



**Online Course Syllabus**  
**THS 504 L1**  
**Spiritual Foundations**  
**Summer 2021 5/24 to 7/16**

**Contact Information**

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Scott Shiffer

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**Instructor Office Hours:** 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM M-F

**Course Description and Prerequisites**

An introduction to the basic convictions and disciplines of the life of the Christian with particular relevance to those who serve in positions of leadership among believers.

**Course Objectives**

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Grow spiritually through meditation on Jesus' teachings on discipleship in Matthew 5-7.
- Apply other key spiritual disciplines in the Christian's life and witness, affecting further spiritual growth.
- Be able to explain the history of Christian Spirituality, recalling specific events, ideas, and individuals.
- Explore and analyze discipleship issues and models for ministry to believers in Christ who are committed to spiritual growth.
- Be able to explain and apply spiritual practices to roles of leadership and to the Christian family.

**Required Textbooks**

- A Bible (Preferred NASB, ESV, or NIV)
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959. ISBN# 0-684-81500-11
- Scorgie, Glen G. ed. *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. ISBN# 978-0-310-29066-7
- Shiffer, Scott. *Growing in the Faith: A New Believers Guide to Developing a Relationship with God*. 2014.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Spiritual Life Workbook	35%
Spiritual Movie Analysis	5%
Research Project	10%.
Bible Study	5%
Letter to God	5%
Exam	10%
Reading	5%
Class Discussion/Participation	25%
Total	100%.

### Course Requirements in Detail:

#### **Spiritual Life Workbook:**

Each week, the student will complete the assignments in the Spiritual Life Workbook. The assignments must be typed and submitted each week by the date indicated on the Course Schedule. Late assignments will be accepted, but there will be a 5-point penalty for each day it is past due. Reflections submitted over one week late will not be accepted. There are a total of 6 workbook assignments.

#### **Spiritual Movie Analysis:**

Students will write one (1) movie analysis this semester. In the review the student will discuss the basic plot and themes, discuss the theological/spiritual issues that are raised, evaluate the theological/spiritual conclusions of the film, and critique the film as a work of art. The student should focus on the overall message of the film and how it is presented by the director and portrayed by the actors. Explain what the film has taught you about the spiritual life and how you will use that lesson to draw closer to the Lord. The review will be approximately two (2) pages, double spaced. A list of films will be provided in Session 1.

#### **Letter to God:**

Write a Letter to God, discussing what the student would like to see happen in his or her life in this class.

#### **Research Paper:**

Each student will write one Research Paper on a specific aspect of the spiritual life. Potential topics include: Prayer, Fasting, Meditation, Baptism, The Lord's Supper, Church Membership, Scripture Reading, the use of Spiritual Gifts, or other topics approved by the instructor. The paper will be 10-12 pages in length and written in Times New Roman font (12 Pt.), and it will be double-spaced. Page margins will be one-inch all the way around. The paper will need to include a Title Page and a Bibliography in addition to the page limit. The topic must be approved by the professor prior to the student beginning the research.

Your thoughts should be supported by evidence in the paper. The paper should be typed with 1 inch margins on each side of the page.

### Research Paper Grading Rubric:

Points	W (1) = Weak	D (3) = Developing	A (4) = Acceptable	E (5) = Exemplary
<b>Ideas/Thesis</b> (Does the Paper have a clear thesis statement? Does the paper do what it claims to do?)	No main topic to theme, no clear purpose, ideas are incoherent	Limited theme, confused purpose, ideas are illogical and do not progress	Clear theme, consistent purpose, ideas are clear and progress	Engaging and confident theme, clear and enriching purpose  Reasoned progression of sophisticated ideas
<b>Parts of a Paper</b> (Does the paper have a clear introduction and conclusion? Are footnotes cited properly? Is there an appropriate cover page? Is the Bibliography correct? )	Few elements of formatting are correct, some are missing	Elements are present, but not clear, errors in formatting	Elements are present with few errors in formatting	Elements are present, clear, and free of errors
<b>Organization</b> (Is the paper well organized? Does it stay on Task? Are the writer's thoughts clear and easy to follow?)	Opening not present, no transitional phases, no paragraph breaks, no closing	Opening does not identify main idea, attempted inappropriate transitions, paragraphs unrelated or illogical, closing does not address the main ideas	Opening identifies main ideas, transitions sometimes missing, paragraphs related with correct breaks, closing addresses main ideas	Opening draws reader into concern for main idea, ideas flow together, fascinating transitions, paragraphs purposeful and focused, fascinating closing synthesizing main ideas
<b>Evaluation/ Evidence/ Claims</b> (Are the claims made by the writer supported with good academic resources? Does the writer present enough evidence to prove his or her claims?)	No appropriate information presented, no attempt to evaluate information	Information presented with inaccuracies, attempts judgment based on opinion	Accurate and appropriate information, compare and contrast strengths and weaknesses	Detailed accurate and compelling, several perspectives with synthesis
<b>Argumentation/ Analysis</b> (Does the writer deal effectively with the	No attempt to argue position	Limited and weak attempt to argue position	Focused and clear argument	Engaging and compelling arguments

