



Grace Communion Seminary

CM507 Experiencing the Trinity

Short Syllabus

Instructor: Larry Hinkle, DMin.

Course description

This course studies spiritual formation. Participation is required in a three-day retreat that presents students with the opportunity to come to know God more intimately through silence, solitude, meditative prayer, communion, worship, and other spiritually formative activities. This retreat experience is informed by a study of the dynamic of these practices as they relate to Scripture and the call of the Triune God to know him better. In place of being physically present during the three-day retreat, students may opt for online participation. This is an elective course.

Fees

- **Tuition charge:** \$600, payable to Grace Communion Seminary in the online registration system
- **Retreat registration:** \$350 (includes room & board), payable to Odyssey in Christ on their website, [Experiencing the Trinity Retreat](#). Includes participant's guide. The 2017 retreat will be held in Titusville, Florida near Orlando on Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon, November 9-12. Transportation costs will vary and are to be paid by the student. A retreat brochure is available at: [Retreat Brochure](#). For more information contact Dr. Hinkle at larry.hinkle@gci.org

- **Optional online retreat participation:** Requirements for this option include a computer with a high-speed internet connection and a webcam. Students must be willing to carefully prepare their schedules and physical environment prior to the retreat in order to be fully present and without interruption during the three-day period (70 hours). A registration fee of \$175 is payable to Odyssey in Christ on their website, [Experiencing the Trinity Retreat](#). Includes participant's guide. For more information contact Dr. Hinkle at larry.hinkle@gci.org.

Required textbooks

Please obtain these books before the class begins. To find the lowest prices on these books, you may want to try www.bookfinder.com.

Andrews, Alan (General Editor). *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010. ISBN: 13:978-1-60006-280-3. 328 pages. \$12.00.

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006. ISBN: 0-8308-3333-1. 187 pages. \$10.00.

Buchanan, Mark. *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*. Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-8499-1870-4. 220 pages. \$11.00.

Reeves, Michael. *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3983-4. 133 pages. \$10.00.

Additional required reading – no additional cost:

Hinkle, Larry. *Odyssey in Christ Retreat Participant's Guide*. 65 pages (available with retreat participation)

Articles below are located on the Odyssey in Christ website at [Pre-Retreat Readings](#).

Perrine, Myra. Spiritual Temperaments Inventory. 13 pages.

Hinkle, Larry. The Spiritual Rhythms of Solitude, Silence and Meditation. 8 pages.

Murray, Andrew. Absolute Surrender. 8 pages.

Davis, Martin. A Window Into the Heart of God. 13 pages.

Tkach, Joseph. Can You Hear the Holy Spirit? 4 pages.

Johnston, Ted. Living on Mission with God. 3 pages.

Recommended textbooks

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence*. InterVarsity, 2010.

Foster, Richard. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. HarperCollins, 1992.

Hudson, Trevor. *Discovering Our Spiritual Identity: Practices for God's Beloved*. InterVarsity, 2010.

Johnson, Darrell W. *Experiencing the Trinity*. Regent College Publishing, 2002.

Payne, Leanne. *Real Presence: The Glory of Christ With Us and Within Us (The Christian Worldview of C. S. Lewis as Incarnational Reality)*. Baker, 1995.

Purves, Andrew. *The Crucifixion of Ministry: Surrendering Our Ambitions to the Service of Christ*. InterVarsity, 2007.

Reeves, Michael, *Rejoicing in Christ*. InterVarsity, 2015.

Seamands, Stephen. *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service*. InterVarsity, 2005.

Torrance, James B. *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*. InterVarsity, 1996.

Student learning outcomes

After participating in the 70-hour retreat (or the optional 3-day online retreat/seminars) and completing the assigned pre-retreat and post-retreat coursework, students will accomplish the outcomes below. Each outcome will be assessed by means of forum discussions, reaction papers, retreat participation, and the final paper.

1. Analyze the dynamics of a spiritual formation retreat experience within a Trinitarian perspective and the development of a Trinitarian hermeneutic (Text most relevant to this outcome: *Delighting in the Trinity*).
2. Identify spiritual formation practices in the context of the student's personal temperament through taking a spiritual temperament inventory and experiencing spiritually formative exercises historically employed by the Church (Text: *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*).
3. Evaluate their personal relationship with the Triune God through an experience of the Father's loving embrace, the Son's call to intimacy, and the Holy Spirit's empowerment by means of a retreat experiential focus on each member of the Godhead (Text: *Delighting in the Trinity*).
4. Explain the participatory nature of mission (*missio Dei*) from a Trinitarian perspective by means of a study of the way Jesus carried out his ministry with the Father and through the Holy Spirit (Text: *The Kingdom Life*).

5. Articulate the value and importance of the principles of Sabbath rest and retreat in Christian spirituality through both reading on the subject and the experiencing of a focused time of both physical and spiritual rest in the context of a three-day retreat framework (Text: *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*).

