



P146 Introduction to Spiritual Formation

3 credits. Prerequisites: none

 On Campus **'A'**  Livestream  Video on Demand

January 13, 2025 – April 17, 2025

Winter Semester

Monday and Wednesday— 10:45am-12:15pm SK

**For on-campus students, this is an electronic-free class unless for medical purposes.*

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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 Horizon's Mission

At the core of Horizon's mission is the preparation of a life empowered by the Spirit. 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:* Christian Practices Investigation
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

* Please note: You must have a **hard copy** of this workbook. *

**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. All on-campus students (and others who are able) will participate in a field trip to Holy Covenant Evangelical Orthodox Church on **February 19th, 2025**, from 10:30 AM – 2:30 PM. (Lunch will be provided.) Livestreaming and VOD students who are not able to attend that field trip will be required to plan a field trip to a church unlike their own.

Instructions for online students who are unable to attend the group field trip:

1. **Identify a Church Context:**

- Choose a church tradition distinct from your own, such as Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, or another that practices communal life with God differently.
- Consult with your professor to confirm your selection.

2. **Plan Your Field Trip:**

- Attend an in-person worship service or, if not possible, participate virtually via livestream.
- 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 need to answer for your reflective essay.

Following the educational trip, **each student** will compose a reflective essay of 500-750 words. In your essay, you should reflect on 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 spiritually 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?
 - Related learning outcome: #4.
 - **Assignment Length:** 500 to 700 words.
 - **Date Due:** February 23, 2025.

2. Critical Reflection (25%)

You will complete a Spiritual Health Reflection from *Practicing the Way* found [here](#) and reflect in-class on its findings. In addition, by February 21, 2025, you will read in its entirety John Mark Comer's book *Practicing the Way*. The critical reflection should demonstrate clear evidence of this reading. Highlight a theme from each section and write two thoughtful paragraphs detailing your ruminations on each theme.

- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - Follow the MCS-Horizon Format Guide
 - Cite the textbook and any relevant quotes.
- Related learning outcome: #2.
- **Assignment Length:** Two paragraphs per section (minimum 12 paragraphs to maximum 14) = approximately 3-6 pages.
- **Date Due:** February 28, 2025.

| <i>Practicing the Way</i> by John Mark Comer | |
|---|-------------------|
| Intro – Apprentice to Jesus | January 19, 2025 |
| Goal #1 Be with Jesus | January 26, 2025 |
| Goal #2 Become Like Him | February 2, 2025 |
| Goal #3 Do as He Did | February 9, 2025 |
| How? A Rule of Life | February 16, 2025 |
| Submit Assignment | February 28, 2025 |

3. Christian Practices Investigation (25%)

Using a minimum of three academic sources, students will research the spiritual disciplines associated with one major historic Christian movement. This assignment does not require a formal write-up, but competency will be exhibited through the submission of at least three pages of substantial, in-depth, descriptive data, organized as a lesson plan suitable for teaching using the

template provided in Populi. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the movement should also be discussed. Possible movements include:

- Desert Fathers
 - Benedictine Monastic Spirituality
 - Jesuit Spirituality
 - Para-church (Campus Crusade, Navigators etc.)
 - Greek Orthodox Spirituality
 - English Spirituality (Anglican)
 - Word of Faith teachings
 - Wesleyan Formation
 - Classic Pentecostalism
 - Quakerism
 - Puritanism
 - Latter Rain
- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - Follow the MCS-Horizon Format Guide.
 - Use the provided template in Populi.
 - Cite three academic sources.
 - Include citations in footnotes when paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting from other sources.
 - Include a bibliography.
 - Format as a Lesson Plan.
 - Related learning outcome: #3.
 - **Assignment Length:** 3-6 pages.
 - **Date Due:** March 29, 2025

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

Students will purchase a hard copy of Stephen A. Macchia's book *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way* and will follow the below schedule for reading and thoughtfully working through and answering the questions in *all* areas except *Spiritual Community* as we will touch on those in class. They will then complete a digital Rule of Life based on the template provided in Populi.

