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CH 750 The Spirituality of Select Christian Women

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CH 750
THE SPIRITUALITY OF SELECT CHRISTIAN WOMEN

Summer Session 1 (May 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28, 2005)
ATS - Florida
Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
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PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION

This seminar is a collaborative examination of the theological, spiritual, and autobiographical writings of select women in Christian history that illustrate important dimensions of spirituality. Those women to be studied include the three Doctors of the Roman Catholic tradition, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, and Therese of Lisieux, and a collection of early British Methodist women. Particular attention will be given to the potential mentoring role of these women in the lives of contemporary Christians.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able:

1. To articulate preliminary understandings of the parameters and contours of women's spirituality in the Christian tradition;
2. To demonstrate an appreciation for the contributions of the women under study to the ongoing life of the Christian community;
3. To show sensitivity to the ways in which gender issues shape the spiritual life of women;
4. To demonstrate a mastery of salient features of women's spirituality that can function as guides for spiritual growth and professional development today; and
5. To translate the discoveries of the course into practical forms/actions that will shape or inform contemporary ministry and promote the place of women in the church.

SCHEDULE/OUTLINE

Tue, 5/31	Women's Spirituality	
	Background Reading for Today: Conn, ed., <i>Women's Spirituality</i>	425 pages
Tue, 6/7	Catherine of Siena	
	Background Reading for Today: Kirvan, ed., <i>Set Aside Every Fear</i>	200 pages
Tue, 6/14	Teresa of Avila	
	Background Reading for Today: Cohen, ed., <i>The Life of Teresa of Avila</i>	320 pages

Tue, 6/21	Select Methodist Women	
	Background Reading for Today:	
	Chilcote, <i>Early Methodist Spirituality</i>	300 pages
	Keith Schwanz, <i>Satisfied: Women Hymn Writers of the 19th-century Wesleyan/Holiness Movement</i>	40 pages
Tue, 6/28	Therese of Lisieux	
	Background Reading for Today:	
	Nelson, ed., <i>The Little Way of Saint Therese</i>	140 pages

RESOURCES

Required Texts

- Paul W. Chilcote, ed., *Early Methodist Spirituality: Selected Women's Writings* (Kingswood Books, 2005: ISBN)
- J. M. Cohen, ed., *The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila by Herself* (Penguin Books, 1988: ISBN 0140440739)
- Joann W. Conn, ed., *Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development* (Paulist Press, 2nd edition, 1996: ISBN 0809136562)
- John Kirvan, ed., *Set Aside Every Fear: Love and Trust in the Spirituality of Catherine of Siena* (Ave Maria Press, 1997: ISBN 0877936242)
- John Nelson, ed., *The Little Way of Saint Therese of Lisieux: Readings for Prayer and Meditation* (Liguori Pub., 1998: ISBN 0764801996)
- Keith Schwanz, *Satisfied: Women Hymn Writers of the 19th-century Wesleyan/Holiness Movement*

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. General Class Participation

Your lively and informed participation in all class activities is valuable for you and contributes to the edification of all. Active involvement in class will be taken into account in determining final grades, both in terms of presence and engagement. Background reading for each Friday session must be completed before the session in which it will be discussed. In order to be disciplined in the reading of the necessary materials for the class, you are required to submit a "reading journal" in which you indicate that you have read the five required texts for the course, noting the date and time of completion, and demonstrating that the respective readings have been completed before each session. The reading journal is due **on or before June 28**.

2. Weekly Assignments (80%)

You are required to write a **four page** reflection paper on each of the four texts assigned as background reading for the final four sessions of the course. Each paper is valued at 20% of your final grade and is due at the beginning of each Friday session. This written assignment consists in four mandatory parts, each one page in length:

Page One. Identify and discuss the central issue/discovery related to the spirituality of Christian women in your reading of the text. Compare and contrast this discovery with your own experience of God in Christ. How does the issue resonate with or challenge your own experience of life in the Spirit?

Page Two. Relate this issue/discovery to a particular biblical text. Interface text and discovery. Very briefly outline a sermon plan, Bible study, Sunday School class (etc.) in which you provide a “teaching moment” for a specific group of people related to the issue.

Page Three. Draft three pertinent questions for discussion related to these matters that can be used as “conversation starters” in the context of small group interaction. Discuss why these questions are important to you, why the reading elicits them, and how your engagement with them might shape your own spirituality and ministry.

Page Four. Design a praxis plan in which you develop a specific plan of action to help you “implement your learning” in a concrete way in your own life related to the reading and witness of each woman (or women for the early Methodist women session). Remember that you are going to do four of these, so be realistic about goals, time, energy, responsibilities. Your plan should be specific, have clear objectives, and entail a reasonable commitment of time and energy. Address the issue of what particular aspect of your spiritual life/journey this action will impact and why.

3. Seminar Projects/Presentations (20%)

Each student will also be required to prepare and lead **one half hour session** in the seminar. This leadership responsibility will be discussed on the first day of class and, if possible, a schedule established for the remainder of the course. Exactly how you use this time is at your own discretion. Video materials may be used, active learning methods may be employed, first person dramatizations are welcome. The session may be an experience of prayer, reflective time devoted to the spiritual life, or worship. You may want to consider creative arts as a part of the design. Interactive styles of teaching/learning are especially welcomed. You must prepare a **one page** summary handout related to the design of the learning/growing experience (something that classmates can keep and also use potentially in their own settings of ministry) and a **three page** narrative description of the purpose, learning objectives, methods, materials needed; a description of the connection with the woman under study and a bibliography for reference.