counterarguments? Does the writer analyze the evidence of the counterarguments as well as the arguments that support the thesis?)				
<b>Application</b> (How does the research apply to the topic at hand? How does the topic apply to the church or the life of the believer?)	No attempt to apply information	Limited ineffectual attempt at application	Common and expected application	Unexpected, insightful application
<b>Grammar</b> (Are there few grammatical mistakes? Are there any spelling mistakes?)	Frequent mechanical and grammatical errors	Occasional mechanical and grammatical errors	Few mechanical and grammatical errors	Very few mechanical and grammatical errors
<b>Voice</b> (How are you conveying your point?, Is the writing academic or conversational?)	Consistently inappropriate for genre, many variations in writer's attitude	Occasionally inappropriate for genre, a few variations in writer's attitude	Voice is consistently appropriate for genre, very rare variations in writer's attitude	Perfectly and creatively tailored, perfectly tailored attitude
<b>Vocabulary</b> (Word Choice)	Careless, inappropriate, inaccurate, trite, vague, flat	Unvaried, unsure, common, redundant	Varied and appropriate, clear meaning	Purposeful, precise, effective and engaging, interesting and brilliance in meaning
<b>Fluency/Sentence Structure</b> (Are the sentences complete as opposed to fragmented? Is the format of the paper consistent? Is there a title page, a table of contents, and a bibliography? Is the paper typed in Times New Roman, Size 12 font, with 1 inch margins on the sides and 1 inch margins on the top and bottom? Are the pages numbered?)	Frequent run-ons and fragments, no variety, many misplaced and dangling modifiers	Some run-ons and fragments, little variety, some lack of agreement, some misplaced and dangling modifiers	Simple compound sentences, no run-ons or fragments, few misplaced and dangling modifiers	Varied and complex sentences, fluent transitions, no misplaced and dangling modifiers

<b>Total Points:</b>				
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### **Bible Study:**

Each student will create a Bible Study from the research paper that could be presented to teach a Sunday School class, discipleship group, or other small-group study. The purpose of this paper is to link the practice of good biblical scholarship with the praxis of Christian ministry. Christian academic pursuit should also be done for the good of the community. Present your academic findings in such a way that they can be accurately shared in a non-academic setting. The length of this study should be between 3 and 5 pages in length.

### **Final Exam:**

For the exam, questions will be asked from the readings in the text as well as from content in the online lectures. Students will have one week to complete the exam, no late exams will be accepted.

### **Reading:**

Students will be asked on the Final Exam to share what percentage of the required reading was completed from the textbooks and the online sessions. They will select the answer most closely associated with the amount of reading completed.

### **Class Participation/Class Discussion:**

In order to receive full credit for class participation every week, each student must respond to the professor's Class Discussion question for that week by Wednesday at 11:55 P.M. of that week. Next, the student must respond to at least two other students' posts by Friday at 11:55 P.M. of that same week. Finally, the student must answer any questions that are asked of him/her by other students by Sunday at 11:55 P.M. in your time zone at the end of that week. Please be courteous to other classmates by not waiting until the last minute each week to post on the Discussion Board. There are a total of 6 required class discussions.

### **Additional Discussion Board Guidelines (Maria Puzziferro):**

An acceptable post to the Discussion Board would contain accurate, original, and relevant comments. The comments should stimulate additional thought about the issue being discussed. A simple "I agree" or "I disagree" will not be counted as an adequate comment.

- Your postings should reflect a) facts, b) logical reasoning, c) be related to the topic, d) be written well (no spelling errors, etc.), and e) be on time. Try to avoid sharing your personal opinions if you cannot back them up with facts and/or statistics.
- You may certainly express your views and beliefs in the context of the discussion topic, but DO NOT use your views to attack others. Simply use your best judgment and treat others with respect. This will be important to bear in mind as we discuss very sensitive and controversial issues.
- Read the assigned chapters before you post your response to the question so that you can tie in the main ideas and facts in the readings to your postings.
- You will be evaluated on the quality and thoughtfulness of how you present your point of view. A quality message is well thought out, clearly presented, and well-formulated.

