



CHRISTIAN MIND AND DEVOTIONAL LIFE (BI 3432)

SYLLABUS & COURSE SCHEDULE

Fall 2000, M-W-F, 12:00-12:50 p.m.

Mr. Kevin James Gilbert
Adjunct Faculty, College of Bible & Ministry
(800) 333-4358; kevin.gilbert@lipscomb.edu

Part I, Syllabus

Course Description

“Development of a more spiritual, simpler, less materialistic life within the American culture. The course aims at helping the student think in a Christian way.”

Materialism in some respects springs from narcissism (self-love). This semester we will stress replacing some self-focused time and activity with the arts of Christian spirituality. Primary attention will be given to the development of the disciplines of the Christian life.

General Course Goals

This course has been designed so that you will:

- Gain an appreciation for the value and significance of devotion to the Christian life through reflection upon yourself, your community, and Christ Jesus.
- Become familiar with classical spiritual disciplines through biblical and historical literature and through classroom dialogue.
- Progress in the personal disciplines toward maturity in the imitation of Christ.
- Employ the disciplines in your community for practical and positive influence.
- Deepen your own understandings of and therefore your relationships with the Christian God and one other.

Specific Course Objectives

In that this course proposes to introduce you to Christian spiritual disciplines you should be able to:

1. Identify key persons and their influences in the history of Christian spirituality.

2. Explain the interaction of various sources in Christian meditation.
3. Address the function of the Bible in the Christian devotional life.
4. Report the results of applying spiritual disciplines in personal and group experiences.
5. Explain the various forms of divine communication and their contemporary roles.
6. Memorize and make relevant contemporary use of biblical texts related to spirituality.
7. Evaluate the value of individual and communal spiritual disciplines.

Course Requirements

1. Attend Class Lectures.

To prepare students for the fulfillment of the objectives of this course, lectures are given Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, August 23 - December 6, 2000. The topics of the lectures are listed on the Course Schedule provided with this syllabus. Attendance at each of the lectures is required. Up to four absences for illness or other conflicts may be excused without notification. In cases of prolonged illness or injury that will cause you to miss several class sessions, you should consult with the professor for options regarding your status in the course. Otherwise, absences in excess of four class sessions will be reflected in the course grade.

a. "Handouts"-- Photocopied or electronic media will be made available to the class from time to time. If you do not receive a copy, please see the professor. Note: These materials are for your personal use only. Do not copy or distribute them to individuals not registered for this course. Any requests for these materials by persons not registered for this course should be directed to the professor.

b. Taping--You may tape class lectures for your personal study only. Such tapes are not to be distributed to individuals not registered for the course.

2. Read the following in the manner described below:

a. Required:

Adler, Mortimer and Charles Van Doren. Chapters 21; 1-5; 18; 10-11 in *How to Read a Book: the Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading*.

Gilbert, Kevin James. "Lecture Outlines for Christian Mind and Devotional Life."
(Handouts)

Mayeux, Randy. "Read: You've Got To!" (Handout)

Whitney, Donald. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994. (Course Textbook).

Whitney, Donald. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life Workbook*.
Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, n.d. (Course Textbook)

b. Optional (for selected ELC Projects)

Boyd, Gregory A. *God at War*.

Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks*.

c. Disclaimer: Course materials may or may not reflect the views of the instructor, faculty, staff, or administration. Course materials are chosen for their potential instructive value, which includes the analysis and critique of alternative interpretations.

d. Readings are to be completed and recorded by units. Units are whole articles, groups of articles, whole chapters, or groups of pages within a chapter. The units which you are to read are listed on the Course Schedule and on the "Reading Assignment Grade Sheets" (RAGS). These units must be read prior to the class hour on which they are due. Late readings are not accepted for credit except in extreme circumstances of lengthy incapacitation which requires extension of all course requirements beyond the end of the semester.

i. In order to report a unit of reading, you must have read its contents in their entirety, intelligently, and critically. "Entirety" means that all of the unit must be read before credit will be assigned. Partial completion of a reading unit will not be credited. "Intelligently" means understanding what you are reading when you are "reading" it. (This may involve looking up words in a dictionary!) It means being able to follow the author's train of thought including any arguments that are presented. "Critically" means judging the strength or soundness of the author's presentation. Note: To receive credit for reading from assigned lecture outlines you must look up and read major Scripture texts cited in that reading.

ii. How to report reading assignments for credit. On the Reading Assignment Grade Sheet, keep a record of reading units which you have completed in the manner described above (see "i" above). Be sure to write your name and date submitted on the form. Write the total number of units completed in the space provided and sign your name on the signature line confirming your completion of the assigned units. Turn in the forms at each exam (i.e., RAGS I at exam 1; RAGS II at exam 2; RAGS III at the final exam).

