

**2011-1 RGP 3270 HS: Discerning the Signs of the Times: Reading Spirituality using Contemporary Critical and Cultural Theory.** (Offered 2nd semester of every academic year)

**AN APPROACH TO THE COURSE**

Discerning the Signs of the Times: Reading Spirituality using Contemporary Critical and Cultural Theory. (Offered 2nd semester of every academic year)

The aim of this course is threefold.

1. To expose the student to contemporary forms of critical and cultural analysis.
2. To use that analysis to look at spirituality.
3. To expose the student to contemporary manifestations of spirituality in a post-modern age.

The first part of this course will present an overview of the present state of critical and cultural analysis using the text, *Critical Theory Today; A User-Friendly Guide*. 2nd ed (2006) by Lois Tyson

The second aspect of the course will apply the concepts learnt to an examination of spirituality. The third aspect of the course will look at contemporary readings of spirituality.

Students in the course will be expected to produce 8 reflection papers, each 500 words in length and worth 10% of the total mark. The remaining 20% of the mark will be given for consistent, intelligent, active, class participation. The papers are expected to conform to a graduate standard of grammar and exposition for academic papers. Failure to do so will alter the mark significantly.

The course aims to develop in students a spiritual literacy which allows them

1. to read the signs of their times and
2. to facilitate the appropriation of their lives and the contexts they live in for
3. a more focused and transformative engagement of the world they live in.

**Required Texts:**

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 2nd., ed. Routledge (2006)

The Internet has an Excellent Range of Easily accessible Articles on each of the topics for the Thirteen Weeks. That resource is given in the Appendix Attached. It is strongly recommended that students avail themselves of this resource.

**Course Outline:**

Week One: Jan 8: An Introduction to the Course. Why theory. Constructs of spirituality. God; prayer; the body; society; community/tradition; self; nature; evil; "other-ness"; ritual; celebration.

Week Two: Jan 15: Developing a Vocabulary and a way of proceeding. "Rhetorical Spirituality"

Week Three: Psychoanalytical Theory

Week Four: Marxist Theory

Week Five: Feminist Theory

Week Six: Reader-Response Criticism

Week Seven: Reading Week

Week Eight : Structuralist Criticism

Week Nine: Deconstructive Criticism

Week Ten: New Historical and Cultural Criticism

Week Eleven: Gender Criticism

Week Twelve: Post-Colonial Criticism

Week Thirteen: Post-modern descriptors of spirituality

Week Fourteen: April 08: The question of interpellation.