- When posting, be sure to present your thoughts and point of view in an unbiased way. You can and should cite evidence for your assertions where appropriate. Use your textbook, and other selected web resources as educational aids.
- Your postings should be clear, yet concise. Please do not feel as though you have to write a lot. Think quality over quantity.
- Please try to keep messages to one paragraph (150-200 words), if possible.
- Once you have posted, check back frequently to see if anybody has responded to you.

## Course/Classroom Policies and Information

### Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to participate weekly during the weeks appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. Such participation may include the following: completing quizzes or exams; emailing faculty or class members as part of an assignment; discussion board posting or response; turning in an assignment; or other communication reflecting ongoing learning in the course. When unavoidable situations result in non-participation, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Instructors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual instructors may determine how participation affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether participation affects course grades.

### Grading Scale

(Assigning grade definitions [i.e., above average, average, below average] is optional. Please delete the last column below if not assigning definitions. Additionally, delete these instructions when completing syllabus.)

			Grade Definitions (optional)
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	

### Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the "I" will become an "F."

## **Academic Honesty**

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

## **Institutional Assessment**

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

## **Institutional Email Policy**

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

## **Identity Verification**

Students enrolled in Distance Education courses are required to present a photo ID to verify their participation in each course at the beginning of the term. Confirmation will occur through live-streamed meetings, video assignments, scheduled video conference calls, and/or another online video medium the instructor assigns.



## Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

## Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

## Resources and Support

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at [studenttechsupport@criswell.edu](mailto:studenttechsupport@criswell.edu).

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or [studentservices@criswell.edu](mailto:studentservices@criswell.edu). Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students, at [deanofstudents@criswell.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@criswell.edu).

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at [library@criswell.edu](mailto:library@criswell.edu). Offsite login information is available in Canvas in the “Criswell Student Training Course” under “Library Information.”

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203, or schedule an appointment by emailing [tutoringcenter@criswell.edu](mailto:tutoringcenter@criswell.edu) or by calling 214.818.1373.

## Distance Education

Students participating in courses through Distance Education, with or without live interaction, must complete the academic requirements for those courses with the integrity and commitment necessary to participate in and benefit from all of the exercises provided by the instructor for learning the subject matter of the course. Therefore, credit for Distance Education courses is the same as credit for courses taken on campus.

## Course Outline/Calendar

### Course Schedule

Meeting	Content	Assignments	Due Dates
5/24	Course Introduction  Foundations of Spirituality  Introduction to a Christian Worldview  Spiritual Transformation	Read: Dictionary: Chapters 1-4  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 1-4  The Spiritual Life Workbook: Week 1-2  <b>Letter to God</b>	5/30
5/31	Foundations of a Christian Worldview and Study Skills  Wounds and Time Management	Read: Dictionary: Chapters 5-11  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 5-8  The Spiritual Life Workbook: Week 3-4	6/6
6/7	Dualism and Personal Purity  Christ and Culture and the History of Christian Spirituality	Read: Dictionary: Chapters 12-15  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 9-12  The Spiritual Life Workbook: Week 5-6  <b>Movie Analysis</b>	6/13
6/14	Your Mind Matters and the History of Christian Spirituality  Calling and Purpose and Conflict Management	Read: Dictionary: Chapters 16-19  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 13-16	6/20

		The Spiritual Life Workbook: Week 7-8	
6/21	Vocation  Happiness and Desire	Read: Dictionary: Chapters 20-24  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 17-20  The Spiritual Life Workbook: Week 9-10  <b>Research Project</b>	6/27
6/28	Ministry, Discipleship, and Spiritual Gifts  Christian College	Read: Dictionary: Chapters 25-29  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 21-24  The Spiritual Life Workbook: Week 11-12  <b>Bible Study</b>	7/5
7/5	Engaging the Arts  The worldview Driven Church	Read: Dictionary: Chapters 30-34  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 25-28  <b>Written Testimony</b>	7/11
7/12	The Family  Final Exam	<b>Final Exam</b>  Read Bonhoeffer: Chapters 29-32	7/16

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<sup>1</sup>Compiled from the references used in the resources for the textbook, *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*.

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## **A BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR A THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY**

**by Dr. James W. Bryant**

**Criswell College**

**Dallas, Texas**

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