

LIDLAW COLLEGE
Te Wananga Amorangi
401.515 Formation
Course Assessment and Delivery Outline

Campus: Distance Learning

Semester SS, 2017-18
 NQF Level 5, 15 credits

Tutor: David Wells

CONTENT OVERVIEW

This course aims to help students deepen both kinds of knowledge, through engagement with Scripture and a variety of Christian spiritual traditions, reflection on their own and others' spiritual journeys, and the development of spiritual practices for life and vocation

By the end of this course, each student will have demonstrated their ability to:

1. Identify the people, ideas, life events and personal responses which have shaped their spiritual journey to date.
2. Make a balanced assessment of their spiritual practices, with a view to developing these in ways appropriate to their context and vocation.
3. Demonstrate a balanced appreciation of distinctive features of Christian spirituality, with particular regard to Christ, community and creation.
4. Respond to others' viewpoints and experiences in ways that show respect and self-awareness.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| Semester Week | Week start | Topic | Assessment Task | Word count | Due date | % Final grade |
|---------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------|----------|---------------|
| 1 | 27/11/17 | Knowing God in Christ | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 3/12/17 | 2.5% |
| 2 | 4/12/17 | Knowing ourselves in Christ | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 10/12/17 | 2.5% |
| 3 | 11/12/17 | Embracing the gospel of Christ | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 17/12/17 | 2.5% |
| 4 | 18/12/17 | Becoming more like Christ | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 24/12/17 | 2.5% |
| 5 | 25/12/17 | Trinitarian at heart | Reflection 1 | 1600 | 31/12/17 | 25% |
| 6 | 1/1/18 | Embracing the gifts | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 7/1/18 | 2.5% |
| 7 | 8/1/18 | Engaging the challenges: Part 1 | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 14/1/18 | 2.5% |
| 8 | 15/1/18 | Engaging the challenges: Part 2 | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 21/1/18 | 2.5% |

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| 9 | 22/1/18 | Reflecting the glory of God: "Human beings fully alive!" | Discussion Forum | 200+50 | 28/1/17 | 2.5% |
| 10 | 29/1/18 | Sharing the brokenness, holding the hope | Reflection 2 | 1200 | 4/2/18 | 20% |
| 11 | 5/2/18 | Participating in the work of the Spirit through our gifts, passions and personality | | | | |
| 12 | 12/2/18 | Knowing our calling | Essay | 2000 | 18/2/18 | 35% |

LEARNING HOURS

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|---|--|
| Learning guide & readings | 60 hours |
| Discussion Forums | 20 hours |
| Reflection 1: What's shaped your foundations? | 20 hours |
| Reflection 2: Finding your fit | 20 hours |
| Essay | 30 hours |
| TOTAL | 150 learning hours (15 credits) |

ASSESSMENT TASKS DETAIL

1. Discussion Forums

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| Length: | 200 words per initial post, at least 50 words for response posts. |
| Percentage weighting of final grade: | 20% |
| Due date: | 11.55 pm Sunday, end of weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 |
| Learning outcomes: | 1, 4 |
| Learning hours: | 20 |

Discussion forums will require you to engage with various themes and topics. The purpose is to create an opportunity for students to discuss aspects of the course in a well-informed but informal way.

Typically you will be required to prepare an initial post in response to a reading and/or some question/s. Over the 7 days following your initial post, you are to engage in genuine conversation with one or two other students by posting response(s) to what they have written, and either responding to those who have commented on what you have written, or entering into any further dialogue about the topic. Specific instructions will accompany each discussion forum.

As a minimum requirement to pass this assessment task, in addition to your initial post you need to respond to at least one other student's post, but you are encouraged to have a meaningful and constructive dialogue with others.

A link to further details about expectations for discussions online, and their grading, can be found within each discussion forum on Moodle.

Criteria for Assessment (major criteria are in bold.)

| | |
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| 1. Engagement with material | Comments show excellent understanding of the topic. Reasoning and connections are clearly articulated. |
| 2. Constructive engagement with others | Meaningful contribution to the online community is shown by both considering and responding to issues raised by others in a timely way, using thought provoking questions as appropriate. |
| 3. Structure and presentation | Clear, well-formed structure. Accurate spelling and grammar. Concise writing. |

2. Reflection 1: What's shaped your foundations?

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Length: | 1600 words |
| Percentage weighting of final grade: | 25% |
| Due date: | 11.55pm, Sunday, Week 5 |
| Learning outcomes: | 1, 3 |
| Learning hours: | 20 |

Instructions applying to all reflections:

This is the first of two "Reflection" assignments. Each of these tasks provides you with the opportunity to engage with the material we have been covering and to apply it to your own experience.

