

Ministry Without Prayer?
Emmanuel College
Course Syllabus for Summer 2017 Rev. Dr. Anne Simmonds
Revised Jan 23, 2017

EMP 2206 HF Fridays, May 12, & 26, June 2, 16, 2017
10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Description: We all know we should pray! However, an intentional personal prayer life is difficult to maintain under the strain of student or church life. In addition, many in the pulpit and pew feel inadequate in the practice, and question the efficacy of prayer. This course offers an exploration of the “theory,” but mainly the “practice” of prayer as it relates to the life of clergy and their parishioners. Classes will include lectures; experiential learning; individual, group reflection, conversations and assigned readings. Course requirements: attendance and class participation 10%; Integrative paper on Prayer journal 30%; two short papers 60%; **Attendance at all four class days is mandatory for a passing grade.** Maximum 16 students

Required Texts:

Note, please read prior to the first class:

i Nouwen text

ii Part One of Rohr text.

iii article titled ‘A Life of Prayer’ by Michael O’Laughlin posted on blackboard

1. Nouwen, Henri, The Inner Voice of Love, Doubleday, 1996.
2. Rohr, Richard, The Naked Now, Learning to See as the Mystics See, Crossroad Publishing, New York, 2009
3. Lamott, Anne, Plan B, Further Thoughts on Faith, 2006.
4. **Either:** Spoto Donald. In Silence, Why We Pray, Viking Compass, 2004.
OR Bondi, Roberta C. To Pray and To Love, Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church, Fortress Press, 1991.

Resource text: on reserve in Emmanuel Library

Brown, Patricia D. Paths to Prayer; Finding Your own Way to the Presence of God, Jossey-Bass Press, 2003.

Course Objectives:

- To understand and experience how the practice of prayer is foundational to clergy life and ministry.
- To examine the literature regarding the practice of prayer as it is revealed through scripture, tradition and contemporary culture.

- To encourage intentional spiritual practices that allow participants to become comfortable conversing about the practice of prayer in one’s own life and encouraging it in others.
- Your individual learning goal?

Participation:

- Students **must** attend all four classes
- Prayer practice and journals between classes;
- Reflection and discussion in class, assigned readings.
- Conversations in class include “holy listening,” respect, and confidentiality of personal sharing.

Assignments (three written in total)

Summary of assignments and evaluation

		Due
5%	Class Participation and discussion on assigned readings – Bring a blank notebook to first class	Weekly
5%	Spiritual life line – introduced wk 1	May 26 th or June 2 nd
1. 30% -	Duvall meet Nouwen – Reflective Paper on “the Apostle” and Nouwen	May 26 th
2. 30% -	Lamott meets Spoto or Bondi – Reflective Paper on “Plan B” and one of these required texts	June 16 th
3. 30% final	Prayer practice & Journal paper	June 30 th
Please note:	Marks will be deducted for late assignments	Papers must be hard copies

Required Assignments (three in total)

#3. Final: Personal Journal, no more than 8 pages, (30% of final grade) due June 30th (Do not hand in at the final class, as it should include reflection on that day as well) *If you wish your paper returned, please hand it into the office with a self-addressed and stamped envelop.*

Participants will be expected to keep a personal “prayer” journal and required to observe a personal prayer practice for the duration of the course.

The final essay, **which is to be written and submitted in an essay format**, (with proper footnotes) will **not** be this journal or record of your prayer practice, but **a reflection on it in light of the class readings and experiences.**

Here are details of the process:

a. Have a specific blank notebook, which you bring to class. Any class exercises requiring reflection can be recorded during class. Record your responses to the readings in your journal. **After each class**, take time to record your reactions

and further responses to the readings, classroom discussions and presentations. Explore how your learning in the course is helping you build a prayer practice in your own life in preparation for your ministry.

b. Use this same journal (or another if you wish) as part of your daily spiritual/prayer practice. Record thoughts, feelings, written prayers, anything you wish. ***All of this writing is confidential and only for yourself. It is important that you be honest with yourself (and the Divine) in this process.***

c. **Toward the end of the course** review and organize your journal/s by themes or categories. Please note that I am interested in your considered reflections, in light of the required and additional readings, **not** in a reporting of your original weekly responses and reactions, although some of these may be useful in demonstrating a point. I am interested in how this process has made a difference in your life, where you have felt challenged, and if and how it has helped you integrate spiritual practices and theoretical understanding into your life and ministry.

Some Guiding questions for readings of texts, additional handouts, viewing audio-visuals in class: Attending to these questions will facilitate your thinking/feeling responses and our class conversation.

- a) What was the author attempting to convey in this reading/book? What were the key points? What did you learn or discover?
- b) What was your reaction? Were there any surprises? Anything challenging? What touched your heart?
- c) What insights did you have?
- d) What might be the implication for your life/ministry?

#1 - First Assignment:

Duvall meets Nouwen – **Reflective Paper** on “The Apostle” and the life and writings of Henri Nouwen. (not to exceed 8 pages)

This Paper is an opportunity to put the life of Sonny from the movie “the Apostle” (will be viewed in first class with guiding questions) in **critical dialogue** with the writings and life of Henri Nouwen and Richard Rohr. This may be done using the following **only** as a guide for elements which need to be addressed:

- a) Nouwen’s, Duvall’s and Rohr’s themes in relation to prayer in the life of clergy
- b) The struggle that both Nouwen and Sonny experience in ministry and prayer; how these are supported by or independent of their theological stance.
- c) **your observations and critical reflection** about these men’s lives; their respective ministries; and the “use” of prayer;
- d) implications for your life and ministry.

Please note: **DO not retell the stories in any detail.** Simply refer to a scene.

#2 – Second Assignment

Lamont meets Spoto or Bondi – **Reflective Paper in essay format** on “Plan B” and the writings of Roberta Bondi **OR** Donald Spoto. (not to exceed 8 pages)

This Paper is an opportunity to put the life of Anne Lamott from the book “Plan B, Further thoughts on Faith” in *critical dialogue* with the writings of Roberta Bondi **OR** Donald Spoto. This may be done using the following *only as a guide* to elements that need to be addressed: a) Bondi or Spoto’s themes in relation to prayer. b) the struggle that Lamott, a not so ordinary seeker in the pew, experiences in relation to a life of faith and prayer. c) using your chosen text as guide, how might you as clergy offer support and teaching to “Lamott” and others in your “congregation.” d) what are the implications for your life and ministry.

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