

HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership

EDU 5311: Spiritual Formation

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Term: Spring 2026 | Canvas

WELCOME TO EDU 5311: SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Welcome to our online classroom! This course invites you into a reflective and experiential journey of spiritual growth. Over the next fifteen modules, you will explore spiritual disciplines, personal faith movements, and practices that nurture transformation—both personally and in your ministry context.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the many meanings of spirituality within a pluralistic world, and explores how a grounded, authentic spirituality can be cultivated through the ordinary, everyday experiences of life. Students will reflect and examine the role of spiritual formation in their own lives. By considering their personal spiritual practices, disciplines, strengths, and limitations, students will gain deeper insight into their ministerial identity.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Reflect on their own spiritual journey** and identify how family, community, faith traditions, and life experiences have shaped their identity and vocation in ministry.
2. **Recognize God's guidance** throughout their life and articulate how faith has influenced their call to serve.
3. **Practice key spiritual disciplines** and apply them meaningfully in personal life and pastoral ministry.

4. **Demonstrate core pastoral qualities**—such as compassion, humility, kindness, and love—in caring for others.
5. **Engage in inclusive ministry**, especially in interfaith and multicultural settings, honoring and respecting people of all backgrounds and traditions.

Course Outcomes	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Proficient (3)	Exemplary (4)	Score
1. Personal Spiritual Journey	Gives minimal account of their spiritual story, with little reflection or purpose.	Provides basic description of experiences but with limited spiritual reflection or connection to ministry.	Shares a personal faith journey with some insight into influences and spiritual growth.	Offers a meaningful and prayerful reflection on their spiritual journey, clearly showing how family, community, and experiences have shaped their faith and ministry.	
2. God's Guidance and Call to Ministry	Has little awareness of God's role or calling in their life.	Mentions faith or guidance but without clear spiritual insight or vocation.	Describes how faith has influenced their path and sense of ministry.	Clearly recognizes God's presence and guidance in life events and expresses a heartfelt sense of calling to serve.	
3. Practice of Spiritual Disciplines	Shows limited knowledge or practice of spiritual disciplines.	Limited or inconsistent practice with unclear spiritual meaning or application.	Demonstrates spiritual disciplines and explains their value in personal or ministry life.	Regularly demonstrated spiritual disciplines with sincerity and applies them to	

Course Outcomes	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Proficient (3)	Exemplary (4)	Score
				nurture spiritual life and ministry.	
4. Demonstrates core pastoral qualities	Demonstrates little awareness of others' needs or pastoral sensitivity.	Shows some caring qualities but inconsistently or without depth.	Shows compassion and respect toward others in ministry settings.	Displays a genuine pastoral heart—showing empathy, humility, and Christ-like love in relationships and care for others.	
5. Inclusive and Interfaith Ministry	Shows little inclusiveness or understanding of spiritual diversity.	Shows some awareness of diversity but with limited engagement.	Shows respect and sensitivity to those from different backgrounds.	Welcomes and honors people of all faiths and backgrounds with respect, humility, and spiritual openness.	

III. REQUIREMENTS (Grade Distribution)

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| 1. Written Reflections on Module Content | 15% |
| 2. Discussion Posts | 15% |
| 3. Book Reviews | 15% |
| 4. Spiritual Journal | 15% |
| 5. Quizzes | 15% |
| 6. Spiritual Autobiography | 25% |

- 1) Written Reflections** – Each week, submit a personal reflection based on the module's lecture and readings. Modules will be posted every

Monday. Reflections are due by **Sunday evening (11:59 PM US Eastern Standard Time)** and should be **1,000 words (2 pages)**.

- 2) **Discussion Posts** - Each **Monday**, a question related to recent topics will be posted on the discussion board. Student's posts should include thoughtful observations, additional insights, commentary, and/or open-ended, critical thinking questions related to the assigned topic.

- **Primary post due Thursday evening (11:59 PM US Eastern Standard Time)**
- **Responses to at least two classmates due Sunday evening**

- 3) **Book Reviews** - Write a substantive two- to three-page review for each required text. Highlight new insights gained from the text and offer a critical analysis of any points of concern, explaining your reasoning clearly. Students are expected to integrate their learning within the context of their ministry.

