



## P146 Introduction to Spiritual Formation

3 credits. Prerequisites: none

 Mississauga Campus 'A' Live-Stream

Semester B  
January 14–April 8, 2025  
Tuesday, 10am–1pm ET

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I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints,  
what is the breadth and length and height and depth  
and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,  
so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. —Ephesians 3:18–19

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### Course Goals

#### Course Description

This course introduces students to the concept of Christian spiritual formation and developing a relationship with God. Through studying Scripture, historical practices, and engaging in various formational exercises, students will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of habits and their fruitful outcomes. The course also emphasizes creating a personal "Rule of Life," which serves as a framework to guide daily living. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to thoughtfully integrate spirituality into their everyday lives.

#### Relationship to MCS-Horizon's Mission

The testimony of Scripture clearly links this enablement with the ongoing practice of the spiritual disciplines. As these disciplines are studied, internalized, and enacted, they become conduits through which God's grace is allowed to impact facets of the student's life, the results of which are an ever-deepening spiritual life and an ever-widening spiritual influence.

#### Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes



To demonstrate competency in *Spiritual Maturity*, students will

1. Develop a Personal Rule of Life as a framework to guide daily living and to support spiritual formation.
  - *Assessment:* Personal Rule of Life
2. Compare and contrast the truths of Scripture against the cultural presuppositions often

propagated in culture that potentially hinder spiritual growth.

- *Assessment:* Critical Reflection



To demonstrate competency in *Contextual Awareness*, students will

3. Describe one faction of historic Christianity and the spiritual disciplines practiced by that group.
  - *Assessment:* Historic Spirituality Lesson Plan
4. Reflect on how Christians in a church context unlike your own participate in communal life with God.
  - *Assessment:* Field Trip and Reflection

## **Course Work**

### **Required Readings**

Comer, John Mark. *Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus, Become Like Him, Do as He Did*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2024. ISBN: 978-0-5931-9382-2  
<https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1416189488>

Macchia, Stephen A. *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3564-5  
<https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/893681565>

\*\*While students have the benefit of accessing many of their textbooks online through the [Digital Theological Library](#), they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library.

### **Course Assignments and Activities**

#### *1. Field Trip and Reflection (10%)*

This assignment is designed to help you experience and reflect on communal life with God in a worship context that differs from your own.

- a) Before the trip
  - Choose a Christian tradition distinct from your own, such as Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, or another that practices communal life with God differently. Ideally, this will be a context that you have no prior experience with.
  - Plan your party. If you live in proximity to other students in the course, it will be beneficial to attend the worship service with others so that you can discuss your experience together.
- b) During the trip
  - This should be an embodied experience. Plan to attend the worship service in person. If you live in a remote location where this is not practical, please talk to the professor to explore your options.
  - Plan your visit to align with a typical worship service, such as Sunday liturgy, vespers, or mass.

- While attending, think about the questions that you will answer on your reflective essay.
- c) After the trip
- Compose a reflective essay of 500–700 words. This reflection should be personal, even if you attended the worship service with other students.
  - Consider the following questions:
    - **Worship Practices:** How do the liturgy, prayers, music, and rituals differ from your own tradition?
    - **Communal Life:** How does the congregation interact with God and one another during worship?
    - **Theological Emphasis:** What aspects of God, Jesus, or the Christian life are emphasized in this context?
    - **Spiritual Experience:** What did you learn or experience that might enrich your understanding of communal life with God?
    - **Key Takeaways:** How does this experience influence your understanding of unity in diversity within the global Church?

As a reflective essay, no additional research is required. However, if the student chooses to use sources (e.g., church bulletin, website, etc.), they should be properly footnoted and included in a bibliography. The submission should follow the [MCS-Horizon Format Guide](#) and be submitted to Populi by the date specified as a Word Document (docx or rtf). Pages and pdf files will not be accepted.

- Related learning outcome: #4.
- **Assignment Length:** 500 to 700 words.
- **Date Due:** Monday February 3, 2025.

## 2. *Critical Reflection* (25%)

This assignment requires two preparatory steps to complete. First, students will complete the Spiritual Health Reflection from *Practicing the Way* found [here](#). Note that a free account is required to access this online tool. When the reflection is complete, you will be given the option to download the results for your personal records. This report does not have to be submitted but will provide material for both class discussion and your critical reflection. Second, students will read *Practicing the Way* according to the schedule below. The critical reflection should demonstrate clear evidence of the reading.

