

SPIRITUAL FORMATION I: REFLECTIONS ON IDENTITY SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course challenges students to grasp more fully the reality of our identity in Christ both personally and corporately. The *Life Inventory* exercises are the primary resource used in discovering and establishing identity. An adequate understanding of one's identity in relation to God, the body of Christ, self, and the world is presented as a precursor to developing authentic community.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. Cognitive

By the end of this course, the students will:

1. Gain greater insight into their unique identity in Christ,
2. Understand their identity in relation to God, the body of Christ, self, and the world,
3. Honestly appraise their beliefs, practices, and virtues.

B. Affective

By the end of this course, the students will:

1. Appreciate their unique makeup in Christ,
2. Appreciate the uniqueness of each individual in the group,
3. Value the practice of periodic self-examination,
4. Desire growth in their relationship with God and in their spiritual life.

C. Behavioral

By the end of this course, the students will:

1. Honestly engage with and discuss the various Identity topics,
2. Create a personal position paper on the theological foundations of Identity,
3. Share their position paper with their Spiritual Formation group,
4. Support and encourage others in their Spiritual Formation group.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The selection of textbooks does not necessarily imply the professor's endorsement of the views of the authors. Textbooks are selected for their perceived value in helping meet the course goals and objectives. As graduate students you are expected to read and interact with texts critically and learn from both those with whom you agree and those with whom you do not.

A. Required

Highfield, Ron. *God, Freedom & Human Dignity: Embracing a God-Centered Identity in a Me-Centered Culture*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013.

Pettit, Paul, ed. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2008. (This book will be used in all SF100 courses, SF202, SF203, and SF204.)

Spiritual Formation: Identity, Community, Integrity, and Fidelity. This workbook is used for all four SF modules and will be distributed to students on Class Day 1 per the Course Lectures and Assignment Schedule (below).

B. Suggested

Bridges, Jerry. *Who Am I?: Identity in Christ*. Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2012.

Greenman, Jeffrey P. and George Kalantzis, eds. *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010.

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

Mulholland, M. Robert. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Designed to Be Like Him: Understanding God's Plan for Fellowship, Conduct, Conflict, and Maturity*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1966.

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

_____. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016.

Wilhoit, James C. *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ Through Community*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading assignments (30%)

In addition to the course requirements for SF100-1, students are expected to read Ron Highfield's *God, Freedom & Human Dignity* in order to complete their Reading Response Paper assignment.

Students will submit a **Reading Report** via DTS Online indicating the percentage of reading completed on time by the end of this course.

B. Written assignments (50%)

In addition to the course requirements for SF100-1, the following written assignments are to be completed:

1. **Reading Response Paper (25%)**—Students are expected to write a **4-5 page paper** in response to their reading of Ron Highfield's *God, Freedom & Human Dignity*. The paper should include these sections: (1) a summary of the argument of the book (1 page), (2) a

critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the book (1 page), (3) several important quotes that were meaningful and/or helpful to the student, (4) a discussion of the personal implications of the book for the student’s own life and ministry (1 page), and (5) a prayer, hymn of praise, poem, or artwork reflecting what the student has learned about God and themselves (1 page). Students will submit their paper via DTS Online as per the Course Lectures and Assignment Schedule (below).

2. **Additional Reading Response Paper (25%)**—Students are expected to write an additional **4-5 page paper** in response to a book from the Suggested titles. The paper should include these sections: (1) a summary of the argument of the book (1 page), (2) a critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the book (1 page), (3) several important quotes that were meaningful and/or helpful to the student, (4) a discussion of the personal implications of the book for the student’s own life and ministry (1 page), and (5) a prayer, hymn of praise, poem, or artwork reflecting what the student has learned about God and themselves (1 page). Students will submit their paper via DTS Online as per the Course Lectures and Assignment Schedule (below).

C. Attendance and Participation (20%)

1. **SF Faculty Meetings**—Students are expected to talk with an SF staff representative (in person or by phone) at the beginning and end of the course. These meetings will provide an orientation to the course as well as an opportunity for feedback.
2. Attendance at all scheduled events, including large group class sessions (Class Days and Kickoff) and group agreed-upon retreats and outings is expected. All Spiritual Formation groups will determine a group agreed-upon method of communicating absences with their leader. Please see Class Participation and Absences under Course Policies for additional information (below).

Please Note: Students may miss no more than two classes per semester. More than two absences in any particular semester will result in failure to receive credit on your transcript for that semester and failure to progress with your SF group.

V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

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		

A+, A = Work of *distinctive* quality

A-, B+, B = Work of *superior* quality

B-, C+, C = Work of *acceptable* quality

C-, D = Work of *inadequate but passing* quality

F = Failure to do minimal work required for a passing grade

B. Class Participation

Students are expected to read the weekly sessions and complete any assignments in preparation for each group meeting. All work must be completed prior to the session in which it will be discussed. As prescribed in the syllabus, presentation of projects to the group is expected. Assignments and due dates are listed in the syllabus.

C. Absences

Absences and attendance will be recorded by the Spiritual Formation leader. Attendance will be recorded at both large class sessions and small group sessions. Attendance requirements follow the attendance policy in the DTS Student Handbook.

The current DTS Student Handbook states: absences should be taken only for important and necessary reasons. In addition, three tardies are equal to one absence.

D. Late assignments

Students will complete course requirements according to the course schedule. In cases of extreme personal emergency the student should contact the professor as soon as possible to make arrangement for completing the requirements in a timely manner.

E. DTS Online Education: <http://online.dts.edu/>

Dallas Theological Seminary's Online Education website provides course content through videos, slides and transcripts. It is a custom learning environment where students and faculty engage in theological content, biblical assignments and limited interaction. To login to the DTS Online Education website go to: online.dts.edu. Courses are structured in units (usually 1 to 2 weeks in length) with activities that include readings, reflections and submissions.

Students will receive an email from DTS Online before the semester begins with instructions on how to log in for this course.

F. Cheating and Plagiarism

All work submitted for this course should be your own. In accordance with the Student Handbook, cheating and/or plagiarism will result in an automatic zero on the assignment in question. Cheating involves presenting another person's work as though it were your own. Plagiarism is using words, ideas or information from a source without giving appropriate credit to that source (in the text, a parenthetical note or footnote). This does not refer only to specific words but also to ideas. Even when paraphrasing someone else's thoughts you must cite your source. When in doubt, use a footnote.

G. Language and Style

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

All written assignments should strive for gender-inclusive language. As a gospel-shaped, gospel-centered learning community, we have compelling reasons to think, write and speak in a way that is inclusive. Consider using “humans,” “persons,” “humanity,” or “humankind,” instead of “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,” or “their”) when appropriate.

H. Use of Electronics

To promote group participation and avoid distraction, the use of electronic equipment, including cell phones, audio or video players, or recording devices, is prohibited (with the exception of making project presentations).

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

DTS Non-discrimination Policy—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 LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Date	Session Topic	Assignments Due
10/7/18—10/12/18	Group Session 4: Heritage	Submit <i>Reading Response Paper</i> on Highfield’s <i>God, Freedom & Human Dignity</i> via DTS Online.
10/28/18—11/2/18	Group Session 7: Practice	Submit <i>Additional Reading Response Paper</i> on book of your choosing via DTS Online.
12/9/18—12/14/18	Summary & Celebration	Submit <i>Reading Report</i> via DTS Online. Submit <i>Attendance & Participation Report</i> via DTS Online.

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