Due dates: week 5, 10, 15.

- 4) **Spiritual Journal** – Maintain a weekly spiritual journal throughout the course. Record new insights, ideas, and experiences; significant emotions, thoughts, or reactions to readings, presentations, or peer interactions; lessons learned about yourself, others, and ministry; moments of frustration or disappointment; and anything else you find meaningful. Please make entries **at least three days a week** (approximately **500 words each**). Submit your journal **five times** during the term.

Due dates: week 2, 5, 8, 11, 14.

- 5) **Quizzes** – Students will take 5 quizzes to check their understanding. Answers are given immediately, so you can see what you know and what you need to review.

Dates: week 3, 6, 9, 12, 15.

- 6) **Spiritual Autobiography** - The final paper will be **18–20 pages** (approximately **9,000–10,000 words**). Students are encouraged to begin planning and organizing their Spiritual Autobiography early in the course. Share how God has been at work throughout your life, or, if you prefer, focus on a particular theme, season, or pivotal period

in your journey.
Due dates: week 15.

IV. TEXTS

Required Texts:

Haase, Albert. *Coming Home to Your True Self*. IVP Books, 2008.
Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN-13:9780830835171. \$9.99.

Nouwen, Henri. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. Harper One, 2010. ISBN-13:978-0061686139. \$12.49.

Selig, William. *Essays on Spiritual Formation: Discovering and Living Your True Self*. Lulu Press, 2024. ISBN-13:978-1304557568. \$18.23.

V. Grading

In computing the cumulative grade point average (G.P.A.), the following quality point scale is used:

A 4.00	A– 3.67	B+ 3.33
B 3.00	B– 2.67	C+ 2.33
C 2.00	C– 1.67	D+ 1.33
D 1.00	D– 0.67	F 0.00

Incompletes are given only when there are compelling medical or personal reasons.

See the school catalog for a detailed grading policy.

This scale severely penalizes Fs. Therefore, it is better to submit a poorly done assignment than not submit one at all.

Grades for each assignment are recorded by letter and are understood as follows:

Excellent (A)

Good (B)

Acceptable (C, D)

Failure (F)

Failure to hand in an assignment will result in an F for that assignment.

IMPORTANT NOTE: According to HJI policy, *students who miss three or more consecutive weeks of class in a given semester may be subject to withdrawal at the discretion of the course instructor.* (Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook, 2024–25, p. 25)

All due dates for assignments are listed in the course outline. Grades will not be changed, and “incompletes” will not be granted unless there are documented personal circumstances that significantly impacted performance or made completion of the course requirements impossible.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: Each student’s work must be a product of his or her own effort. Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student presents someone else’s work as their own. The most severe form of plagiarism occurs when a student purchases a paper from a third party or submits an entire body of work written by someone else. Such cases will be reported to the Office of the Provost for disciplinary action. Possible actions include probation, suspension, or dismissal/separation from HJI.

Cutting and pasting material from websites without citing the source also constitutes plagiarism, as does failing to cite sources in a paper, thereby giving the impression—intentional or not—that someone else’s work is the student’s own. In such cases, the instructor may give the student an “F” for the assignment, require the student to repeat the assignment, or, if the behavior continues, give an “F” for the course. A pattern of such behavior may be reported to the Office of the Provost and may lead to the consequences listed above.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, in assignments is permitted only with prior permission of the instructor. If AI is permitted for research, students should be aware that AI may produce inaccurate information, and all facts must be checked and verified. Any passages generated by AI must be properly cited, just as with any other source. In addition, students must include a paragraph at the end of their work explaining how and why they used AI, what prompts were used, and what measures were taken to verify accuracy. Students may not use AI to produce the full content of an assignment. If AI is used without prior permission and/or without proper citation or explanation, it will be treated as plagiarism.

Faculty reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin, to identify instances of AI-generated writing or plagiarism from other sources in student assignments.