<i>Practicing the Way</i> by John Mark Comer	
Apprentice to Jesus	Monday January 20
Goal #1: Be with Jesus	Monday January 27
Goal #2: Become like him	Monday February 3
Goal #3: Do as he did	Monday February 10
How? A rule of life	Monday February 17
Take up your cross	Saturday February 22

For the critical reflection submission to be considered complete the following points must be observed:

- Students should write 250 words for each of the six sections of *Practicing the Way*.
- Students should cite brief quotations from the text that facilitate their reflection.
- No introduction or conclusion is required. The headings of *Practicing the Way* (listed in the chart above) should be used as headings in the paper.
- This critical reflection should follow the [MCS-Horizon Format Guide](#) and should be submitted to Populi by the date specified as a Word Document (docx or rtf). Pages and pdf files will not be accepted.

This assignment will enable students to evaluate their current spiritual life and expectations according to the truth of scripture.

- Related learning outcome: #2.
- **Assignment Length:** 250 words per section = 1,500 words (acceptable range = 1,350–1,650 words).
- **Date Due:** Saturday February 22, 2025.

### 3. *Historic Spirituality Lesson Plan (25%)*

Students will prepare lesson plan that explores the spiritual practices associated with a major historic Christian movement. Competency will be demonstrated through the submission of a lesson plan. This lesson will introduce the movement, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the movement, and suggest ways that the movement's practices could be used today. Possible movements include:

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| ● Desert Fathers        | ● Wesleyanism              |
| ● Benedictine Monastics | ● Classical Pentecostalism |
| ● Jesuits               | ● Quakerism                |
| ● Greek Orthodox        | ● Puritanism               |
| ● Anglican              | ● Latter Rain              |
| ● Word of Faith         |                            |

For the investigation to be considered complete the following points must be observed:

- Students may should choose from the list of movements above or select their own. If students wish to choose a movement not on the list, they should confirm that choice with the professor.
- The lesson plan should be formatted according to the template provided in Populi.
- Students should use a minimum of three academic sources specific to the movement.
- Proper footnotes and a bibliography should be included, formatted according to the [MCS-Horizon Format Guide](#).
- The investigation should be submitted to Populi by the date specified as a Word Document (docx or rtf). Pages and pdf files will not be accepted.

This assignment will enable students to explore and evaluate a type of historical spirituality in depth and give consideration to how the resources of that movement can be drawn upon today.

- Related learning outcome: #3.

- **Assignment Length:** 3 pages, single-spaced.
- **Date Due:** Saturday March 22, 2025

#### 4. *Personal Rule of Life.* (40%)

Students will read *Crafting a Rule of Life* according to the schedule below and thoughtfully work through and answer all questions in the book except those in the sections titled, “Spiritual Community,” which we will discuss in class. They will then complete a digital Rule of Life based on the template provided in Populi.

<i>Crafting a Rule of Life</i> by Stephen A. Macchia			
Chs. 1–2	Sun January 19	Ch. 7	Sun March 9
Ch. 3	Sun January 26	Ch. 8	Sun March 16
Ch. 4	Sun February 2	Ch. 9	Sun March 23
Ch. 5	Sun February 9	Ch. 10	Sun March 30
Ch. 6	Sun February 16	Chs. 11–12	Sun April 6

For this assignment to be considered complete the following points must be observed:

- Use the template provided on Populi for your question responses and rule of life.
- Follow the reading and session schedule outlined in the chart.
- Thoughtfully answer all the questions from the book that are listed on the template.
- Your completed question answers and rule of life should be submitted to Populi by the date specified as a Word Document (docx or rtf). Pages and pdf files will not be accepted.

This assignment will enable students to plan for future spiritual growth as they integrate all the content of this course.

- **Related to learning outcome:** #1.
- **Assignment length:** Completed template.
- **Due Date:** Saturday April 5, 2025.

#### **Estimate of Time Investment** (individual time investments may vary)

			<b>Assignment Weighting</b>
Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	
1. Field Trip and Reflection	6 hrs	Feb 3	10%
2. Critical Reflection	21 hrs	Feb 22	25%
3. Historic Spirituality Lesson Plan	10 hrs	Mar 22	25%
4. Personal Rule of Life	29 hrs	April 5	40%
Total =	96 hrs		

All assignments are due at 11:59pm **ET** unless otherwise indicated.

#### **Assessment Rubrics**

Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi. Click on the name of the assignment to access each rubric.