Given that they are reflections rather than essays, the emphasis is personal and applied. You don't need to do a lot of extra reading or research, although what you write should clearly demonstrate that you have kept up with the required readings and the course guide notes (see criterion a below). There are two extremes to avoid in these assignments: (i) writing in a very scholarly, impersonal style that tells the marker very little of your own personal experience and shows little self-awareness (see criterion b), and (ii) simply telling the story of your own experience ('testimony' style) without engaging in thoughtful reflection on this experience or intelligently applying the course content to your situation (see assessment criteria c and d).

If you refer to any of the readings in your reflection, please use footnotes and supply a bibliography, following the usual Laidlaw guidelines for written assignments.

Note: What you write in your reflections may cover quite personal matters. Be assured that the marker will keep whatever you write confidential. You may wish to alter names etc., so as to respect the privacy of others.

Instructions for the first reflection: 'What's shaped your foundations?'

In weeks 1 – 4 you have looked at issues that are foundational to your formation as a person in relationship to God, namely: (i) who God is for you, (ii) your sense of identity, (iii) the basis of your 'belonging', and (iv) spiritual disciplines which have helped to sustain and grow you as a Christian.

In this assignment you are asked to look back on your past experience and to reflect on the influences that have shaped you in these areas. How was your image of God shaped? What influenced how you saw/see yourself? Has your sense of 'belonging' been shaped more by a 'wells' or 'fences' ethos, and how has that come about? What spiritual disciplines have been most helpful (or unhelpful!) in your growth as a Christian?

Remember that you need to do more than simply tell the story here; you also need to write about how these past events and influences have affected your experience of the spiritual life. You may like to write about each area separately (about 400 words on each), or they may be quite interconnected so that you need to discuss them together. Either approach is fine. You should also give some indication of where you are now in relation to each of these areas – what significant challenges or breakthroughs have you experienced in each of these areas?

Criteria for Assessment (major criteria are in bold.)

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| Clear understanding of course topics and readings | Use of information gained from course materials is apparent in analysis of own story. |
| Healthy self-awareness in relation to spiritual development and practices | A frank discussion of your own spiritual development and practices using the terminology learned in the course. Reference is made to your image of God, your influences, your sense of belonging, and your spiritual practices. |
| Appropriate personal application | Challenges / breakthroughs explained with reference to materials. |
| Structure and presentation | Clear grammar and language use, overall coherence. |

3. Reflection 2: Finding your fit

Length: 1200 words
 Percentage weighting of final grade: 20%
 Due date: 11.55pm, Sunday, Week 10
 Learning outcomes: 1, 2
 Learning hours: 20

This reflection assignment is based on Chapters 1 – 3 of the text book. Specifically, you are required to complete the exercises outlined on pages 44 – 53. Only submit for grading your responses to steps II and III on page 45 (see point iv. below for details), plus a 200 word reflection (see point v. below for details).

Please note the following points before you start:

- i. Before starting on the exercises, please read through Chapters 1 and 2, and the beginning of Chapter 3, so that you understand the purpose of what you are asked to do.
- ii. Although the main heading is "Your Autobiography", this is not a repeat of the life story which you are asked to tell in the Discussion Forum of Lesson 9.
- iii. In Step I of the exercises (pages 44 and 45), you are asked to think about "the most satisfying events of your life" and "satisfying and enjoyable achievements". The things you come up with don't have to be huge world-changing achievements or

peak experiences. They can be anything you did that gave you a real sense of enjoyment and fulfilment, even if they may seem to others to be quite ordinary or small things.

- iv. It's hard to give exact guidance on how many words you should write on each area, other than "just write enough to clearly answer the question". Here is a very rough guide for what might be appropriate for each main section. You won't be penalised for writing a bit more or less than this, but aim to be concise – someone has to mark all this!

STEP I This step involves thinking and making your own notes - not for handing in.

STEP II **Here is where your written assignment that you hand in starts.** For the 7 achievements you describe (using headings 1 – 4 for each one) you might write about 500 words in total.

STEP III Please note that what you write here applies to the 7 achievements taken as a whole, not to each one separately. For each of the 5 headings (1. Abilities, 2. Subject Matter etc.) make some notes (not for handing in), and then provide 5 summaries, as indicated under "Your Fingerprint" (pages 52 and 53). Each of the five summaries should be around 100 words.

- v. Finish your assignment by writing a reflection of around 200 words about what this exercise has shown you or confirmed to you about yourself.

Criteria for Assessment (major criteria are in bold.)

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| 1. Clear understanding of reading and exercises | Seven achievements identified, with a description of what you did for each one. You have considered the parts that made up that achievement. From these, you have determined 'your fingerprint'. All parts of the exercises have been carried out carefully. |
| 2. Healthy self-awareness in relation to past experiences | Openness to what has happened in your past, as shown by a mix of experience types, and what is involved in them, glory and pain. A thoughtful reflection is given, consistent with your story and character. |
| 3. Structure and presentation | Clear grammar and language use, overall coherence. |

4. Essay

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| Length: | 2000 words |
| Percentage weighting of final grade: | 35% |
| Due date: | 11.55 pm Sunday, Week 12 |
| Learning outcomes: | 3 |
| Learning hours: | 30 |

Choose one of the following three topics and write a 2000 word essay.

