this way? Why do these thoughts of sex seem to control me? Why hasn't God helped me to overcome this sin?"

Case Study 2

A Christian friend confesses to you that he/she is plagued by the periodic struggle to control emotional outbursts, often expresses anger at others. Your friend recognizes how unreasonable and hurtful these outbursts are. While he/she confesses these outbursts are sinful and regrets them deeply, he/she can't seem to stop. Your friend asks, "Why can't I stop hurting others this way? Why do these emotions control me at times? Why doesn't God stop me from giving in to it?"

Case Study 3

A Christian friend struggles with a severe eating disorder (bulimia/anorexia). Despite completing a treatment program that was temporarily helpful, the problem has returned and is life-threatening. Your friend asks, "Why can't I stop destroying myself this way? Why does this seem to control me? Why doesn't God make me stop?"

Addendum 3: Spiritual Life Paper #3

Purpose

This paper is designed to help you to express and apply the Pauline presentation of the Flesh and of the resources provided through the Holy Spirit for your spiritual life and development

Preparation

Review Dr. Ralston's Course Notes and your own notes from class discussions on the believer's relationship to the Holy Spirit and the flesh.

Writing

Write a four-page (maximum), typed, double-spaced paper in three parts.

Part 1 (one page maximum)

Develop a concise, comprehensive definition and explanation of the following terms:

1. the ethical concept of the flesh
2. indwelling of the Spirit
3. filling of the Spirit
4. legalism (particularly as it related to attaining holiness)

Part 2 (one page maximum)

Answer each of the following questions in a *short* paragraph

1. How does the flesh influence a Christian's pursuit of holiness and how can the Christian minimize the influence of the flesh?
2. What is the root error of legalism? (i.e. Identify the theological errors are at the core of legalism.)
3. How does legalism relate to the flesh?

Part 3 (two page maximum)

Apply all that you have defined and discussed to a particular struggle that you have with a specific sinful behavior. Answer each of the following questions about your struggle as concretely as possible:

1. Identify one consistent problem – sin – with which you struggle as a Christian?
2. What is the *real* root of your problem – how does this relate to the flesh in your life?
3. How can/does the Spirit assist you to identify and overcome this problem?
4. How could legalism impact your reaction to this problem and how can you prevent such an occurrence?

Addendum 4: Spiritual Conversations with Non-Christians¹

The student will interview six non-Christians to gain information and insight on their thoughts and feelings toward Christ and His church:

1. Two interviews of non-Christians under the age of thirty
2. Two interviews of non-Christians who are culturally different from the student (different in nationality, socioeconomics, race, etc.)
3. Two interviews of non-Christians who is culturally similar to the student (family members, friends, coworkers, etc.)

The student can interview non-Christians that he/she knows personally or the student can interview strangers (at the mall, coffee shop, restaurant, gym, grocery store, park, etc.).

In the interview, the student will ask the non-Christian the following six questions:

1. "How would you (the non-Christian) describe your religious background and church involvement?"
2. "To you, what is God like? Describe God. (If the non-Christian does not believe in God, do not ask the next two questions but instead ask "To you, what is important in life?")
3. "What do you think is important and unimportant to God?"
4. "What do you think it takes to be straightened out with God?"
5. "Describe what the term Jesus Christ means to you."
6. "From your perspective, what are the major problems of churches today?"

If the non-Christian seems receptive to the Gospel and the student thinks the non-Christian would like to talk further, the student is *strongly encouraged* to make an evangelistic appeal to the non-Christian to trust in Jesus Christ.

After each interview, the student will write a brief (two page) reflection on the experience. The reflection will include:

- A summary paragraph of the interview
- Significant quote(s) from the non-Christian
- One specific need that the student perceived from the non-Christian
- One thing the student learned about non-Christians in general
- Rationale as to why or why not the Gospel was presented to the non-Christian after the interview
- If the Gospel was presented, what was the outcome?

¹ This exercise is adapted from Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2003), 244-245.