

Spirituality and Wellness
REL 206 W8

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Meetings with Course Instructor as requested by individual students.

This 3 semester credit class meets on 8 Wednesdays from 6:30-9:20 August 25 through October 13, 2021. Because the class is an accelerated one, there is a **required pre-assignment**, due the first class and **attendance at each of the 8 classes is mandatory**. One exception due to serious extenuating circumstances may be accepted but requires conversation with the professor and further assigned work.

Please bring a printed copy of the pre-assignment to the first class.

Course Description and Objectives:

Judeo-Christian spirituality is an "incarnational spirituality" at its core. In Genesis, God "walks in the garden" to encounter Adam and Eve. Moses first encounters God in a bush and his people are freed through natural plagues and physical death. The prophets see God's hand in the political-social-economic events of the day, and call people to live justly through it all. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born as a human being to show us that the kingdom of God is among us in the here and now. In this spirituality, God enters the "natural world" to show us how to live as whole, healthy humans, through the exercising of our freedom of choice, our "Free Will," in accord with the Divine Will. This course will explore the connection between a deeply incarnational spirituality and "wellness," a state of wholeness mediated through the "divine challenge" of free will exercised "on earth as it is [archetypically] in heaven."

"The purpose of an undergraduate education at the Mount is to provide students with a broad range of learning experiences in order to create a habit of mind conducive to a lifetime of learning in a diverse society."

Integrated Learning Outcomes for this course are:

- To explore the connection between spirituality and wellness using required texts, critical thinking, appropriate written and other communication skills
- To explore awareness of core beliefs and their contributions and impediments to "spirituality and wellness."
- To explore spirituality from a variety of perspectives, in order to help the students clarify their own perspectives and develop a better understanding of culturally and religiously diverse approaches.
- To explore how sustainable development and concern for our Earth are crucial dimensions of "spirituality and wellness."
- To help enhance one's spirituality through exploration of various traditional spirituality exercises.

Required Text:

Seaward, Brian L. *Stand Like Mountain, Flow Like Water: Reflections on Stress and Human Spirituality*, c. 2007

[Online Resources may be assigned throughout the course as appropriate.]

Grading (based on course taught in person rather than through Zoom and Blackboard :

Pre-assignment	25%
Other Written Assignments	25%
Final Class Essay and Presentation	25%
Intelligent Class participation and presence	25%

N.B. All written assignments must be “typed” and include proper notation and documentation. Please check the MSJ website regarding academic honesty:
<http://registrar.msj.edu/undergraduate-catalogue/rights-policies/academic-policies/academic-honesty>.

Pre-Assignment:

Read the Seaward text from the Introduction through Chapter 2.

THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ANSWERED THOUGHTFULLY AND IN DEPTH. Please document quotations or text concepts to support your in depth answers.

1. In his Introduction, Seaward discusses stress, spirituality and the need for balance through accepting the Divine in our lives. Summarize and document Seaward's thoughts and then explain your own beliefs on this.
2. In Chapter 1, Seaward uses an ancient Chinese proverb to explain the book's title and the call to walk in balance. What is this and how does it apply? Please answer this thoughtfully and in depth.
3. Seaward writes of anger and fear as the root of stress. How does he explain these and how does he connect them to the concept of death? What are your own beliefs about the meaning of life, death and beyond death?
4. In Chapter 2 Seaward connects the “evolution of the soul” and love. Explain this. How is this connected to the various definitions of spirituality which he shares? Which of these comes closest to what you believe?
5. Seaward presents stress as a “tension between divine will and free will” as well as a “resistance to living in the present moment.” (58) What do you think this means and how might it apply to your own life? Please give a detailed answer.
6. What are the four pillars of human spirituality described by Seaward? What do you believe is the meaning or purpose of life? Have you or a close family member or friend experienced anything similar to his examples of the fourth pillar?
7. Seaward writes of various paths people take to enhance their well being. What are these paths? Are you currently following any of the paths he mentions and how do they help you?
8. What does Seaward describe as the “roadblocks” and “distractions” on the human path? Do any of these sound familiar to you? How do you maintain health in light of these?
9. In Chapter 2 Seaward speaks of the “medicine of the soul” which helps in times of stress. What inner resources (soul medicine) do you have? (See pages 78-83.) How does regular exercise fit into your lifestyle choices?
10. What are your hopes for and any concerns about taking this accelerated course?
11. Please include your name, cell phone number and if texting works with this number.

SYLLABUS AVAILABLE AT FIRST CLASS. REMINDER: BRING A PRINTED COPY OF THE IN DEPTH PRE-ASSIGNMENT ANSWERS TO THE FIRST CLASS ON AUGUST 25TH