3. Take Three Exams.

a. These exams will cover all assigned readings except the optional reading for Experience Learning Components (ELCs) discussed in requirement 4 below, as well as all class lectures. All exams will be multiple choice. The final will be comprehensive and 10% of it will cover material from your University Bible classes.

b. Study questions will be provided to guide your preparation. Do not use or consult exams given in this course in previous years. You should think carefully about how the class reading or lecture presentation answers the study questions. Compare and contrast issues, ideas, and names with one another to make sure you have a grasp on the material. Note the specific terms, vocabulary, and grammar of the author as you study any particular issue. Note especially biblical texts and the language of those texts which are taken up by the author in developing a theological position, idea or issue. The study questions guide you to specific areas in the class readings and lectures which you are to study and master. The multiple choice questions on the exam are designed to test how well you understand them.

c. The exams must be taken in class on the dates for which they are scheduled unless an alternate time has been approved by the professor. Rescheduling due to out of town travel must be made during the first two weeks of class (emergency travel for critical illness or funeral services exempted). In such cases, the exam must be taken by the fifth class day following the exam. Exams may not be taken prior to their dates listed on the Course Schedule or the Final Exam Schedule. Other alternate arrangements for taking an exam late are allowed only in the case of physical incapacitation at the time of the exams and must be made by the class period following the scheduled exam. As a rule of thumb, an acceptable last minute excuse from an exam will be equivalent to an acceptable last minute excuse from a preaching assignment or from your own wedding.

d. If the average of your first two exams is below 80, you will have an opportunity to be reexamined over the combined material of those first two exams in order to raise that average up to an 80. (A score of 80 or higher on this retake exam will raise the average of your first two exams to an 80.) This reexamination will be given during the second hour of the final exam period. The exam format will be the same as in "3a" above. Use the same study questions that were distributed for exams 1 and 2 to guide your preparation.

e. Usually, the grades for the first two exams will be posted outside the classroom the first class day following the exam next to a confidential "password" provided to the professor by the student (Not acceptable are Social Security Numbers, ID numbers, Dorm Room numbers, and other easily identifiable "codes.") Students may refrain from participating in this exam grade listing and wait to receive their exam grades on the review days (times for reviewing questions missed on the first two exams will be announced during a regular class). Do not contact the professor about exam grades prior to these review days.

f. All exams are the property of the professor. You are not to take your exam from the examination or reviewing session. You are not to make any copy of the exam or exam questions.

4. Complete Two Experience Learning Components.

Journaling

Group Project or Individual Reflection

a. Report on Each Project.

i. **Journaling.** Keep a hand-written spiritual journal in which you include the fruits of your active and contemplative spiritual journey this semester. It must include the following: (a) A spiritual autobiography, i.e., where you find yourself at the beginning (more below); (b) how you have planned to practice/improve one (no more) spiritual discipline; (c) how you proceeded; and (d) struggles, victories, insights, and/or newfound aspect(s) of your personal place in the church and the world. Bring the journal with you to one meeting with the professor (to be scheduled).

(a) **Spiritual Autobiography.** Write this section of your journal in the first person and include the following: Home life and family background; circumstances leading to your contemplation of Jesus and profession of faith (or lack thereof) in him as Lord; significant persons, experiences, and developments which influenced your spiritual life and growth; and finally, define to the best of your ability your call to a place in the priesthood of believers we variably call the church, the people of God, etc., supported by personal confirming experiences and the responses of others. The version in your journal, should be viewed as a draft which you will develop into an 8-10 page double-spaced paper to be viewed by the professor only.

(b) **Confidentiality.** Your journal is for you and God alone, though you are free to share with the class or professor at your discretion. It will be graded generally by volume, i.e., at your private journal appointment with the professor, he will quickly flip through it to see the number of pages with writing. Pages on which information exists that you do not wish him to see inadvertently should be folded over prior to the appointment. Consider that your ability to be vulnerable and transparent about the process of Christian growth occurring in your personal life can serve to encourage others on their own pilgrimage.

