

REGENT COLLEGE
Distance Education

INDS/SPIR 578: EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY

Dr. R. Paul Stevens & other faculty

Grader: Dr. R. Paul Stevens

3 Graduate Credit Hours

Course Tutor: Alvin Ung, de-INDSSPIR578@regent-college.edu

Your due date: _____

(See the last page of your Student Handbook for setting your due date)

A course may be dropped within two weeks of the course start date for a 100% refund (less a \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between two and four weeks of the course start date for a 75% refund (less a \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between four and eight weeks of the course start date for no refund; after this time the student is committed to receiving a grade for the course. All course materials must be returned in original condition before a drop or refund will be approved.

NOTE: Advance reading of one of the two texts (notably Stevens, *Down-to-Earth Spirituality*) is recommended.

Course Description

How do we live as followers of Christ in the midst of our communities, workplace and country? How do we find God in the seemingly ordinary or trivial things of everyday life? Developing an integrated Christian lifestyle involves much more than being faithful in devotional practices and church activities. In this course, we will address the Biblical emphasis of *everyday, vocational holiness*. We will build a foundation for the ministry and spirituality of the ordinary Christian. As we consider how our mentalities, pressures and environments shape our patterns of response, we will attempt to develop patterns of spiritual life that will sustain us in the pressures of daily life.

Goals and Format of the Course:

The goals of this course are as follows:

- * to learn to reflect on everyday issues and experiences
- * to gain a deeper integration of Christian faith and daily life
- * to develop patterns of spiritual life that will sustain us in the pressures of ordinary life

Each section will have some or all of the following parts:

- (1) an exposition of Scripture relating to everyday life,
- (2) a lecture and everyday theme integrating theology and spirituality,
- (3) a case study on an issue/experience of everyday life.

Academic Requirements and Time Investment

	<u>3 cr hrs</u>
Lectures	36 hrs
Reading and Book review	39 hrs
Journal-keeping and conversation	10 hrs
Collaborative work	10 hrs
Research Paper (1500 words)	20 hrs
Immersion Paper (1500 words)	<u>20 hrs</u>
TOTAL	135 hrs

Assignments

1. Reading and Book Review.

You will read *Down-to-Earth Spirituality* and selected articles from *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* (no book reviews required for this reading).

In addition to the required texts, students will read another 700 pages from book(s) selected from the recommended reading list on pages 6-9. You will write one formal book review (750-1000 words) on one of the books from that list (not *Down-to-Earth Spirituality* or *The Complete Book*). The book review should:

- offer a brief summary of the book
- express the primary contribution this book makes to the subject
- explain the author's perspective and background
- offer a critique
- interact personally with the material
- adhere to normal scholarly style

Please submit a list of all the books you read for this course and attach it to your book review.

2. Journal-keeping

Journal-keeping can serve as a tool for honest reflection about everyday issues, cultivating the discipline of prayer and attentiveness to Christ, and gaining a deeper integration of Christian faith and daily life by engaging with questions that are included in your course manual. You are encouraged to view your journal entries as prayers – written with the constant awareness of God's presence as you write.

Guidelines for journal-keeping:

- Respond to a reflection question before each lecture session, and to an integrative question after each lecture session. You should take no longer than 30 minutes to respond to both questions.
- We encourage you to keep a journal in whatever form that's helpful for your reflection i.e. type in computer, write by hand on paper, jot things down in point form, generate mental maps, or written prayers, etc. There's no word limit.
- Select a few journal entries and submit photocopies (minimum 5 pages).
- Grading will be on a pass/fail basis. Confidential to the grader.

3. Spiritual Conversation

Spiritual conversation. You will meet three times with one other person (not necessarily in the class) to reflect and pray on the issues that have arisen from this course. You will document this with a 3-5 page reflection on your experience. For example, in what way has the spiritual conversation impacted

a specific dimension of your life and faith? For a list of potential discussion questions, see page 9. Grading will be on a pass/fail basis. Confidential to the grader.

You must obtain approval from Dr. Paul Stevens for the assignments below (Collaborative Work, Research Paper and Immersion & Reflection paper) by filling in the proposal form on pages 10-11 and emailing it to him. Please print out the necessary email correspondence (to demonstrate that you have obtained the professor's approval) and submit it along with your papers.

4. Collaborative Work

The purpose of this collaborative work is to create a small community of learning where your ideas will be critiqued by your peers. You will write a 3-5 page paper with *either*:

- a) one or two other students who are currently taking this course. Please email distanceeducation@regent-college.edu for a list of students you could contact, *or*
- b) in the absence of this, with someone from your community.