Requirements and assignments

1. This course is offered in conjunction with the ministry of Odyssey in Christ, Spiritual Formation for Leadership. The tuition fee is in addition to the retreat registration fee, room & board, and transportation costs. The Odyssey in Christ program offers a 70-hour retreat that focuses on an experiential encounter with the Trinity. To fulfill the requirements for this course, students are required to participate in this retreat (or the optional online retreat experience) and to complete pre-retreat and post-retreat reading and writing assignments.
2. Take the Spiritual Temperament Inventory and read the pre-retreat articles required of all participants (available on the Odyssey in Christ website). About two hours.
3. Read the required textbooks. They total about 900 pages, or about 80 pages each week. About three hours each week.
4. Write a 3-5 page reaction paper (double-spaced) for each of the four textbooks in which you interact with the author's concepts. This may take about 8 hours for each paper; each paper counts for 5 percent of the grade, for a total of 20 percent. Three of these are due before the retreat, and one is due after the retreat. After an introduction giving the purpose of your writing, summarize the author's main points and reflect upon and respond to the following:
 - a) What most stands out to you regarding the main thesis of the book,
 - b) What observations do you have that either give you new insights or affirm your beliefs about the nature of God as Trinity,

- c) How might these insights or affirmations affect your personal relationship with God, and
 - d) How might what you are reading be applied to your current ministry or your goals for future ministry endeavors.
5. Read the lectures. Lectures and related reading/audio-video materials will be posted each Monday during the eight week period of the course prior to the retreat experience and the week following. Estimated time spent on each lecture is 2 hours.
6. Write three two-page reflection papers in response to ideas discussed in three of the lectures. In each paper the student is required to:
- a) Discuss which ideas or spiritual practices in the lecture were most helpful, inspiring, or personally transformative.
 - b) Discuss which ideas or spiritual practices in the lecture were the most challenging and explain why.
 - c) Explain how these ideas or spiritual practices will have an impact on your relationship with God and service in ministry.
7. Participate in the forum discussions: Each student will interact with the instructor and other students during four forum discussions. The online discussions along with the reflection papers count for 20 percent of the final grade.
- a) The first forum will consist of a review of the syllabus, expected course learning outcomes and, in the context of the Spiritual Temperament Inventory to be taken beforehand, a discussion of the student's relationship with God and self.
 - b) Forum 2: The student's understanding of the vicarious humanity of Christ in relationship to the Trinity;
 - c) Forum 3: The student's rationale for choosing specific spiritual formation practices for personal transformation;

- d) Forum 4: The student's foundational goals for ongoing participation in the mission and ministry of the Triune God.
8. Attend the 3-day (70 hour) Odyssey in Christ Experiencing the Trinity retreat or participate in the optional online experience. This accounts for 30 percent of the grade.
9. Write a final 6-8 page (double-spaced) paper. This paper may take about 15 hours, and counts for 30 percent of the final grade. It should include the following:
- a) What you have learned about the Trinity,
 - b) How you personally encountered God as Father, God as Son, and God as Holy Spirit during the retreat and/or coursework,
 - c) Your view of the value of setting aside time for spiritual rest and renewal in the context of ministry,
 - d) The importance of creating personal and congregational sacred spaces for worshipping God, and
 - e) How you believe this course and retreat experience will impact your mission and ministry in Christ's service.

For a guide to formatting papers, see the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

Assignment	Hours *	Percentage of grade
Reading the syllabus, lectures, and related materials on the course website	18	
Forum discussions and reflection papers	4	20
Reading the textbooks	30	
Writing reaction papers	33	20
Retreat experiential learning	40	30

Final paper	15	30
Total – about 12 hours each week	140	100

* This is an estimate. A student who reads quickly may be slow in writing papers, and vice versa. Some students will complete the course requirements in less time, and some will take more time. The experiential learning retreat component of 40 hours will, however, be the same for all students. Students will be at the retreat facility from a Thursday evening to a Sunday afternoon, a total of 70 hours.

Class Confidentiality

Materials posted in the class, including lectures and discussion forums, are for class use only. Grades are confidential; we do not report your grades to your employer or to anyone else outside of GCS administration. Students are to protect the confidentiality of all classroom materials and should not share any classroom materials without specific written permission of the person quoted and the instructor.

Weekly topics and assignments

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
1	Course Overview/Syllabus Topic: In Relationship with God & Self	Murray (8 pp.) Hinkle (8 pp.) Barton, 9-28 Buchanan, xiii-41 Andrews, 7-25 Reeves, 9-18	Take Spiritual Temperament Inventory, then participate in Forum 1
		Andrews, 7-25 Reeves, 9-18	
	After reading this lecture, students will be able to evaluate their relationship with God, and how their personal spiritual temperament affects that relationship. This is the first step toward course outcome		

