

**College of Arts and Sciences  
Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministries  
Spirituality 224 Prayer and Prayer Methods  
Fall 2025**

*Instructor: Sarah Bonini*  
*Course Meeting: Thursdays, 6 - 9 p.m.*  
*Email: [sbonini@scu.edu](mailto:sbonini@scu.edu),*  
*Office Hours: By Appointment*

**Course Description:** This course will consider various forms of prayer and spiritual practice with a focus on both personal and ministerial growth. We will explore the relationship between personality and spiritual growth, ways of discernment, approaches to prayer and other spiritual practices that support our growth. Students will also explore numerous ways to incorporate prayer practices into practical ministerial areas such as retreats, both online and in person, and developing other faith sharing opportunities that will be useful for students' areas of ministry.

**Learning Outcomes:** GPPM has four learning outcomes, one or more of which are linked with every course in the Program. For Prayer and Prayer Methods, we pay special Attention to Goals 1 and 2 (Theological Proficiency and Pastoral Proficiency).

**Required Texts and Course Materials**

- 1) Bieber, Nancy L., *Decision Making and Spiritual Discernment*
- 2) Thibodeaux, SJ, Mark *Armchair Mystic: How Contemplative Prayer Can Lead You Closer to God*
- 3) Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (newly revised edition, 2014)
- 4) [Journal](#) of your choice for class and home prayer work.

**Recommended Course Materials**

- 1) Burrows, OCD, Ruth OCD *Essence of Prayer*
- 2) Eldredge, Becky *Busy Lives & Restless Souls*

- 3) Martin, SJ, James *Learning to Pray*
- 4) Silf, Margaret *Inner Compass*

**Course Requirements/Assignments:** We accomplish the learning objectives above through various activities in the course. The most important thing is **student participation**. That requires presence. We will meet on Thursdays from 6-9 p.m. beginning September 25. There will be no class on November 27 (Thanksgiving). Our final class will be on Thursday, Dec. 11. Each class session is important, and students are expected to attend each class.

**Flow of Class and Prayer work:** Since one of the goals of this course is to learn practical ways to incorporate prayer practices into ministerial experiences, classes will be run retreat style. Prayer practices will be experienced as well as learned through readings, journaling and small group and partner discussions which will be a part of every class meeting. These will be presented by the instructor (me) and students (you!). In addition to readings during the week, new prayer practices experienced and learned in class as well as journaling which will be a part of your daily prayer time during the week away from class. You should expect about 20 minutes of prayer work each day to be a part of the class. Although you will not be graded on this, fully entering into this practice will enhance not only your own spirituality, but it will allow you to become more comfortable with these prayer practices so you can share them with others.

**Apportionment of credit:**

Assignment		Assessment Value
1	Attendance and class participation	25%
2	Three mini projects or reflection papers Due dates: <b>Oct. 5, Oct. 26, Nov. 9.</b>	30%
3	Prayer Presentation	10%

4	Final Project	35%
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### **1. Class Attendance and participation: (25%)**

Being present in class, being on time to class, and participating in class are vital to your learning and to the learning of others. For that reason, please make arrangements to attend and be on time for all classes as scheduled for the quarter. Extenuating circumstances may result in the need for a class absence or tardiness. If there is an emergency that precludes you from attending class, please notify me by email or phone BEFORE class. If there is an emergency and it is not possible to contact me prior to class, you are responsible for contacting me within 24 hours by email or phone to let me know why you were absent from class. Please be sure to review all course materials in the Module on Camino for the missed class date.

Excessive tardiness may also result in a grade penalty, and it may affect class participation as well.

**Three Mini Projects or Reflection Papers (30%): Due Dates: Oct. 5, Oct. 26, Nov. 9.** (midnight) These will be submitted on Camino in the Discussion Post section. Upload your paper, PowerPoint, video etc. **You must respond to at least TWO posted projects of other students by the time class that week.**

1. Mini Project - create a guided reflection using one of the prayer practices discussed in class - this can be written, presented as a PowerPoint or other creative medium. This can also be incorporated more fully into your class presentation or final project. **At least ONE of your submissions must be a mini project.**
2. Reflection Paper - 3-4 pages; double spaced, 12-point font. The purpose of these reflections is to articulate and integrate insights and practices from your reading and class discussion. Questions for your consideration will be posed in class sessions. Feel free to incorporate poetry, art, etc., as well as prose in your reflection paper. **At least ONE of your submissions must be a reflection paper.**

### **Prayer Presentation: (10%)**

Students will be presenting a prayer practice that the class will experience. You will sign up for your date at the first-class session. You can choose one we have experienced in class or another one that you would like to share. It is recommended to present one that is new to you - stretch yourself! The presentation should be about 10-12 minutes followed by 2-3 reflection questions for the class to journal with and then discuss either in pairs, small groups, or as a large group. You will be leading the discussion. The entire presentation should be about 20 minutes.

**Final Paper: (35%) Due Date Dec. 9 - by midnight**

A comprehensive project or paper designed for a pastoral setting that creatively offers insights into one of the Prayer methods that have been introduced in class. Projects must be accompanied by a one-page bibliography of sources and a succinct 3–4-page paper about the project and how it can be used in a pastoral setting.