## Course Outline

Unit	Class	Topic	Readings
Unit 1: Formation Process	Class 1: Tue Jan 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>God Loves First</li> <li>Syllabus Review</li> </ul>	
	Class 2: Tue Jan 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everything is Spiritual: Cultural Liturgies</li> </ul>	Comber: Apprentice Macchia: Chs. 1–2
	Class 3: Tue Jan 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWJD? How are we Formed?</li> <li>Holy Habits as Medicine</li> </ul>	Comber: Goal #1 Macchia: Ch. 3
	Class 4: Tue Feb 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field Trip Discussion</li> <li>Gnostic or Earthy Spirituality</li> </ul>	Comber: Goal #2 Macchia: Ch. 4
	Class 5: Tue Feb 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtue Ethics: “Fit us for Heaven”</li> </ul>	Comber: Goal #3 Macchia: Ch. 5
Unit 2: Historical Formation	Class 6: Tue Feb 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contemplative, Holiness, and Charismatic Spirituality</li> </ul>	Comber: How? Macchia: Ch. 6
	No Class for Reading Week: Feb 24–28		
	No Class for Module Week: Mar 3–7		
	Class 7: Tue Mar 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical Reflection discussion</li> <li>Social justice, Evangelical, and Incarnational Spirituality</li> </ul>	Comber: Take Up Macchia: Ch. 7
Unit 3: Spiritual Disciplines	Class 8: Tue Mar 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holy Habits (1/3): Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, and Study</li> </ul>	Macchia: Ch. 8
	Class 9: Tue Mar 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holy Habits (2/3): Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service</li> </ul>	Macchia: Ch. 9
	Class 10: Tue Apr 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holy Habits (3/3): Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration</li> </ul>	Macchia: Ch. 10
	Class 11: Tue Apr 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course Evaluations</li> <li>Navigating Culture: Being a Peculiar People</li> </ul>	Macchia: Ch. 11–12
Revision Week: April 14–17 (April 18 is Good Friday, so revision week concludes on Thursday)			

- First submissions of assignments will not be accepted after April 11, 2025.
- Revision Week is April 14-17. Your instructor may request revisions on some assignments before revision week.
- No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after *Thursday* April 17, 2025.

## **Academic Policies**

### **General Assignment Guidelines**

Please see the [MCS-Horizon](#) Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines.

### **Late Assignments and Extensions**

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Assignment Extension Request Form* on Populi and *before the due date*. Professors may grant extensions in the case of extenuating circumstances, such as significant illness or a family emergency. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late submissions will be tracked across each student's program. If a student incurs multiple instances of late submissions, it will result in academic discipline, such as required tutoring, academic probation, failure of the course, or failure to qualify for graduation. Similar to standard human resource employment practices, students will receive warnings and conditions with increasing severity of academic discipline. If one assignment is submitted more than five days late, the student will fail the course.

### **Assignment Completion**

Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

### **Assignment Revisions**

Students can generally submit up to two revisions for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward achieving competency.

### **MCS-Horizon College Assessment of Student Work**

The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, not earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment rubric. Once a student's assignment has met all competency requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. Likewise, a final course grade is not calculated until the end of the course. Students pass a course (with a B- or higher) only after they have demonstrated that they have *met or exceeded all competency requirements* for that course and, therefore, only after they have passed all assignments.

MCS-Horizon CBE Scale	Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
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E	Exceeding expectations	Student demonstrated <b>exceptional</b> achievement of the learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
		Student demonstrated <b>excellent</b> achievement of the learning outcomes.	A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting expectations	Student demonstrated <b>good</b> achievement of all learning outcomes.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

If the student does not meet all competency requirements in a course and, therefore, does not pass all the assignments in a course, the course will not be sufficient to fulfill their program requirements at MCS-Horizon. Nevertheless, for transferability purposes, the student will receive a letter grade of C+ or below according to the scale below.

BTM	Beginning to meet expectations	Student was <b>beginning to meet</b> one or more learning outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting expectations	Student made <b>insufficient progress</b> toward meeting learning outcomes.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
			F	0.0	0-49

**Academic Integrity**

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student’s and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Accessible Learning Services Information**

MCS-Horizon aims to provide an accessible learning environment for all our students. If you would benefit from learning accommodations due to temporary or ongoing physical or mental health conditions or learning disabilities, please contact us as soon as possible to schedule a conversation. In all cases we ask that you provide current documentation of the disability or condition you wish to disclose. MCS-Horizon takes appropriate care to ensure confidentiality about any such disclosures. For more information, contact Wendy Holmes, MCS’s Director of Academic Success ([wendy.holmes@mcs.edu](mailto:wendy.holmes@mcs.edu)), or Richelle Bekkattla, Horizon’s Library Technician and Academic Accommodations Coordinator ([library@horizon.edu](mailto:library@horizon.edu)).



### **Class Attendance (On Campus or Livestreaming)**

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for, either on campus or through livestreaming with their camera on. A student must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss the equivalent of six hours of class (e.g., one day of a module course or two three-hours classes) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

### **Livestreaming Etiquette**

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via livestream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of engagement. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

### **Use of Technology**

MCS-Horizon encourages the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.

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