Spiritual Formation, Vocation and the Spiritual Disciplines

SF 504

Spiritual Formation Focus Program at Talbot

[Cohort Leader Name, Degree's Earned above Bachelors Degree]

I. Course Description

A theological and experiential exploration of the believer's vocation and the various "callings" in the Bible as it relates to the general call of loving God and neighbor, a training in righteousness and conformity to Christ's image. Explores the panoply of spiritual disciplines sanctioned by the Bible and developed throughout Church history in order to enter deeply into one's calling. This learning takes place in a cohort group and includes various modalities of learning. Prerequisites: TTSF 503. Spiritual Formation Focus course not open to ISF students. Units: 0 Notes: Required of all Talbot Students not in a Spiritual Formation academic program. Credit / No Credit.

II. Goals and Outcomes:

A. To understand the Christian's general and specific vocation or callings from the Scriptures and seeking the Lord in prayer.
B. To personally explore in prayer/retreat and one's general and particular vocation or calling in God and relate these to one's study and purpose in attending Talbot School of Theology, including your personal goals and desires regarding the future and gainful employment.
C. To understand and practice the various spiritual disciplines sanctioned by the Bible and developed in church history, understanding how they assist in spiritual growth in the Spirit and how they are to be practiced appropriately depending upon one's circumstances and the various developmental seasons in one's life.
D. To understand and affirm the "goodness" of work, that work has intrinsic as well as instrumental value in serving God.

III. Readings

Books

A. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, Calhoun
Read pp. 11-23 and read at least 15 of the 62 sections on individual spiritual practices and disciplines from pp. 25-255 (See schedule when due, turn in reading slip)
B. *Courage and Calling*, Smith
Selected portions, see schedule when assigned, turn in reading slip)

Course Resources (Available on Blackboard)
A. Coe, John "Spiritual Formation and Vocation" 4+ hours; all can be downloaded for personal use.
B. "A Meditation" by Cardinal John Henry Newman
C. "The Road Ahead" by Thomas Merton
D. Prayers of Intentions
E. "Calling, Vocation and Business" article by Scott Rae

IV. Course Requirements

1. **Reading: 200 points**
   Submit a reading percentage at the end of the semester regarding assigned readings.

2. **Spiritual Formation Prayer Projects: 120 points (6 projects, 20 points each)**
   Prayer Projects are assigned in order to assist the students with engaging honestly with oneself and God in prayer over the lecture and content of the course. Students will turn in a minimum one-page, maximum three-page, double-spaced experiential report to their group leader who will give a grade and comments. (Anything less than a page will receive no credit.) The content of the reports will be entirely confidential with the group leader and ISF faculty.

   Each class session, the instructor will assign a prayer project, typically consisting of three questions that students will consider for 15 minutes each, for a total of 45 minutes. Students will consider the questions three different times/days during the period between classes. (Three 45-minutes sessions.) Prayer project reports should include the number of sessions prayed. ***All six prayer projects must be completed to pass the course.***

3. **Group Experience and Participation: 200 points**
   Students meet bi-weekly in groups to process their thoughts, feelings and general experience of prayer projects and their own spiritual lives. Because the church and its leaders are not to be isolated individuals but growing in community, the class helps to develop this practice and spiritual discipline (take this serious). Grade will be given on the basis of honest and open participation and attitudes toward the group. ***(Each absence is worth 50 points. Two absences will result in the failure of the course.)***

4. **Spiritual Discipline Report: 200 points**
   Students will engage in a daily (5 days week) spiritual discipline chosen by the student from *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, in order to practice a regular spiritual rhythm and practice (assigned at some point in schedule). Write up one page on the experience, due the last day of class.

<u>Note regarding Grading Scale:</u>
1. Pass/credit and No Pass/No Credit grading based upon 720 points total. Minimum passing grade is 504 points (70% or D-). Any student receiving 503 points or less will not receive a passing (No Pass/No Credit) and will need to retake the entire course.

2. Furthermore, any student not completing the Progress Review and Retreat will receive a No Pass/No Credit grade and must retake the entire course again.

IV. Course Schedule

Jan. 30 **Introduction to Vocation and Disciplines Class and Review of SFF Experience**
Assign prayer project 1

Feb. 13 Discuss prayer project 1
Discernment – discerning God's call and the work of the Holy Spirit
Assign prayer project 2

Feb. 27 Discuss prayer project 2
The Spiritual Disciplines – theory and practice
Assign prayer project 3
Spiritual Disciplines Handbook reading due (turn in reading slip)

Mar. 12 Discuss prayer project 3
Vocation and calling – theological and theoretical concerns
Read Scott Rae article
Assign prayer project 4

Mar. 26 Discuss prayer project 4
Vocation and calling – the individual's particular call
Assign prayer project 5

Apr. 16 Discuss prayer project 5
Tying it all together – knowledge of self and God
Assign prayer project 6 (for Saturday retreat)
Spiritual Disciplines Project due
Courage and Calling reading due (turn in reading slip)

April 21 Capstone Retreat (Hilltop Renewal Center)

GRADING STANDARDS FOR WRITTEN WORK

Please note that all written work must be type written, double spaced, and checked for spelling and grammar. Whereas Talbot School of Theology desires to maintain the highest standards with respect to the composition of all written work, any student paper exhibiting poor grammar, spelling errors, typographical errors, or other substandard academic expression may have the overall grade for that paper reduced accordingly.

PLAGIARISM

Talbot School of Theology sees any form of plagiarism as a serious problem with serious consequences. Please refer to the academic integrity statement and article on plagiarism in the Talbot Graduate Student Handbook.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

No late readings, prayer projects, or other assignments accepted unless arranged with professor.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is an important component of the class. Attendance is counted for the entire class period and particularly for group experience. Two unexcused absences will result in the failure of the class. If you foresee a problem, please talk with professor for further assistance.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students desiring accommodations on the basis of physical, learning or emotional disability for this class are to contact the Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Student Services Building and can be reached by calling (562) 944-0351, extension 5851.

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

[email address]

[times available, possible before or after class]