This assignment may be one of the following:

1. Written paper to accompany your class prayer presentation (6-8 pages)
2. Final Integrative paper (6-8 pages)
3. Creative project with brief accompanying paper (3-4 pages)

All assignments are expected to be submitted by their due dates through Camino. Unless we have made arrangements beforehand, assignments should not be submitted at other times, or in other formats.

Some project examples (not limited to these - use your imagination!): Create a retreat or day of reflection for a parish or other group setting, design a pilgrimage, create a unit lesson plan for a classroom, design a digital or audio prayer meditations series, craft a piece of artwork or original music to be used for prayer, plan a prayer service for a parish or other group setting.

### **Spir 224 Course Map and Camino Modules**

Sept. 25: What is Prayer? Entering into Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Naming the Grace, Lectio Divina, Prayer of Consideration

Oct. 2: Companions in Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Images of God, Trellis of Life, Spiritual Direction, Prayer in Unsolicited Places

Oct. 5: **Project/Reflection - due by midnight**

Oct. 9: Ignatian Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Sensory/Imaginative Prayer, Examen, Colloquy

Oct. 16: Ignatian Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

Oct. 23: Contemplative Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Breathing, Centering Prayer, Devotional Prayer

Oct. 26: **Project/Reflection - due by midnight**

Oct. 30: Embodied Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Ignatian Yoga, Pilgrimage, Walking Meditation, Bibliodrama

Nov. 6: Communal Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Liturgy, Liturgical Seasons, Sabbath, Taize

Nov. 9: **Project/Reflection - due by midnight**

Nov. 13: Discernment in Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Willingness, Attentiveness, Responsiveness

Nov. 20: Discernment in Prayer

Spiritual Practices: Ignatian Discernment, Contemplation and Action

Nov. 27 - Thanksgiving NO CLASS

Dec. 4: Praying with Art

Spiritual Practices: Visio Divina, Creating Art and Poetry

Dec. 9: **Final Project - due by midnight**

Dec. 11: Class Presentations

*Subject to change. Changes will be communicated via in-class announcement, Camino, and/or email.*

**Instructor Feedback** through written comments on papers and course projects. I am also happy to meet students on Zoom for “office hours.” Please email me and we will find a convenient time for us both to meet.

**Responsible Use of Technology.** Cell phones should be turned off during class, and laptops may only be used for authorized collaborations or for viewing course readings and taking notes. The Student Handbook prohibits video or audio-recording or streaming of private, non-public conversations and/or meetings inclusive of the classroom setting, without the knowledge and consent of all recorded parties. If you require the recording of classroom lectures, discussions, simulations, and other course-related activities for a documented disability, please make arrangements through Disabilities Resources and discuss this with the instructor (me). If for some reason other than disability you would like to record the class, please seek the permission of the instructor (me) first, and then of the class.

**Academic integrity:** Santa Clara University insists on honesty and integrity from all members of its community; see [www.scu.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.scu.edu/academic-integrity) for details. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of dishonest acts in an examination, paper, or other required work for a course, or who assists others in such acts, will receive a grade of F/NP for the course. In addition, a student guilty of dishonest acts will be immediately dismissed from the University. Students that violate copyright laws, including those covering the copying of software programs, or who knowingly alter official academic records from this or any other institution, are subject to disciplinary action (SECP Graduate Bulletin, 2017-2018 <https://www.scu.edu/media/ecp-media/-ecp-media-2018/pdfs/Final---SECP-17-18.pdf>).

## **Department of Education and University Resources**

**Academic Action Plan** Students who are struggling to meet course expectations will be placed on an Academic Action Plan (AAP). The purpose of the AAP is to document the areas of difficulty, the support to be provided, and the time frame in which the student must improve performance. More information about the AAP is available in the MATTC Handbook.

**Incomplete Grades** Under certain extenuating circumstances, a student may request an Incomplete. If you have any concerns about your ability to fulfill the course requirements by the due dates, contact me right away to explain your situation.

**Writing Support** The HUB Writing Center (Benson Center 22 and Library Annex) offers a variety of services, such as peer tutoring. For more details, please visit: <http://www.scu.edu/provost/writingcenter/>.

**Disability Accommodations** If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources <http://www.scu.edu/disabilities>, Benson 216, as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with us outside of class. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations.

While we are happy to assist you, we are unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information, you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

**Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting** In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations for students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

**Title IX** Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or

stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy at <http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb> or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043 or by email at [bguthrie@scu.edu](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>.

**Reporting Practices** While we want you to feel comfortable coming to us with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of our job at Santa Clara University. For example, if you inform us of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, we will keep the information as private as possible, but we are required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform us that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, we will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at [www.scu.edu/osl/report](http://www.scu.edu/osl/report). If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at 408-554-3043 or by email at [bguthrie@scu.edu](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through [www.scu.edu/osl/report](http://www.scu.edu/osl/report) or anonymously through Ethicspoint: <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of university policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.