NETIQUETTE: When posting online or communicating by email, you are expected to follow the same ethical standards and laws that apply to face-to-face communication. Your language should be respectful toward faculty members and fellow students. Do not post private or confidential information about anyone, and do not share personal information that could put yourself at risk. The school's LMS has robust security measures to protect communication between teacher and student. However, be aware that anything posted in discussions or groups with other students can be copied or retrieved by others.

Do not download or share course materials without the instructor's permission, as this may violate copyright. HJI reserves the right to delete postings on HJI-maintained sites that are considered insensitive, harassing, or illegal. Language that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, harassing, abusive, hateful, or otherwise embarrassing to any person or entity is a violation of the Student Code.

COURSE MODULES (15 WEEKS):

Below is a week-by-week breakdown. Each module includes Overview, Readings, and Assignments.

Module 1: Introduction to Spiritual Formation

Module Overview

Spiritual formation begins with recognizing God's movement already present within us. This module introduces the idea that spiritual growth is something we respond to rather than manufacture. Students explore how the inner journey becomes the foundation for all ministries.

Readings

- Nouwen, Preface, Introduction & Ch. 1 ("From Opaqueness to Transparency")
- Selig, Foreword, Preface, Introduction & Ch. 1 ("Spiritual Formation")

Assignments

- Introduce yourself (submit a text or video 3-4 min)
- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts

Module 2: The True and False Self

Module Overview

This module explores the lifelong discernment between the self, grounded in God, and the self, shaped by fear, ego, and expectations. Students examine how the false self subtly influences ministry and relationships. Growing in awareness of the true self fosters authentic service and deeper intimacy with God.

Readings

- Haase, Foreword, Preface, Ch. 1 (“The True Self”)
- Nouwen, Ch. 2 (“From Illusion to Prayer”)
- Selig, Ch. 2 (“Spiritual Discernment: Navigating Life’s Choices”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Spiritual Journal - 1 of 5

Module 3: Desire, Longing, and the Search for God

Module Overview

Holy longing is often the spark that leads us toward spiritual depth. This module examines how desire can act as a spiritual compass. Students explore how their deepest longings reveal God’s ongoing invitation.

Readings

- Nouwen, Ch. 3 (“From Sorrow to Joy”)
- Haase, Ch. 2 (“The False Self”)
- Selig, Ch. 3 (“The Spiritual Journal: Recording Your Journey”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Quiz – 1 of 5

Module 4: Silence, Solitude, and Listening to God

Module Overview

Silence and solitude help cultivate attentiveness to God beneath daily noise. This module encourages creating intentional space for quiet prayer. Through these practices, students learn to listen with the heart and deepen their spiritual presence.

Readings

- Haase, Ch. 3 (“Coming Back Home”)
- Nouwen, Ch. 4 (“From Resentment to Gratitude”)
- Selig, Ch. 4 (“Mapping My Spiritual Journey”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts

Module 5: Compassion, Healing, and the Movement Outward

Module Overview

True formation leads naturally toward compassion and service. This module explores how inner transformation equips us to be healing presences.

Students reflect on the relationship between personal spirituality and pastoral care.

Readings

- Nouwen, Ch. 5 (“From Fear to Love”)
- Haase, Ch. 4 (“Graced Guilt”)
- Selig, Ch. 5 (“Spiritual Autobiography”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Spiritual Journal – 2 of 5
- Book Review 1 of 5

Module 6: Conversion of Life – Turning Toward God

Module Overview

Conversion is both sudden and gradual—a continual turning toward God. This module examines moments of insight, surrender, and disruption that shape spiritual transformation. Students reflect on subtle and dramatic experiences of renewal.

Readings

- Haase, Ch. 5 (“Present to the Presence”)
- Nouwen, Ch. 6 (“From Exclusion to Inclusion”)
- Selig, Ch. 6 (“Embracing Spiritual Strengths and Weaknesses”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Quiz – 2 of 5

Module 7: Discernment and the Inner Movements of the Spirit

Module Overview

Discernment involves recognizing inner movements of consolation and desolation. This module teaches students to distinguish God's voice from competing impulses. Mature discernment leads to wiser decisions and intentional spiritual living.

