

**St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute  
Summer 2021**

**Mondays & Thursdays, 6:00 to 9:00 pm (May 24 – June 28)**

**SP/BS629 Scripture & Spirituality**

**Dr. Derek Olsen**

**Course Description:**

Historical forms of liturgical worship and other spiritual practices can be deeply interpretive events that engage with biblical texts in ways that are not always obvious to modern Christians. This course will explore the intersection between Scripture, theology, and spirituality in a variety of practices including *lectio divina*, monastic psalm-singing, medieval Books of Hours, the hymnody of Protestant writers like Isaac Watts, and the African American Spiritual tradition. We will experience each practice together, then examine the interpretive and theological principles—as well as the pursuit of beauty—that contribute to the spiritual purpose and efficacy of each.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Reading:** Students should expect to read at most 850 pages of required reading and should come prepared to discuss readings in class.
- **Writing**
  - A 2-3 page writing assignment each session will reflect upon the experience of the practices introduced the previous class period (40% of grade)
  - At the conclusion of the course, a 12-15 page research paper will explore a topic chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor. (40% of grade)
- **Other**
  - Because much of the student learning will occur within class discussions, attendance and participation are essential aspects of this class. (20% of grade)

**Required Texts:**

- Casey, Michael. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. Triumph Books, 1996. ISBN: 978-0892438914 (pbk.)
- Grey, Scotty. *Hermeneutics of Hymnody: A Comprehensive and Integrated Approach to Understanding Hymns*. Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2015. ISBN: 978-1573127677
- Johnson, James Weldon & J. Rosamund Johnson. *The Books of the American Negro Spirituals*. Rev. Ed., De Capo Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-0306812026
- Nanay, Benice. *Aesthetics: A Very Short Introduction*. Illustrated ed. Oxford University Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-0198826613
- Wieck, Roger S. *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art*. George Braziller, 1999. ISBN: 978-0807614570 (pbk.)