	<p>#3 (Evaluate one's relationship with God). The student must be able to <i>describe</i> the relationship before the student is able to <i>evaluate</i> it. The student's ability to describe his/her relationship with God will be verified in the first forum discussion and again in the final paper.</p>		
2	Trinitarian Perspectives	Davis, (12 pp.) Andrews, 29-59, 225-249. Reeves, 19-62.	Reflection paper on lecture 1 or 2
	<p>After reading this lecture, students will be able to explain the basic tenets of a Christ-centered Trinitarian understanding of the nature of God and begin to develop a Trinitarian hermeneutic as it relates to their personal experience in life with God as Father, Son, and Spirit. This reflects course outcome #1 (Analyze the dynamics of a spiritual retreat experience in the context of a relationship with God from a Trinitarian perspective). The student's ability to analyze the dynamics of this relationship will be assessed by means of a personal daily evaluation during each day of the retreat experience, in the reaction paper on the text <i>Father, Son, & Holy Spirit</i>, and in the final paper.</p>		
3	The Father's Loving Embrace	Buchanan, 42-84. Reeves, 63-133.	Reaction paper 1, on Reeves.
	<p>After reading this lecture, students will be able to evaluate their belief in the unconditional love of God the Father, and lay the groundwork for understanding the retreat spiritual formation exercises that focus on a personal experiencing of the Father's loving embrace. This understanding and experience, reflecting course outcome #3 (Evaluate a personal relationship with the Triune God), will be verified through personal retreat reflections and group evaluations, in forum discussions, and the final paper.</p>		
4	The Son's Call to	Andrews, 85-138.	Forum 2

	Intimacy	Barton, 29-109	
	<p>After reading this lecture, students will be able to evaluate their understanding of the call of Jesus to intimate relationship, and lay the groundwork for understanding the retreat spiritual formation exercises that focus on developing a deeper personal intimacy with Christ. This understanding and experience, reflecting course outcome #3 (Evaluate a personal relationship with the Triune God), will be verified through the student's personal retreat reflections and group evaluations as well as in forum discussion and the final paper.</p>		
5	The Holy Spirit's Empowerment	Andrews, 251-274. Buchanan, 85-144	Reflection paper on lecture 3, 4, or 5.
	<p>After reading this lecture, students will be able to evaluate their understanding of how the Holy Spirit is at work in their lives and lay the groundwork for understanding the retreat spiritual formation exercises that focus on keeping in step with the Spirit's activity in the ministry of Christ. This understanding and experience, reflecting course outcome #3 (Evaluate a personal relationship with the Triune God), will be verified through personal retreat reflections and group evaluations as well as in forum discussion and the final paper.</p>		
6	Sabbath Rest & Retreat	Barton, 110-145 Buchanan, 145-220	Reaction paper 2, on Buchanan
	<p>After reading this lecture, students will be able to articulate the value and importance of intentionally taking time for rest and retreat in the context of life experience and ministry, thus directly relating to course outcome #5 (articulate the value of Sabbath rest and retreat). This articulation will be demonstrated in the writing of the reaction paper on <i>The Rest of God</i>, as well as in forum discussion and the</p>		

	final paper.		
7	Creating Sacred Spaces & Spiritual Practice	Andrews, 165-193. Barton, 146-187	Forum 3
	After reading this lecture, students will be able to identify transformative spiritual formation practices that apply personally and in groups (course outcome #2: Identify personal spiritually formative practices in the context of one's spiritual temperament). This identification will be verified through forum discussion, the writing of the reaction paper on the text <i>Sacred Rhythms</i> , and the final paper.		
8	The Ongoing Journey to Wholeness	Andrews, 139-163, 275-314. Barton, 146-187	Reflection paper on lecture 6, 7, or 8.
	After reading this lecture, students will be able to synthesize their understanding of God as Trinity (a Trinitarian hermeneutic) with a deeper recognition of the calling of Christ to an ongoing participation in his life in the Father and through the Spirit (course outcomes 1-5). This synthesis will be verified through forum discussions, the writing of the reaction paper on <i>Participating in God</i> , and the final paper.		
9	Retreat Experience (70 hours) Note: The Retreat date for this semester in 2017 is Thursday November 9 through Sunday November 12 (Titusville,	Hinkle, <i>Odyssey in Christ Retreat Participant's Guide</i>	For Retreat Registration: OdysseyinChrist.com .

	Florida). The optional online retreat experience must be arranged with Dr. Hinkle.		
10	On Mission in the Spirit	Andrews, 195-221. Johnston (3 pages) Tkach (5 pages)	Reaction paper 3, on Barton (Due Sunday, November 19, 2017)
<p>After reading this lecture, students will be able to explain Christian participation in the mission and ministry of Christ in relationship with the Father and through the Holy Spirit (course outcome #4: Explain the participatory nature of Christ's mission and ministry). This explanation will be verified through the final forum discussion, the reaction paper on the text <i>Participating in God</i>, and the final paper.</p>			
11			<p>Forum 4: Post-retreat testimonial and mission statement</p> <p>Reaction paper 4, on Andrews (Due Sunday, December 3, 2017)</p>
12-13	GCS closed week of Thanksgiving, 11/20-26		Final paper (Due Monday, December 4, 2017)