Readings

- Haase, Ch. 6 ("Penance")
- Nouwen, Ch. 7 ("From Denying to Befriending Death")
- Selig, Ch. 7 ("Spiritual Disciplines")

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts

Module 8: Prayer as Relationship

Module Overview

Prayer is a relational encounter rooted in trust, honesty, and presence. This module explores forms of prayer that deepen intimacy with God. Students reflect on how their prayer life shapes their ministry and identity.

Readings

- Nouwen, Epilogue
- Haase, Ch. 7 ("Discernment")
- Selig, Ch. 8 ("Spiritual Self-Care and Other-Care")

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Spiritual Journal – 3 of 5

Module 9: Community and Spiritual Growth

Module Overview

Spiritual formation is nurtured in community as much as in solitude. Community challenges, supports, and transforms us through shared experience and accountability. Students explore the spiritual gifts and tensions of living in community.

Readings

- Haase, Ch. 8 (“The Spiritual Director”)
- Nouwen, Appendix
- Selig, Ch. 9 (“Spiritual Formation and Transformational Leaders”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Quiz – 3 of 5

Module 10: Service, Justice, and the Outward Journey

Module Overview

A mature interior life naturally leads toward justice and compassion in action. This module examines how personal transformation fuels social transformation. Students reflect on how ministry becomes an expression of God’s love in the world.

Readings

- Haase, Ch. 9 (“Continuing Home”)
- Selig, Ch. 10 (“Spiritual Formation and Social Responsibility”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Book Review – 2 of 3

Module 11: Ministry as Sacred Encounter

Module Overview

Every pastoral encounter holds the possibility of becoming a moment of grace. This module encourages students to view ministry through the lens of sacred presence rather than function. Students will discover how humility, compassion, and attentiveness create spiritual depth in ministry.

Readings

- Haase, “Conclusion”
- Selig, Ch. 11 (“God’s Plan and Purpose vs. My Plan and Purpose”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Spiritual Journal – 4 of 5

Module 12: Spiritual Wounds, Healing, and Resilience

Module Overview

Spiritual life includes seasons of loss, disappointment, and wounding. This module examines how God works through suffering to build resilience and

compassion. Students explore how their own healing equips them to accompany others with authenticity.

Readings

- Haase, “Appendix A”
- Selig, Ch. 12 (“Spiritual Warfare: The Battle Within and Without”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Quiz – 4 of 5

Module 13: Interfaith Spirituality and Inclusive Ministry

Module Overview

In a pluralistic society, effective ministry requires humility and openness to diverse traditions. This module encourages students to appreciate the sacred in other faiths while remaining grounded in their own. Students reflect on inclusive ministry as a spiritual discipline.

Readings

- Haase, “Appendix B”
- Selig, Ch. 13 (“Spiritual Formation: Paying God’s Love Forward”)

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts

Module 14: Integrative Practices of the Spiritual Life

Module Overview

Authentic spiritual formation weaves prayer, service, community, and personal discipline into a coherent spiritual rhythm. This module helps students integrate insights from the course into their ongoing spiritual practice. Students clarify the disciplines that will sustain them beyond the classroom.

Readings

- Haase, “Appendix C”

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Spiritual Journal – 5 of 5

Module 15: Writing Your Spiritual Autobiography

Module Overview

The final module invites students to synthesize their journey through crafting their spiritual autobiography. Writing becomes an act of gratitude, integration, and clarity. Students identify themes that reveal God’s presence across their life story.

Readings

- TBA

Assignments

- Written Reflection (1,000 words/two pages)
- Discussion Posts
- Quiz – 5 of 5

- Book Review – 3 of 3
- Spiritual Autobiography Due

Course Assignment Summary

Assignment Type	Total	Due Date / Modules
Written Reflections	15	Weekly (Modules 1–15)
Discussion Posts	15	Weekly (Modules 1–15)
Spiritual Journals	5	Modules 2, 5, 8, 11, 14
Quizzes	5	Modules 3, 6, 9, 12, 15
Book Reviews	3	Modules 5, 10, 15
Spiritual Autobiography	1	End of Module 15

SUPPORTING BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Benner, David G. *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

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———. *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

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Wimberly, Anne E. Streaty & Evelyn L. Parker. *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church*. Abingdon Press, 2002.