(c) **Workbook.** Complete portions of Whitney's Study Guide corresponding to assigned readings in Whitney's text. The workbooks must be brought to class daily and may be collected at the professor's discretion at any time during the semester to check progress.

ii. Group Project

(a) Choose one of the following:

(1) **Reading and Reflection:** Read and reflect on one of the following books: John Sanders, *The God Who Risks* or Greg Boyd, *God at War*. Participate in group dialogue meetings with others

choosing this ELC option for a total of 4 hours.

(2) **Sharing Gifts.** Each student will lead a session of his or her group regarding a discipline of his or her choice. This discipline will be one about which the student has read, practices deliberately and seriously, and in which he or she consider him- or herself divinely gifted (group meetings totaling 4 hours).

(3) **Being Silent.** Each student will participate in a group whose focus is the discovery, exploration, and development of passive disciplines which focus on individual and communal being (in contrast to doing, or *passive* disciplines vs. *active*; group meetings totaling 4 hours).

(4) **Perfecting Work.** Each student will participate in a group whose focus is the discovery, exploration, and development of active disciplines which focus on individual and communal action (in contrast to being, or *active* disciplines vs. *passive*; group meetings totaling 4 hours).

(b) **Type or Word Process/Machine Print** your personal reflections upon specific questions or problems related to your chosen project. These reflections must be completed and brought in their machine-printed form to the scheduled class and/or group discussions. The process of composing your answers in writing should suitably prepare your mind for discussion and/or practice, and your written answers will function as a reference for you during oral discussion. At the class or group meeting you may take notes on the discussion, but these notes must be kept separate from the written answers you prepared prior to the discussion.

(c) **Bring your written reflections** with you to your group meetings. Organize your discussion group as quickly as possible. Select one person to function as director and one to serve as reporter. These positions are purely functional and neither positions of honor nor producers of extra credit. Anyone who feels that he or she has talents suited to function as either director or recorder should volunteer to do so. Here and throughout the discussion, practice the Christian graces of humility, deference to one another, and selfless service. Before the end of the discussion, the group must attempt to reach a consensus and summarize its conclusions. These summary group responses will contribute to the final grade of the project (see below).

(d) **The director is not the spokesperson of the group.** His or her only responsibility is to pace the discussion so that it does not bog down and waste time. The director should make sure the discussion covers all the questions or otherwise fulfills the directions on the form entitled

"Discussion of" Keep things moving by majority consensus, being sensitive to the need of the group to spend more or less time on any one issue.

(e) **The reporter's responsibilities** are to record the names of those present at the discussion, to accurately write down the group's official conclusions to its discussions, and to collect individual written work (completed prior to discussion) from each member at the end of the session.

iii. **The grade** for each Experience Learning Component will be as follows:

Hours Completed	Missing both thoughtful written responses and participation in ELC	Missing either thoughtful written responses or participation in ELC	Completed both thoughtful written responses and participation in ELC
0-1.9 hours	F	F	D
2-2.9 hours	F	D	C
3-3.9 hours	D	C	B
4 hours	C	B	A

Outstanding or poor journaling group conclusions will affect individual grades in the following manner: high quantity journaling and insightful conclusions clearly articulated on the group projects will raise the grade to a plus (+); low quantity journaling and superficial conclusions on the group projects will reduce individual grades to a minus (-).

b. **Participation in the group discussions may be excused** only in cases of travel arrangements made prior to the end of the second week of class, infectious disease or paralysis. In such cases, an eight (8) page essay (typed, word-processed/machine printed with normal margins, font, and line spacing) on the group discussion questions, and submitted to the group director or recorder prior to the group meeting, will be accepted as a substitute for verbal participation in the group meeting.

5. The above requirements may be altered, deleted, or other requirements added at the discretion of the professor.

Course Grading

1. Factors determining the Course Grade:

The overall grade is a composite of several factors. It is not a measure of personal worth or necessarily of the amount of information that a student feels he or she has learned. Rather it is a

cumulative figure that bears a relationship to the student's successful completion of the course requirements.

- a. **The three exams** will be averaged together and count as 50% of the course grade.
- b. **The two ELC's** will comprise 30% of the course grade (15% each).
- c. **The reading grade** = units completed/units assigned. 20% of the course grade.
- d. **Class attendance.** Each absence in excess of 4 subtracts 4% from course grade.
(Contact the professor regarding any prolonged absence).

2. Explanation of Letter Symbols:

A = work of exceptional quality.

B = work of commendable quality. Commendable means praiseworthy. A majority of students usually achieve this quality in their overall course grade.