The topic of your paper must come from 1 of these 4 options:

- a) A daily experience (washing, walking, commuting, watching TV, playing games, the internet, cleaning, having a coffee break, preparing meals, dreaming)
- b) *Hospitality* (interviews and reflection on hospitality experiences in churches, homes, neighbourhoods and in cross-cultural contexts that could help inform or shape the paper/project) .
- c) *Urban Spirituality*
- d) *Everyday Life at the Movies, in Art or in Music*

Please include the name(s) of the people you work with, as well as their relation to you (fellow student, friend, etc.).

5. Research Paper

Students will choose an everyday subject/issue/symbol and write a scholarly reflection that combines a theological/biblical perspective along with some personal reflection. This academic paper (1500 words) requires extensive *bibliographic research* and will include:

- statement of the issue
- secular and Christian reflection on the issue
- biblical insights
- personal reflection and integration

The following are some possible topics for your paper:

- a) Symbols: the automobile, telephone, television, credit card, home, airplane.
- b) Phenomena: technology, information, anonymity, urbanization, consumerism, competition, commercialism.
- c) Passages: birth, circumcision, dedication/baptism, childhood, puberty, menstruation, adolescence, career selection, work, home making, relaxation, vacations, retirement, menopause, grandparenting, death.
- d) Daily Experiences: students may elect to do a paper on a subject **not** covered by the Collaborative Work paper/project.

NOTE: Students who choose a subject already covered in Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens, *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity: An A-Z Guide to Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997) must interact with the published material and offer fresh research and reflection.

NOTE: You may combine the Research Paper and Immersion & Reflection Paper (see following) in a single long paper (3000 words) that incorporates scholarly research, personal reflection and investigation. This paper may be divided into two parts (experiential and bibliographic research), or both kinds of research may be interwoven in the paper.

The approximate breakdown of the combined paper will be as follows:

6. Immersion & Reflection Paper

This part of the course will combine scholarly research, personal reflection and first-hand investigation of what it means to integrate faith and everyday life. The student will select a topic of interest or importance to the student; this topic should be different from the topic chosen for the Research Paper. After doing scholarly research using the recommended reading list, the student will conduct *first-hand investigation (through interviews and observation)* either in a church context or outside to deepen the student's grasp of the integrative process. This may involve a field trip. Finally the student will reflect on the problem in the context of the Bible.

This investigative research must not simply be a reflection on your past experience. Where interviews are used, there should be a minimum of five (except where you elect couple spirituality). The student should indicate in the paper what questions were asked and the data received.

The paper (1500 words length) should have four parts:

Part 1 - Statement of the problem or challenge (50-100 words)

Part 2 - Scholarly Research (500 words approx)

Part 3 - Statement of First-Hand Research or Observation (500 words)

Part 4 - Concluding Reflection including Biblical and personal insights gained through the research (400 words).

Suggested Topics: (Other immersion topics may be considered with the approval of the professor. They may include topics of current interest in the student's own life.) You may not repeat your topic from your Collaborative Work project.

1. Spiritual Friendship

Students may elect to undertake a guided sequence of conversations and prayer times with one other person using resources provided. For example, they may read Aelred of Rievaulx's *Spiritual Friendship* and discuss it together.

2. Spirituality of Work

Students not currently employed may elect to spend 10 hours immersed in a specific part of the work-world (trades, business or professions) observing and asking questions. Those currently involved in societal occupations may undertake a regular period of reflection (one hour weekly) and conversation with another student to gain perspective on what vocational means in their own situation.

3. Couple Spirituality

Couples may elect, as an alternative, to use Stevens, *Marriage Spirituality* (or some other resource) as a guide for a scheduled evening each week of marriage enrichment.

4. Urban Spirituality

The student will undertake a focused investigation of the various dimensions of urban life of one specific city.

5. A Christian Perspective on Riches and Poverty
The student might undertake a series of interviews of people considered rich and poor.
6. A Christian Perspective on Hospitality
Interviews and reflection on hospitality experiences in churches, homes, neighbourhoods and in cross-cultural contexts would provide the experiential basis for this project.
7. A Christian Perspective on the Passages of Life
This would involve a reflection on one's own life journey.
8. Everyday Life at the Movies, in Art or in Music
A Christian reflection on how everyday life is portrayed in film, art or in music, contemporary or classical.
9. A Christian Perspective on Death and Dying
Students may volunteer in a hospice or interview people working with the terminally ill.

Evaluation

		<u>3 cr hrs</u>
Book Review		20 %
Journal-keeping & conversation (Pass/Fail)	10 %	
Collaborative Work		20 %
Research Paper	25 %	
Immersion and Reflection Paper	25 %	

NB: The Course Evaluation form is to be returned by your due date

Late Policy and Extensions (please read carefully!)

