

**Religious Studies 220**  
**Scripture and the Spiritual Journey**

Fall 1998  
Tu Th 9:40-11:10 (M Hour)  
Dr. Carey Walsh

Office 400 Clough  
Office Hour C

Phone: 843-3578  
email walsh@rhodes

There are today many popular writings about spirituality that rely on some sort of biblical basis. Are they meeting a new spiritual need or are they loosely translating key themes of the Bible for today? How do we critically assess in spiritual reading what can be considered biblical and what is more properly New Age?

This course explores the spiritual richness of the Bible through a comparative study with modern spiritual writings of certain key topics. The intent is to discover how certain key issues of a spiritual journey persist from biblical to modern times. These issues include: the question of human existence, prayer, redemption, grace, Imago Dei, incarnation, kingdom of heaven, and the Imitation of Christ. The course is an exploration of what these terms could mean in human experience, rather than a study of official doctrine. Therefore, the student will be expected to draw on three areas of spiritual meaning: (1) the Bible; (2) the modern spiritual writings; and (3) life experience through participation in service learning and a series of films. This is an upper level Religious Studies course, so a willingness to work hard and keep up with class discussions is presumed. A prerequisite of two Bible classes is necessary and any student without that background should consult the professor.

### **Course Requirements**

- 1. Class participation (20%)** It will be assessed on the basis of
  - a) preparation for each class
  - b) relevance of comments and
  - c) engagement with the overall discussion

Engagement means that you are expected both to interact meaningfully and to respect your colleagues. Because the course draws on experience, passivity (i.e., being unprepared, “spacing out,” missing classes) is not sufficient to pass.

- 2. Examinations (60%).** There will be two take-home essay tests, equally weighted (30% each) to give you the best chance of success.

- 3. Journal (20%).** A reflective journal on topics assigned throughout the term. They are not to be paper quality, but should demonstrate considerable, thoughtful reflection. The journal entries will be assessed by the professor. A check (✓) or check plus (✓+) on an

entry indicates passing. A check minus (-) is a failing mark and the entry would have to be redone.

**4. Film Series.** A series of four films will be shown throughout the term on Tuesday nights. The student is expected to view them critically for their spiritual issues and to incorporate them into discussion of the reading material, biblical and contemporary, on those issues.

**5. Service Learning Component.** 6 hours of service learning at two downtown sites is required for the course.

Both the film series and the service learning provide the experiential component to the course and to the student's journal. This is designed for your protection, so that we all have the same common experience to draw on, and no one is at an unfair advantage because their dad's a minister or they've seen more triumph or tragedy than you.

**Professor Pledge:** I will not grade your personal spirituality at any point in the term, only your reflection on spiritual issues from materials in the course.

### Grade Breakdown

A (93-100) A- (90-92) B+ (87-89) B (84-86) B- (80-83) C+ (77-79) C (74-76) C- (70-73) D+(need we go here?) (67-69) D (64-66) D- (60-63) F (59 and below)

### Required Texts

A Bible. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* is preferred, but not necessary.

Buechner, Frederick. *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Lucado, Max. *And The Angels Were Silent*. Sisters, Or: Multnomah, 1992.

Peck, M.Scott. *The Road Less Travelled*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.

Teresa, Mother. *No Greater Love*. Novato, CA: New World Library, 1989.

Walsch, Neale Donald. *Conversations with God. Book 1*. New York: Putnam's Sons, 1996.

**August**

**Tuesday**

**Thursday**

**25**

Buechner "Faith" 29-31

**September**

**1**

**Why have Religion?**

Peck 185-225;

Buech: "Agnostic," "Atheist"

**3**

**Human Existence**

Peck 15-46

Buech "Escapism,"

"Humankind," "Religion,"

"Religious Books" "Life"

Ecclesiastes 1-12

**8**

**Truth**

Peck 51-72  
Genesis 15-19, 22  
Buech "Israel"

**10**

**Tough Love**

Peck 81-131  
Buech "Love"  
Num 11; Deut 34;  
Matt 26:30-56

**15**

**Tough Love**

Peck 131-169  
Song of Solomon 1-8  
Psalm 16

**17**

**Grace**

Peck 235-263  
Buech "Angels," "Grace,"  
"Miracle," "Myth"  
Psalm 8

**22**

**Sin**

Peck 263-288  
Buech "Evil," "Sin"  
Genesis 2-3

**24**

**Film Discussion:  
What is Holy?**

Lev 19 Hosea 6  
Matt 6-7

**\*\*FILM:** The Apostle

**29**

**Revelation**

Peck 289-311  
Buech "Bible,"  
"Doubt," "Revelation"

**Oct 1**

**Images of God**

Buech "God"  
Exod 3-7, 11  
Isa 6, Luke 1

**October**

**6**

**Creator God**

Buech "Creation"  
Gen 1-2 Job 38-42  
Psalm 104

**8**

**Prayer**

Walsch 1-28  
Gen 19, 32  
Matt 7:7-11  
Buech "Prayer"

**\*\*Zoo assignment**

**13**

**Imago Dei**

Walsche 110- 147  
I Cor 12

**15**

**Imago Dei**

Walsch 148-158  
Gen 25:21-34; Gen 27  
II Sam 11-12

**\*\*Film:** Amadeus

**20**

**No Class  
Fall Recess**

**22**

**Law**

Walsch 70-87, 94-109

Buech "Law," "Life"  
Exod 20, Psalm 19

**27**

**Prophecy as Challenge**

Walsch 168-206

Buech "Prophet"

Life,"

Isaiah 1, 5

**29**

**Suffering**

Walsch 29-58

Buech "Hell," "Eternal"

Psalm 22

Job 1-3, 29-31

**November**

**3**

**Redemption**

Buech, "Faith," "Feet" "Job"

Gospel of Mark

**\*\*Film:** Dead Man Walking

**5**

**Incarnation**

Mother Teresa, ix-xiv, 20-35,

77-90; Buech "Incarnation,"

"Jesus," John 1

**10**

**Love Your Neighbor**

Mother Teresa 38-75, 91-105

Buech "Avarice," "Poverty"

Matt 1-2

Luke 8:26-39

**12**

**Kingdom of God**

Mother Teresa 108-182

Buech "Forgiveness,"

"Kingdom of God"

Matt 20

Luke 14-15

**17**

**Follow Christ**

Lucado 11-52

Buech "Immortality,"

"Messiah"

Matt 5-8

Luke 10-13

**19**

**Resurrection**

Lucado 53-138

Buech "Justification,"

"Righteousness"

"Salvation"

Rom 5-6, I Cor 15

**24**

**NO CLASS ALL WEEK!!**

**Thanksgiving Recess**

**26**

**December**

**1**

**Passion**

Lucado 139-193

Buech "Lord's Supper"

Matt 26-27

**\*\*Film:** Fearless

**3**

**Assurance of Things Hoped For**

Luke 24

Psalm 23

**8**

**Rabbouni**

**Reading Day**

**10**

**Final Exam**

**12**

John 20-21  
“Spirit,” “Mystery,”  
“Mysticism”

8:30-11 a.m