Whereas the reflection assignments are primarily your personal response to aspects of the course, this essay is expected to be a more objective discussion on your chosen topic, following normal academic essay guidelines. Please note the grading criteria carefully.

Having said that, you are to include a brief section of personal application at the end of the essay of around 250 words in length (this is counted in the 2000 word limit). In this application section you should comment on your own experience of the issues you have written about.

Starting bibliographies for each topic are given at the end of this document.

Topic 1

Perhaps it seems terribly obvious to say that my images of God and my willingness to grow in those images will determine how I pray and how I will deal with what happens after I pray. Based on my personal experience and my years of priestly ministry, I am convinced that the difficulties many people face in prayer cannot be resolved until they face the images of God on which their prayers are based. Those images have very radical implications for how the praying person sees himself or herself and others.

(Pat McCloskey, *Naming Your God: The Search for Mature Images*, 103-104)

In the light of these claims, discuss the ways in which a person's images of God may impact on their personal and spiritual life as a whole, and suggest ways in which they may move toward greater maturity in this area.

Topic 2

I interviewed ordinary people about prayer. Typically, the results went like this. Is Prayer important to you? Oh, yes. How often do you pray? Every day. Approximately how long? Five minutes – well, maybe seven. Do you find prayer satisfying? Not really. Do you sense the presence of God when you pray? Occasionally, not often. Many of those I talked to experienced prayer more as a burden than as a pleasure. They regarded it as important, even paramount, and felt guilty about their failure, blaming themselves.

(Philip Yancey, *Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference?* 6)

Explore possible reasons as to why so many people find prayer to be unsatisfying and a source of guilt and failure. What perspectives on prayer might help such people find a more positive experience of prayer?

Topic 3

Most Christians approach decision making with certain assumptions concerning the will of God and with particular ideas about how to discern God's will. Some believe that God has a detailed, perfect plan for their lives, which they must discover and obey if their lives are to be blessed by God. Others believe that God has revealed all the guidance we need in the Bible, and that beyond this God gives us freedom to choose our path in life.

Explain what implications these contrasting views might have for the Christian life, and put the case for what you regard as the most helpful approach to decision making and the will of God. (It may be one of the approaches outlined above, or it may be something different).

Criteria for Assessment (major criteria are in bold.)

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| 1. Reading and research | Breadth of reading as evidenced in the essay: resources are selected appropriately to cover the topic, and there is clear understanding of the material. |
| 2. Skills of analysis and synthesis | The most important aspects of a topic are discussed logically. Your own ideas and those from readings support your argument. You answer the question clearly. |
| 3. Overall depth of treatment | A range of viewpoints is considered. You give evidence to support your central argument. You identify and discuss contrary viewpoints and weak aspects in your arguments, and give explanations and evidence for your view. |

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| 4. Originality and creativity of approach | You approach the topic showing your own convictions, emphases, and awareness of context. |
| 5. Application | Demonstration of appropriate self-awareness in the application. Application is consistent with issues discussed in essay. |
| 6. Structure and presentation | Clear grammar and language use, overall coherence, correct referencing. |

TEXTBOOK

The textbook for this course is:

Mackenzie, Alistair, Wayne Kirkland and Annette Dunham. *SoulPurpose: Making a Difference in Life and Work*. Christchurch: NavPress, 2004.

Please note that this book can be purchased from Laidlaw College for \$20.00 plus \$5.00 postage. Please contact distance learning on distancelearning@laidlaw.ac.nz for further information.

Additional required and recommended readings are supplied on Moodle.

NOTES

Please note:

- All assignments need to be presented according to the Laidlaw College "Guidelines for Written Assignments".
- Assignments are to be submitted to Moodle no later than 11.55pm on the due date, unless otherwise noted.
- Assignments must comply with the standards set out for assessment in Laidlaw College's "General Information and Regulations".
- Please see these regulations for guidance on extension requests, submission of late work, and plagiarism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS THAT FOCUS ON SPIRITUAL FORMATION:

Benner, David. *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2010.

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. 2nd ed; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989.

_____. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992.

_____. *Streams of Living Water*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998.

Gangel, Kenneth O. and James C. Wilhoit. *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

Holmes, Peter R. and Susan B. Williams. *Becoming More like Christ: A Contemporary Biblical Journey*. Carlisle: Authentic, 2007.

Nouwen, Henri. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010.

Pritchard, Sheila. *The Lost Art of Contemplation: Deepening Your Prayer Life*. Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2003.

