

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Semester, Year	SPRING/SUMMER, 2025
Course Title	SPIRITUAL FORMATION
Course Code	SPIR 0700 1A
Date	From May 1, 2025 To July 24, 2025
Delivery Format	ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Instructor Contact	Jenn Aspilla, MDIV, CSD, CSDS(Qualifying) Email: jaspilla@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only. Appointments are conducted over zoom only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an integrated study of the Christian life and the development of personal character shaped by the values and virtues of God’s Kingdom. It includes an examination of conceptual frameworks and major categories in spiritual theology, as well as understanding and practising the classical spiritual disciplines.

Included in this course is a 48-hour retreat in which all students must participate. The retreat will be made individually (or with other classmates as desired). It should be made with consideration given to the guidelines in the book *Renew* (among the required texts). Students will not make their retreat at home, but find a more isolated place, such as a cottage or retreat centre. Even a hotel room can be better than home in making the most of a retreat. This retreat is *not* a time to try and catch up with work (academic or otherwise), it is a sacred and set apart time for you to connect with God.

Students are permitted to make a retreat together if they wish (self-organized). Please note that the retreat must take place for a minimum of 48 hours (i.e., over two nights). It is recommended that you make your retreat during or near Weeks 6 or 7.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, by:

1. Participating in weekly online discussion groups.
2. Completing and reflecting upon a regular series of spiritual exercises.
3. Identifying the unique ways, they are wired to connect with God and reflecting on this in a paper
4. Participating in a retreat and reflecting upon the experience
5. Receiving regular spiritual direction and writing a paper on their experience, describing how the course has deepened their understanding of Christian spirituality and how they have been invited to integrate this into their everyday life.

Students will be able to:

1. Identify their own areas of strength and growth in their spiritual formation
2. Discuss and practise spiritual formation as a dynamic process of 'being', initiated by the Holy Spirit; reflect on that process; recognize and discuss that one is being rooted and grounded in Christ for the sake of others
3. Live more fully in Christ by describing dominant spiritual disciplines, selecting personally appropriate ones, and beginning to integrate them into their daily activities; and 4. Identify with, practise and demonstrate the development of personal character shaped by the values and virtues of God's Kingdom.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Foster, Richard. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Harrison Warren, Tish. [*The Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life*](#). InterVarsity Press, 2017.

Mulholland, M. Robert. *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in the Christian Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Sherbino, David. [*Re-Connect: Spiritual Exercises to Develop Intimacy with God*](#). Toronto: Castle Quay Books, 2013.

Sherbino, David. [*Renew: A Basic Guide for A Personal Retreat*](#). Toronto: Castle Quay Books, 2015.

Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Pathways*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Supplementary reading and viewing resources will be placed on the course page periodically. There are no additional weekly required readings.

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance, Participation and Reading: Worth 10% of the final grade

Due to the nature of the course, each member is expected to participate fully in discussions and in the practical dimensions of the course. Attendance in this course is demonstrated by regular logins and thoughtful participation in course discussions.

Online conversations, in individual and group discussions will involve possessing a foundational understanding of concepts explored in course texts.

Read all required course texts and submit a clear statement noting the course texts you have read, and the percentage read in each book. This statement is due by 11:59p.m., July 24th. This meets learning outcomes # 1,2.

2. Short Essay: Due Friday May 30, 2025 (11: 59p.m); 15% of Final Grade

Read the book *Sacred Pathways* with the intent to discover your sacred pathway. At the end of each chapter there is a short questionnaire that will help you determine your preference for a predominant pathway. Submit a three-page essay that focuses upon the pathway that helps you relate to God. Explain how this is being revealed in your experience. Do you also see other pathways that enrich your spiritual life? How has this changed over the years? Are there biblical examples that you can reference? Is there a particular pathway you would like to explore further? Explain why this pathway is of interest. This meets learning outcome # 1, 2.