For every week that your course requirements are submitted late, there will be a deduction of a third of a letter grade per assignment accordingly. Only under circumstances that are both *unavoidable and unforeseeable* are extensions considered (please refer to your student handbook for specific details

<http://www.regent-college.edu/academics/cstudies/documents/StudentHandbook.pdf>). Weddings and births do not count as *unavoidable and unforeseeable*. If you need to go beyond the six-month time limit, you must contact the Coordinator *first* for an extension. Contact information is provided in your Student Handbook. Please note that extensions are not automatically granted, and must be applied for before your original due date.

ACADEMIC HONOUR Regent College upholds the highest standards of academic responsibility as part of our commitment to Christ in all of life. Students are required to familiarize themselves especially with the discussion of “Academic Integrity” in the College Catalogue.

Bibliography

Required Reading:

R. Paul Stevens, *Down-to-Earth Spirituality: Encountering God in the Ordinary, Boring Stuff of Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003)

Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens, *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997). – Required reading from this book will be provided in your course manual.

Recommended Reading: Most recommended*

*Aelred of Rievaulx. *Spiritual Friendship* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publishing, 1977).
- the classic treatment on the subject but written in a monastic context.

*Banks, Robert. *All the Business of Life*. (Sutherland, Australia: Albatross Books Pty. Ltd., 1987).
now reprinted as *Redeeming the Routine* (Victor Book, 1993).
- opens up many of the areas covered in the course most helpfully; an excellent chapter on "people's theology."

*Banks, Robert. *The Tyranny of Time: When 24 Hours Is Not Enough* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983).

*Banks, Robert and Stevens, R. Paul. *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997). Note: Articles other than those read for each day may be selected for completion of reading (one page counts for three) but may not be used for the book review.

Baxter, Richard. *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, abridged by Benjamin Fawcett (Baker Books, 1978).
- a Puritan classic.

*Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together* (Harper and Row)
- a modern classic on fellowship, church life and the grace of being together in Christ.

*Boyer, Ernst, Jr., *Finding God at Home: Family Life as Spiritual Discipline*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 193 pp.
- a deep reflection on family life itself as a spiritual discipline, exploring such dimensions as caring, the sacrament of the routine and the gifts of family spirituality.

Brother Lawrence. *The Practice of the Presence of God*, ed. John J. Delaney (New York: Image Doubleday, 1977)—may be read with Jean-Pierre De Caussaude, *The Sacrament*

Bunge, Marcia J., ed. *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001)

Capon, Robert Farrar. *An Offering of Uncles: The Priesthood of Adam and the Shape of the World* (New York: Crossroads, 1982).

- a literary reflection on work, art and aesthetics, brilliantly written.

*Dawn, Marva, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

De Caussaude, Jean-Pierre. *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*, Kitty Muggeridge, trans. (Glasgow: Collins, 1981).

Cummings, Charles. *The Mystery of the Ordinary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982).

- a spiritual reflection on hearing, seeing, walking, resting, standing up, eating and drinking, hurting.

*Dryer, Elizabeth A. *Earth Crammed with Heaven: A Spirituality of Everyday Life* (New York: Paulist, 1994).

- a thoughtful Roman Catholic perspective on the spirituality of "lay" life with theological reflection.

Foster, Richard. *Money, Sex & Power* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985).

Hall, D.J. *Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1988).

*Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

- a deep Jewish philosophical and spiritual reflection on the place of Sabbath in Biblical tradition.
- *Kass, Leon R. *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- *Kass, Amy A. and Leon R. eds. *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000). Selected readings - 632 pages (you may select sections for reading)
- *Lecky, Delores. *The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality* (New York: Crossroads, 1982).
 - a Roman Catholic exposition of the grace of marriage and family.
- *Mason, Mike. *The Mystery of Marriage* (Portland: Multnomah, 1985).
- *Mason, Mike. *The Mystery of Children: What Our Kids Teach Us About Childlike Faith* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2001).
- *Meilander, Gilbert C. ed. *Working: Its Meaning and Its Limits* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2000) – selected readings 271 pages.
- Mouw, Richard. *Called to Holy Worldliness* (Laity Exchange Books Series. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).
 - an early sequel to Kraemer's *Theology of the Laity* with helpful reflection on politics and poverty.
- *Neuhaus, Richard John, ed. *The Eternal Pity: Reflections on Dying* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000). Selections – 181 pages.
- *Nouwen, Henri. *Creative Ministry* (Image/Doubleday, 1971).
 - a deep reflection on several dimensions of "ministry" (as traditionally defined) but with perspectives on daily life.
- *Palmer, Parker. *The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity, and Caring* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990).
 - collection of poems, Christian and otherwise, which form the basis of a deep reflection on the spirituality of ordinary life.
- *Peterson, Eugene H. *Leap Over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians* (San Francisco: Harper, 1997).
 - a wonderful reflection on the life of David offering a down-to-earth spirituality for everyday life.
- Rybczynski, Witold. *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (Viking: 1986).
- *Rybczynski, Witold. *Waiting for the Weekend* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).
- Rybczynski, Witold. *City Life: Urban Expectations in a New World* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1995).
- Schneider, John. *Godly Materialism: Rethinking Money and Possessions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994).
- *Schmemmann, Alexander. *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988).
 - an Eastern Orthodox contribution that argues for the world as one all-embracing banquet for humankind through which we are to find communion with God, a sacramental approach to the theology of everyday life.
- Stevens, R. Paul. *Seven Days of Faith* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2001).
 - composed around the seven day theme: work, family, other, sex, neighbour, alone, rest—only slight overlap with lectures) formerly *Disciplines of the Hungry Heart* (but revised)
- *Stevens, R. Paul. *Marriage Spirituality: Ten Disciplines for Couples Who Love God* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989). (reprint copies available from regent bookstore)
 - can be used to enrich marriages.
- Walter of Hilton. *Towards Perfect Love* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1985).
 - reflection on a life "mixed" of action and contemplation by a 14th c Augustinian canon.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

