

LIM G827 Syllabus

Spirituality for Ministers

Summer Term 2025



May 27-July 31, 2025
Dr. Deborah Wilhelm
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Office hours:
Anytime by appointment

Required texts and resources :

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Cunningham, Lawrence, and Keith Egan. *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition*. New York: Paulist, 1996. Also available as an e-book through the Monroe Library.

Gula, Richard. *The Way of Goodness and Holiness: A Spirituality for Pastoral Ministers*. Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2011. Also available as an e-book through the Monroe Library.

Additional required reading and other materials and viewings are available on Canvas. Some of these will explore contemporary trends in the field; others will represent recent methodological turns in theology. Therefore, you should read not only for content, but also for structure, rhetorical strategy, and interaction with your own understanding of spirituality.

You'll also need:

- ❑ The LIM Guide to Written Theological Reflection, (latest version, available on Canvas)
- ❑ Adobe Reader (latest version)
- ❑ Webcam and microphone for Zoom sessions and your small group (please use a computer rather than your smartphone for course Zoom sessions)

You'll find more information about all of these items on Canvas.

"This is a prayer we must pray every day: 'Holy Spirit, make my heart open to the word of God, make my heart open to goodness, make my heart open to the beauty of God every day'."

--Pope Francis (General Audience, 15 May 2013)

Reflection | Practice | Community

This course discusses the theological foundation of Christian life and explores how ministry is rooted in and gives expression to the minister's relationship with God. Students are invited to reflect on prayer, discernment, and spiritual growth in the context of finding God in the midst of ministry.

--Graduate Bulletin 2023

Think of this syllabus as a "Quick Start" guide with the basic information that you need to get going. Detailed information is available on Canvas, so you'll want to explore our Canvas site as soon as it's open.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO HELP YOU START SUCCESSFULLY:

I will send you an email when Canvas is open (normally the week before class begins), so check your Loyola email account for instructions. When you receive this notification email from me, please respond right away and confirm that you are ready to begin the course.

While our course is in session, please check your Loyola email account daily during the week. Canvas is set up so that all email goes to your Loyola account.

Meanwhile, please order your books from an online bookseller as soon as possible--our reading begins immediately!

**What does your relationship with God look like these days?
How does that relationship affect, and how is it affected by, your ministry?
Spirituality for Ministers is a graduate course that will give you a model
for—and allow you to practice—deliberate, ongoing, reflection on that
relationship, particularly within the context of your ministry.**

What should you bring to this course?

Please come to our coursework in *Spirituality for Ministers* with these habits of mind and spirit:

Be willing to reflect deeply on your ministry, your role in it, and how God may be calling you to grow in that ministry and your life.

Be able to study and grow within our LIM intentional learning community, participating in its ongoing disciplined conversations.

Organize your time so that you are present online early and often, surveying each week's work and completing tasks **throughout** the week instead of at the end (otherwise, there's no "conversation" at all, let alone "disciplined conversation").

Share your authentic ideas, insights, and questions. Arrive online prepared, ready to listen (or read!) carefully, and able to contribute meaningfully to the conversation.

What can you expect from this course?

By the end of this course, you will be able to do these things:

Deepen your theological understanding, professional competence, and practical ministerial skills in the area of spirituality;

Examine critically your own beliefs, attitudes, and practices in your relationship with God;

Integrate your religious experience and your ministry;

Explore the implications of creation, justice, beauty, and liturgy for your spirituality;

Practice critical, contextual theological reflection; and

Pray throughout the course.

We'll get together:

The coursework for *Spirituality for Ministers* is completed almost entirely online and asynchronously (which means that we don't need to be online at the same time). However, in the interest of forming community, **we'll have multiple chances to meet** using Zoom.

You will also have the chance to meet in your small groups using a tool that your group selects. You'll find the dates and times for these meetings on Canvas.



What's the course format?

