

**MS 3XS3/6XS6 Spiritual Formation in the Church
SYLLABUS Fall 2013**

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

Fall 2013 (Term 1)
Tuesdays 7:00-9:00 p.m.
3 units/6 units

Biography:

Dr. Phil Zylla is Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at McMaster Divinity College. His current research project, *Spiritual Formation of the Congregation*, expands on his earlier work in virtue theory and pastoral theology. 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.

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 spirituality, 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.

Specializations:

Christian Worldview
Pastoral Care & Counselling
Pastoral Studies

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. *Research Degree (M.A./Ph.D.) participants will prepare and deliver a 40 minute graduate level lecture in class.

Required Course Textbooks:

Alves, Rubem *The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet*. London: SCM Press, 1990.
Read for class: October 22, 2013

Mulholland, M. Robert *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993.
Read for class: October 1, 2013

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.

_____ *Here and Now: Living in the Spirit*. New York: Crossroad, 1994.

Read for class: November 26, 2013

COURSE OUTLINE and TOPICS

Mondays 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

September 10, 2013	The Task of Spiritual Formation in the Church
September 17, 2013	The Myth of Discipleship
September 24, 2013	Theology of Community
October 1, 2013	Developing a Contextual Paradigm for Spiritual Formation <i>Class Discussion of Nouwen, Reaching Out</i>
October 8, 2013	Prayer and the Spiritual Life
October 15, 2013	Cultivating Virtue in the Congregation
October 22, 2013	The Spiritual Life of the Ministry Leader <i>Class Discussion of Alves, The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet</i>
October 29, 2013	The Compassionate Congregation
November 5, 2013	Conflict and Spiritual Tension in the Church
November 12, 2013	Spiritual Types and Congregational Leadership <i>Class Discussion of Mulholland, Invitation to a Journey</i>
November 19, 2013	M.A./Ph.D. Lectures – topics to be announced
November 26, 2013	M.A./Ph.D. Lectures – topics to be announced <i>Class Discussion of Nouwen, Here and Now</i>
December 3, 2013	Spirituality and Humor
December 10, 2013	Worship Service – Spirituality for the 21 st Century

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignment # 1:

Book Response 5 pages MS 3XE3 - 20 % 6XS6 – 10%

Choose one of the three core textbooks to respond to, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* **or** *The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet* **or** *Here and Now: Living in the Spirit*. 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: October 1, 2013 (n.b. all three books are required reading for the course and will be discussed in class on the dates assigned)

Assignment # 2:

Paradigm Review 5 pages MS 3XS3 - 20 % 6XS6 – 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: spiritual formation 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 29th, 2013.

Assignment # 3

Spiritual Autobiography 5 pages MS 3XS3 - 20 % 6XE6 – 10%

Select and read a spiritual autobiography from the list provided in class or from an additional autobiography approved by the professor. Write a short (5-page) response to the life story of this person which describes:

- the spiritual lessons you have gained from reading their story
- the enduring legacy of their spiritual journey as depicted in the book (cite incidence or observations)
- the fundamental aspect of living out the gospel which is depicted by this person's life
- the implications of this story for the ministry of the church.

Prepare and deliver a brief devotional in class (no longer than 5 min.) on a theme or topic related to the autobiography you have read. Sign up for the presentation of your devotional during one of the weeks of class.

Assignment # 4

Class Discussion of Core Textbooks MS 3XS3 – 10% 6XE6 – 10 %

Turn in a one-page summary of your talking points, quotes, and questions from each of the three core texts on the dates due for class discussion. October 1, 2013 – Mulholland; October 22, 2013 – Alves; November 26, 2013 – Nouwen, *Here and Now*

Assignment # 5

Final Ministry Paradigm 12-15 pages MS 3XS3 - 30 % 6XE6 – 15%

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

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

Due Date: December 6, 2011

Assignment # 6 MS 6XS6 only MA/PhD Research Degree Assignment 30 pages and guest lecture

MS 6XS6 only – 45 %

In addition to the other assignments in the course **read an additional 2000 pages** (10-12 volumes) related to one core aspect of spiritual formation in the church. This reading list should be approved by the professor prior to

October 8th. 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 on the weeks of November 19th and 26th.

Due Date: November 19, 2013

****Sign up with Dr. Zylla for a class presentation on either Nov. 19th or 26th****

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 website.

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 <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

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 145 at MDC. Books may also be ordered from other sources such as READ ON Bookstore, 100 – 304 The East Mall, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2; Phone: 416-620-2934; Fax: 416-622-2308; Email: 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.