From: Francis Vanderwall, *Spiritual Direction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981) p. 74

1. What is the purpose of my life at this time? Do I feel that this purpose is being realized? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What do I feel guilty about most often? Why? How do I get rid of my guilt?
3. Looking back on my life, do I feel that I have gotten a “fair deal”? What does that mean to me?
4. What does it take for me to be true to myself? Is it important to me? Why?
5. What does it mean to me to be free? Do I feel that I am free? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. What is the one quality that I really like about myself? Why?
7. What are the things that I find have most meaning for me in life? Try to explain why.
8. Where is it most easy for me to find God?
9. Which person, or person, of the blessed trinity do I find greatest ease praying to?
10. Do I feel God calling me in my heart (i.e. feelings) to any special place with him at his point in my life?

Robert Hestenes 10/86

1. Begin by sharing some of your spiritual history – your autobiography. What have been the high places and low places in your personal spiritual journey? Share one specific memory of feeling close to God – one specific period when you felt distance from God.
2. Talk about the present. How do you feel about your relationship to God at the present time? What spiritual disciplines do you practice? What are the strengths and weaknesses in your personal use of spiritual disciplines? Where would you like to “go” in this area? What can help you? What hinders you?
3. Talk about prayer. What is the place and meaning of prayer in your life? Where is it easy and where is it hard? What kinds of prayer are you involved with? Where do you want to learn or grow in your prayer life?
4. Talk about pictures of God. What single words, images, or metaphors about God are most meaningful to you? Which images or pictures do you find difficult or barriers for you? How does imagery affect your prayer life?
5. Consider your key relationships. Are you able to pray and share spiritually with your spouse? Why or why not? With your children? What are your deepest desires in your marriage and family? How is it coming? Do you have any key relationships that need healing or forgiveness?
6. Consider the Christian community. How does being in the church impact your life in God? What experience of meaningful community do you have? What are your needs and hopes in this area?
7. What helps or encourages you in faith? What hinders or hurts you in your desire to know and follow God?
8. How do you handle suffering and hurt in your life? Who is God for you in such places?
9. Talk about the future. What are your goals for yourself in spirituality? How are you going to move toward those goals?

Consider:

- a) The importance of praying for and with your spiritual friend
- b) The use of a brief passage of Scripture as a means of ‘centering’ your time together
- c) The toleration of silence if it includes a responsiveness to each other and the Spirit of God in your midst
- d) The possibility of brief ‘assignments’ for study, reading or reflection before the next meeting

PROPOSAL FOR PAPERS

(You must email this information to Dr. Paul Stevens for approval at paul@rpaulstevens.com. If you need a soft copy of this document, please email distanceeducation@regent-college.edu)

STUDENT NAME:

COLLABORATIVE WORK

Topic:

Outline or 5- sentence description of the project:

Who you will be doing this with

a) Current students (list their names):

b) Others (list their names and explain why you chose them):

RESEARCH and IMMERSION & REFLECTION PAPER

Please tick one.

I am doing: a) Research Paper and b) Immersion and Reflection Paper

I am doing: a *combined* Research and Immersion & Reflection Paper

Research Paper

Topic:

Indicate some of the sources you will explore (scholarly articles, books etc) to understand your subject:

Immersion & Reflection Paper

Topic:

What kind of “first-hand” research will you undertake (interviews, observation etc):

In a couple of sentences describe the qualitative first-hand research you will do, naming the number of interviews or situations you will explore. Indicate what it is you want to learn through this:

The professor will respond with feedback/approval within two weeks of submission.