We're gathering to form an intentional learning community, with the bulk of our work will taking place asynchronously, meaning that apart from our video chats, you won't have any required specific times to be "present" in class. Working asynchronously, however, doesn't mean that there aren't any deadlines! A deep, reflective, helpful conversation requires everyone's timely participation and engagement. Therefore, when I set up discussion items on Canvas, I'll specify deadlines by which you must post an initial item or any further-required responses. As a general rule, you'll want to "attend" class online several times per week to complete your work, read postings, respond to postings, view instructor comments, and contribute your insights to our ongoing conversations. This participation is not merely key to your learning, it's key to others' learning as well—and key, by the way, to your grade. **To help preserve your Sundays for rest or ministerial work, the course will run Tuesday through Tuesday instead of Monday through Monday.**

What does the main coursework look like?

You'll complete readings in our assigned texts and viewings online, and you'll respond to those tasks in the Discussion Board. Everyone will complete some written work in the form of these postings and other course-related assignments, and graduate students will also write a theological reflection paper. I've divided the work into weekly sessions on Canvas; you'll find all of your assignments there, and I recommend "clicking through" the entire course before you begin so that you can have a sense of the work flow.

How long should I spend?

Spirituality for Ministers is a three-unit graduate-level course. Adding up your time to read, watch videos, think, post on Canvas, and complete your research and writing, you might estimate your course involvement at around 9 **total** hours per week, an amount of time comparable to any other three-unit graduate university course.

How does the Discussion Board work?

I'll post questions, plus instructions about requirements and deadlines for posting. I will likely facilitate the initial discussions, but because we're an intentional learning community, **each of you will also get the chance to lead your small group in the discussion board** (directions are on Canvas). As facilitators, you'll have the chance to practice online communication skills and to offer meaningful feedback to your colleagues. The facilitator will provide the week's first post to open the discussion. However, if the conversation seems slow to get started, I may email another member and ask that person to launch the discussion. Please post early, and please help to create a true conversation by responding to your colleagues' postings—the Discussion Board will quickly become a Discussion **Bored** if everyone simply "speaks" without "listening" to everyone else! I'll post a facilitators' schedule on Canvas after our enrollment is finalized so that you know ahead when you'll be facilitating. If the schedule is problematic for you, arrange a swap with one of your colleagues, and let me know who will be doing what, and when.

What should my Discussion Board posts look like?

Your posts should always be **substantive**, meaning focused, succinct, specific, clearly written, and worth reading. Keep in mind that we all have to read these posts! Bring your own experience into conversation with our course materials and with what the other members of the learning community are saying, and be sure to directly address the question at hand. Your responses should also be critical, meaning that the conversation will generate questions, requests for clarification, and other methods of deepening the discussion. As you can see, remarks like "I loved your post" or "I agree wholeheartedly" are NOT substantive posts! In addition to being substantive, the online conversations should also be authentic—that is, anything that you say online should be something that you would say if we were all sitting around a table in a physical room. Finally, in your posts, please write in a clear, correct style—that is, with proper punctuation, spelling, and grammar—so that nobody need work to decipher your comments, and cite any course materials that you use: Alert your readers by including a parenthetical reference with at least the name of the material or the author and, if possible, a page number (e.g., Course Book, 15; Johnson, 17; Session 3 video). Please also alert your readers when you refer to other outside sources, such as other books or websites.

In terms of assessment, regular and substantive participation on the Discussion Board make up 50% of your grade for this course—and almost 100% for CEU students. **To help you understand the specific grading standards that I will use to assess your Discussion Board posts, I've provided a rubric and a one-page handout on Canvas for you to review. Please read both of these documents before you post!**

CAUTION: To avoid losing any work, you may wish to compose your posts in a word processing program and then copy and paste them into a discussion board post. *How do I know this? Painful personal experience!*

How will I be evaluated?

Whether you'd like to earn CEU or graduate credit for *Spirituality for Ministers*, you must complete the assigned work for all of our course sessions—and, if you're a graduate student, write a reflection paper that explores your ministry and your own developing understanding of the course material. You can find a detailed description of all these assignments on Canvas. For help with style and formatting requirements, consult the LIM *Guide to Written Theological Reflection* on Canvas.