3. Spiritual Exercises: Due Friday, June 27th (11: 59p.m); 20% of Final Grade

You are required to read a chapter *each week* from Sherbino, *Re-Connect: Spiritual Exercises to Develop Intimacy with God*, over a period of seven weeks, (chapter eight does not require reflection) and do the exercises in preparation for weekly interaction. These exercises are intended to enable you to understand and experience some of the spiritual disciplines taught in class. You may begin reading this text as early as you like but no later than the first week of the course. At the end of the assignment submit a 2-page reflection paper on a spiritual practice you found to be helpful. You must include a statement indicating what percentage of work you did for the assignment. This will be reflected in your grade.

This meets learning outcomes #1, 2, and 3.

4. Retreat and Reflection Paper: Due Friday, July 11; worth 20% of the Final Grade

The retreat is intended to be an opportunity to practice and experience some of the spiritual disciplines in a guided fashion. You are encouraged to keep a journal throughout the retreat (you will *not* submit this journal). At the end of the retreat, you will write a 5-page paper incorporating the following elements:

Reflect on your experience in silence and solitude. Was this a welcome experience or a challenging one? What came to the surface of your attention during this time? How were you shaped by your reading of Scripture during this time? (Use Mulholland's text as lens through which to understand what is meant by being shaped by scripture). What was your experience of prayer? Which types of prayer that Foster introduces did you experience or explore?

In preparation for a personal retreat read *Renew: A Basic Guide for a Personal Retreat*. Plan to arrive at the retreat center the evening prior to the first full day and leave after lunch on the second day. At the end of the retreat (not while you are on retreat), you will write a three-page paper reflecting on your experience.

This meets learning outcomes # 1, 3.

Again, please note that making of the retreat is *mandatory* for all students, and it must take place over a minimum of 48 hours (i.e., two nights), alone or with others. Students will not make their retreat at home, but find a more isolated place, such as a cottage or retreat center. Even a hotel room can be better than home in making the most of a retreat. Check with the instructor if you are considering making your retreat as part of a group retreat organized by others.

5. Spiritual Direction Reflection & Integration Paper. Due: Thursday, July 31; worth 30% of the Final Grade

Each participant is required to have a trained spiritual director (you may utilize one who is currently studying in Tyndale's Spiritual Direction Internship) during this course. You are required to meet in person *or* online for a minimum of six sessions, approximately every two weeks, for focused conversation and prayer. Keep a journal of your meetings and record your reflections, insights, and struggles.

Write a 7 paged reflection paper using the following format: Clearly indicate how many times you met with your spiritual director. Include what has been helpful and what has been challenging from your overall experience with the spiritual director. Integrate your reading of *Harrison's Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* as discussed with your spiritual director. How have you become more aware of God with you in your everyday life since beginning spiritual direction? What invitations have you sensed from God during this

semester, how can you take practical action steps to respond to these invitations? Conclude by writing about two or three things you learned in the course that stand out the most, that you hope to integrate into your life. They may be from the lectures, the readings, the retreat, and/or the class discussions.

Again, you must meet with your trained spiritual director for a minimum of six sessions. Be sure to submit the approval form, signed by you and your spiritual director, as soon as you secure one. The form will be posted on the course resource page.

If you already meet regularly with a trained spiritual director, please speak to the instructor.

If you are a student who has been granted accommodation by the Centre for Academic Excellence, please note that in order to get any extension on this paper, you will require the approval of the Registrar's office.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	%
Attendance, Participation, Required Readings	July 24	10%
Short Essay	May 30	15%
Spiritual Exercises	June 27	20%
Retreat Reflection Paper	July 11	25%
Spiritual Dir. Reflection/Integration Paper	July 31	30%
Total Grade		100%

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Weekly Topic

1. Biblical and Theological Foundations of Christian Spirituality
2. Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Friendship
3. Holy Reading: Lectio Divina and Gospel Contemplation
4. Sabbath, Silence and Solitude
5. Prayer
6. Suffering: Heart Renovations and The Liturgy of Lament
7. Emotionally Healthy and Embodied Spirituality
8. Rule of Life: Creating a Life of Holy Habits
9. Intergenerational Faith Formation
10. Discernment

11. Contemplation and Action

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please see a separate document for the full list of selected bibliography on classes.tyndale.ca.

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR BLENDED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each individual assignment.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+").

Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete (“I”) may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of “F” will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

[Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course’s grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or [classes.tyndale.ca](#). For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).