- To complete this assignment, follow these guidelines:
 - Follow the reading and session schedule outlined below.
 - Thoughtfully answer directly in the book in the spaces provided the questions in all areas except *Spiritual Community*.
 - Use the provided Rule of Life template provided on Populi.
 - Upload your Rule of Life to Populi for assessment.
- **On-campus students** will hand in their hard copy of the *An Invitation to a Well-Ordered Life* book to professor for assessment.
- **Online students:**
 - Instead of writing in the book, type out each question and your responses in a **digital document** (e.g., Word or Google Docs).
 - Combine your answers (typed questions and responses) and the **completed Rule of Life template** into a single digital file.
 - Upload this document to **Populi** in place of handing in the physical book.
- **Related to learning outcome:** #1.
- **Assignment length:** Completed sections in the book and completed Rule of Life Template.
- **Due Date:** April 4, 2025.

Reading Schedule & Workbook Schedule:

| An Invitation to a Well-Ordered Life | | Crafting a Rule of Life | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Intro – Chapter 2 | January 19, 2025 | Chapter 7 | February 23, 2025 |
| Chapter 3 | January 26, 2025 | Chapter 8 | March 9, 2025 |
| Chapter 4 | February 2, 2025 | Chapter 9 | March 16, 2025 |
| Chapter 5 | February 9, 2025 | Chapter 10 | March 23, 2025 |
| Chapter 6 | February 16, 2025 | Chapter 11 | March 30, 2025 |

***Remember to also complete the digital Rule of Life template created for you and available in Populi.**

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is being offered by VOD. Students taking the course through VOD are required to indicate this during their course registration. While VOD recordings are available for any student who may be absent from class, non-VOD students are expected to attend class live following the class attendance policy.

- For this course, VOD students have the same assignment due dates as in-class students.
- By Saturday at 11:59pm each week, VOD students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities from the previous week's classes.
- By Saturday at 11:59pm each week, VOD students will submit a 2–3 minute video report on Padlet that 1) affirms they have watched the recording for the last seven days, 2) summarizes one thing that they learned that week to help them reach the learning objectives, and 3) ask one question that arose from the class recordings
- To pass the course, VOD students must submit all of their VOD weekly submissions. These submissions are marked as pass/fail based on whether or not they demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the class material.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Classroom time | 30 hrs | N/A | Assignment Weighting |
| 1. Field Trip and Reflection | 6 hrs | Feb 23 | 10% |
| 2. Critical Reflection | 21 hrs | Feb 28 | 25% |
| 3. Christian Practices Investigation | 10 hrs | Mar 29 | 25% |
| 4. Personal Rule of Life | 29 hrs | April 4 | 40% |
| Total = | 96 hrs | | |

All assignments are due at 11:59pm **SK time** 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

- Syllabus and assignment due dates will be reviewed.
- **Unit 1 Contextual Background**
 - **Most Substantive Unit**
 1. What is spiritual formation?
 2. How has the early church historically viewed spiritual formation?
 3. Current trends
 4. Relationship to “works”
 5. Impact upon ministry effectiveness
 6. Personal characteristics that will affect spiritual formation.
 7. What can hinder spiritual growth?
 - **Unit 2 Inward Spirituality**
 - **Unit 3 Outward Spirituality**
 - **Unit 4 Corporate Spirituality**
 - **Unit 5 Developing a Personal Rule of Life**
 - *Ten minutes on the final day of class will be given to complete course evaluations.*
- 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 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 |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|--------------------|
| E | Exceeding expectations | Student demonstrated exceptional achievement of the learning outcomes. | A+ | 4.0 | 90-100 |
| | | Student demonstrated excellent achievement of the learning outcomes. | A | 4.0 | 85-89 |
| | | | A- | 3.7 | 80-84 |
| M | Meeting expectations | Student demonstrated good 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 beginning to meet 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 insufficient progress 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), or Richelle Bekkattla, Horizon's Library Technician and Academic Accommodations Coordinator (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.

Bibliography

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