Participation Spiritual Formation	50% graduate, 85% CEU 5% graduate, 5%CEU	Wisdom Conversations Final Paper	10% graduate, 10% CEU 35% graduate
A (100-93%)	Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection.		
A- (92-90%)	Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed.		
B+ (89-87%)	Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation.		
B (86-83%)	The standard for the master's degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree will be awarded.		
B- (82-80%)	The work is slightly below the standard for master's level work. The assignment is addressed but a number of corrections are needed to address assignment in a clear and concise manner. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.		
C+ (79-77%)	Substandard graduate work. Evaluation criteria are not adequately met in the assignment. Moderate improvement is needed. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.		
C (76-73%)	Less than graduate-level work. Evaluation criteria are not met. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree.		
C- (72-70%)	Below average, grade does not count towards graduation.		
D+ (69-67%)	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.		
D (60-66%)	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.		
F (59-0%)	Assignment not addressed at all, incomplete assignment, or not submitted on time		

How does the professor feel about late work?

Short answer: Yuck!

Slightly more nuanced answer: Please submit your work on time. If you post late to a discussion forum, for example, you won't be able to participate in the back-and-forth of the conversation, and nobody else will likely see your posts (your colleagues will have moved on to the next topic), which detracts from your learning and impoverishes everyone else's learning as well. If you submit a late assignment or paper, I'm not able to grade your work in the same cycle that I do everyone else's—I've moved on, too. It's difficult to respond to a single "Assignment X" when my head is full of your colleagues' "Assignment Y," which drastically increases the time that it takes me to look at your work. That said, sometimes life does get in the way of our best-laid plans. If you know ahead that you'll be out of town, for example, let me know, and if you need an extension because of some truly unforeseen circumstance, we can work that out, too. Late assignments that I don't approve in advance will earn half credit, and late final papers will lose half a letter grade per day they are late. I'm asking you to be timely, and I will do the same. Again barring unforeseen circumstances, I'll read all Canvas posts within three days of the end-of-posting deadline, and I'll return all papers within a week of the due date, even if I have to stay up all night drinking Diet Cokes and eating Snickers bars to make it happen.

Anything else I really, really need to know? Yes. See the fine print below:

Incomplete Grade Policy. Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible, by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive semesters.

Attendance & Participation. Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the Bulletin. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

University Policies

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located on LORA and in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, accessible education, and more.

Tentative Schedule (emphasis on *"tentative"*!)

You will find the full schedule on Canvas, but this tentative version can serve as a general planning guide. I will also provide an updated version of the schedule once our course actually begins, and I will notify everyone if I make any changes thereafter. If you monitor Canvas at the beginning of each course session, you will have no difficulty following the assigned readings and work. I strongly encourage you to "click through" the entire list of tasks at each session start so that you can plan your work (and your life!) accordingly. Our course weeks run Tuesday through Monday.

Date	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 May 27-June 2	Introductions	Introduce yourself, complete readings, media, discussion question, "Initial Understanding"; complete Synchronous Class Availability Survey
Week 2 June 3-9	Spirituality	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; complete Survey 1; attend optional synchronous class meeting
Week 3 June 10-16	Holistic Spirituality	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; complete Wisdom Conversation 1; submit Prayer Reflection 1
Week 4 June 17-23	Discipleship	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend Small Group Meeting; complete Survey 2
Week 5 June 24-30	Prayer in the Spiritual Life	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; complete Wisdom Conversation 1 Report; complete Small Group Meeting 1 Report
Week 6 July 1-7	Discernment (July 4 Holiday)	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend optional synchronous class meeting
Week 7 July 8-14	A Spirituality for Justice	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 8 July 15-21	Spirituality and Beauty	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; complete Wisdom Conversation 2 by 7/18; attend Small Group Meeting by 7/24; complete Wisdom Conversation 2 Report; complete Small Group Meeting 2 Report
Week 9 July 22-28	Communal and Liturgical Spirituality	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; Spiritual Formation Journal 2 due
Week 10 July 29-31	Final Assignment and Course Evaluation	Final Assignment due 7/30 by 11:59 pm Central; Course grades due to Registrar by August 6