C = work of an acceptable but not distinguished quality. Such work is deemed a satisfactory and adequate completion of the course objectives.

D = work of a minimal but passing quality.

F = Failure to do minimal work with no credit given.

3. Numerical and Letter Distribution

100-98 A+	89-87 B	80-78 C	71-69 D
97-95 A	86-84 B-	77-75 C-	68-65 D-
94-93 A-	83-81 C+	74-72 D+	64-0 F
92-90 B+			

Part II, Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignments</u>
Aug 23 (W)	Introduction	Syllabus
Aug 25 (F)	LO 1: What's a "Christian Mind and Devotional Life?"	Ad:21; Mayeux
Aug 28 (M)	LO 2: Reflection, Contemplation, and Journaling	Ad:18; W:205-22
Aug 30 (W)	LO 3: Hie! To the Books: The Discipline of Reading	W:223-34
Sep 1 (F)	LO 4: Study: Natural or Acquired Skill?	Ad:1-5

Sep 4 (M)	LO 5: Learning as Life	LO:1,2,3,4
Sep 6 (W)	LO 6: Benefits and Detriments of Environment	Ad:10-11; W:181-203
Sep 8 (F)	LO 7: Solitude and the Contemplative Life	
Sep 11 (M)	LO 8: Silence in the Presence of God and Others	LO:5,6,7
Sep 13 (W)	LO 9: Prayer as Dialogue	W:65-83
Sep 15 (F)	LO 10: Types, Purposes, and Efficacy of Prayer	
Sep 18 (M)	LO 11: The Community of Prayer	LO:8,9,10
Sep 20 (W)	LO 12: Sensitivity to Divine Speech (SDS) in Creation	W:1-41
Sep 22 (F)	Review	
Sep 25 (M)	Exam (Covering class material up to and including LO 10)	
Sep 27 (W)	LO 13: SDS in the World, Part 1: Video	LO: 11,12
Sep 29 (F)	LO 13: SDS in the World, Part 1: Video (continued)	
Oct 2 (M)	LO 14: SDS in Scripture: Appropriation and Misappropriation	
Oct 4 (W)	LO 15: Physical Disciplines: Fasting	W:159-180
Oct 6 (F)	LO 16: Physical Disciplines: Fasting	
Oct 9 (M)	Group Meetings	
Oct 11 (W)	LO 17: PD-Labor, Part 1	

Oct 13 (F)	LO 18: PD-Labor, Part 2	LO:15,16
Oct 16 (M)	LO 19: Fellowship and Association	W:186-189
Oct 18 (W)	LO 20: Confession and Profession	LO:17,18
Oct 20 (F)	Fall Break-No Class	
Oct 23 (M)	LO 21: Community Confession	LO:19,20
Oct 25 (W)	LO 22: Service	W:115-129
Oct 27 (F)	Review	
Oct 30 (M)	Exam 2 (Covering material from LO 8 to LO 20, inclusive)	
Nov 1 (W)	LO 23: SDS in the World, Part 2: Audio	
Nov 3 (F)	LO 23: SDS in the World, Part 2: Audio, (continued).	
Nov 6 (M)	LO 24: SDS in Service	LO: 21,22,23,24
Nov 8 (W)	LO 25: Passionate Chastity	W:171-72; 174-5
Nov 10 (F)	LO 26: The Sacrifice of Dying	
Nov 13(M)	LO 26: The Sacrifice of Living	
Nov 15 (W)	Group Meetings	
Nov 17 (F)	LO 27: Economy: Simplicity Built on Complexity	W:168-70; Marty
Nov 20-24	Thanksgiving Break	

Nov 27 (M)	LO 27: Economy: Frugality Built on Abandon	LO:25,26
Nov 29 (W)	LO 28: Submission in Ideal and Fallen Structures	W:189-90
Dec 1 (F)	LO 29: Worship: A Commitment of Worth	LO:27,28; W:177-79
Dec 4 (M)	LO 30: Celebration and Jubilation	W:179-81
Dec 6 (W)	Review	
Dec 8 (F)	Study Day–No Class	
Finals Wk.	Exam 3 (Comprehensive); see final exam schedule.	

Reading & Workbook Key

Ad:# = Adler, How to Read a Book and chapter #

LO:# = Lecture Outline & #

Marty = Martin E. Marty, "M.E.M.O."

Mayeux = "Read: You've Got To!"

W:# = Whitney & page #s (corresponding sections of workbook to be completed as well)