Smith, James B. and Linda Graybeal. *A Spiritual Formation Workbook: Small-Group Resources for Nurturing Christian Growth*. 2nd ed; New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

Wilhoit, Jim. *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ Through Community*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

_____. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002.

BOOKS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY:

Kruger, C. Baxter. *The Great Dance: The Christian Vision Revisited*. Jackson, MI: Perichoresis Press, 2000.

McGrath, Alister. *Christian Spirituality*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

Peterson, Eugene. *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005.

Smith, Karen E. *Christian Spirituality*. London: SCM, 2007.

Webber, Robert E. *The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.

See also the 'Spirituality' series of *Grove Books*, which has many excellent brief booklets dealing with historical and contemporary aspects of Christian spirituality.

THE PRACTICE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:

Barry, William A. *God and You: Prayer as a Personal Relationship*. New York: Paulist Press, 1987.

Calhoun, Adele A. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2005.

Demarest, Bruce. *Satisfy Your Soul*. Colorado: Navigator, 1999.

Dyer, Phil. *Encountering the Still Point*. Oxford, NZ: Ricoh, 2000.

Huggett, Joyce. *Listening to God*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986.

_____. *Learning the Language of Prayer*. Sutherland, NSW: Albatross, 1996.

_____. *Open to God*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989.

- _____. *The Smile of Love*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990.
- Jamieson, Alan. *Called Again: In and Beyond the Deserts of Faith*. Philip Garside Publishing, 2004.
- MacDonald, Gordon. *Ordering Your Private World*. Nashville: Oliver-Nelson, 1985.
- _____. *Restoring Your Spiritual Passion*. Nashville: Oliver-Nelson, 1986.
- Nouwen, Henri J. *The Way of the Heart*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981.
- _____. *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993.
- _____. *The Return of The Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*. New York: Image Books, 1993.
- Ortberg, John. *God is Closer than You Think*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.
- _____. *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Tacey, David J. *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality*. Sydney: HarperCollins, 2003.
- Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1983.
- _____. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998.
- _____. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.
- Yaconelli, Michael. *Dangerous Wonder*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1998.
- _____. *Messy Spirituality: God's Annoying Love for Imperfect People*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.
- Yancey, Philip. *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- _____. *Reaching for the Invisible God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- _____. *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR ESSAY TOPICS:

These bibliographies are not intended to be definitive. You may find some of the books more helpful than others, and hopefully you will find other books or articles not mentioned there that are helpful also. It is suggested that you also search the electronic databases available through the library website for any relevant articles.

Note: A few of the items shown on the suggested bibliographies can be found on Moodle, in the "Additional course resources" folder. These are not sufficient, but will help complement your use of library resources.

Topic 1

Barry, William A. *God and You: Prayer as Personal Relationship*. New York: Paulist, 1987, 27-39.

Huggett, Joyce. *The Smile of Love*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, 136-157.

Hughes, Gerald W. *God of Surprises*. London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1985, 26-39.

McCloskey, Pat. *Naming Your God: The Search for Mature Images*. Notre Dame, IND: Ave Maria Press, 1991, chapters 4-5.

McFarland, Ian A. *The Divine Image: Envisioning the Invisible God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

Ryan, Dale and Juanita Ryan. *Recovery From Distorted Images of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990.

Thomas, Carolyn. *Will the Real God Please Stand Up: Healing Our Dysfunctional Images of God*. New York: Paulist, 1991.

Yancey, Philip. *Reaching for the Invisible God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000, 135-146.

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Topic 2

Barry, William A. *God and You: Prayer as Personal Relationship*. New York: Paulist, 1987.

Chase, Steven. *The Tree of Life: Models of Christian Prayer*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Foster, Richard. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992.

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Hybels, Bill. *Too Busy Not to Pray: Slowing Down to be with God*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1989.

Pritchard, Sheila Mary. *The Lost Art of Meditation: Deepening Your Prayer Life*. Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2003.

Yancey, Philip. *Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference?* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006.

Topic 3

Adam, Peter. *Guidance*. Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1988.

Friesen, Garry and J. Robin Maxson, *Decision Making and the Will of God: 12 Session Study Guide*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2004.

Lonsdale, David. *Listening to the Music of the Spirit: The Art of Discernment*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1992, 49-66.

Mackenzie, Alistair, Wayne Kirkland and Annette Dunham. *SoulPurpose: Making a Difference in Life and Work*. Christchurch: NavPress, 2004, chapter 2.

Ramesh, Richard. *Soul Vision: Ensuring Your Life's Future Impact*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004.

Runcorn, David. *Choice, Desire and the Will of God*. London: SPCK, 2003.

Smith, Gordon T. *Listening to God in Times of Choice: The Art of Discerning God's Will*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.

Waltke, Bruce K. *Knowing the Will of God: For the Decisions of Life*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998.