I. **Course Description:**
A study of the nature, theology, purpose, and practice of biblical discipleship and spirituality. This seminar will engage the life-giving resources of discipleship and spiritual formation, the seasons and stages of the maturing spiritual journey, ministries of guiding others in groups and individuals on the spiritual path with spiritual disciplines, and the implementation of Christian formation for the local church and other ministries. Attention is given to understanding contemporary issues in discipleship and spirituality and evaluating popular trends and practices. (4 semester hours)

II. **Co-requisite Course:**
This course is a co-requisite with DM 7026 Applied Ministry Experience in Discipleship and Spiritual Formation.

III. **Course Objectives:**
The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Distinguish between discipleship models, both historically and biblically, with its impact upon the Great Commission.
- Analyze theological models of sanctification with its impact upon Christian spirituality.
- Appraise the use of spiritual disciplines for Christian growth.
- Identify significant devotional classics of the Christian faith.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills required in ministry today.

IV. **Course Texts:**

**Required Texts:** All students must read the required books.


Additional Reading: Students should complete a total of 2,000 pages of reading, including the two required texts, by the beginning of the seminar. This total should include at least one text from each of the following categories.

Read at Least One of the Following: Introductions


Read at Least One of the Following: Spiritual Disciplines

- McDonald, Larry Steven and Matt Queen, eds. *A Passion for the Great Commission: Essays in Honor of Alvin Reid*. Greer, SC: Towering Oaks Books, 2013. Pp. 262. (This book may also be purchased at reduced price directly from Dr. McDonald.)


**Read at Least One of the Following: Theology**


• McDonald, Larry S. *The Merging of Theology and Spirituality*. Landham, MA: University Press of America, 2006. Pp. 166. (This book may also be purchased at reduced price directly from Dr. McDonald.)


Read at Least One of the Following: Discipleship


Read at Least One of the Following: Age Group Discipleship and Spiritual Formation


*Books with an asterisk cannot be used for the Book Critique*

V. **Course Requirements:**

**Pre-seminar Assignments:**

1. In *Following the Master* by Michael Wilkins, he identifies Five Discipleship Models (25-34). Identify the model you support by writing a five-page essay that details your position. Site-specific references from your reading with appropriate footnotes.

2. Select one of the books that are included on the additional reading list and write a five-page critique following “Guidelines for a Critical Book Review” under “Content” on Blackboard. Contact Dr. McDonald (larry.mcdonald@ngu.edu) with your top three choices of a book as only one student may review a book. He will notify you which book has been assigned to you. Each student will present a 10-minute report on their book.

3. Prepare a 20 page paper on one of the topics listed below. Formatting guidelines will be given later. Each student should come prepared to make a 20-minute presentation including a one-page handout outlining the main ideas of the presentation. At the time of presentation bring one printed copy for Dr. McDonald. Contact Dr. McDonald (larry.mcdonald@ngu.edu) to give him your top three choices. He will notify you which topic has been assigned to you.

   [•] What is biblical meditation? What does the Bible teach about this? How does it differ from mediation in eastern religions? Is this still a viable practice for 21st century Christians?
   [•] What is the great commission? Is it evangelism? Or discipleship? How do these two relate? Are they opposites in competition of each other? Or do they go hand-in-hand with each other? How does a church set priorities on these two?
   [•] What is the ancient practice of *lectio divina*? Is this only for Roman Catholics? Can evangelical believers use this practice? Is it dangerous?
What is a devotional reading of the Bible? Is this different from studying the Bible? What place do the heart and the mind have in Bible reading? Are they opposite? Or can they work hand-in-hand?

Is Bible reading and prayer separate disciplines? Or do they connect and overlap? If so, how does this happen? What about the practice of “praying the Scriptures?”

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life? What does it mean to be “filled with the Spirit?” Does this differ from the “baptism of the Holy Spirit?” Are all Christians to “walk in the power of the Spirit?” Or is this only for a select few?

How does prayer and fasting relate to each other? Is fasting really a spiritual discipline for modern believers? What does the Bible teach about fasting?

What are characteristics of a disciple? How does discipleship differ with spiritual formation? Are they opposite? Or do they overlap?

What are key elements that new believers need to be taught? Who is responsible to disciple them? What are the stages of growth that believers go through?

Does theology have anything to do with the Christian life? What does it mean to be spiritual? Can one be spiritual without understanding basic theological truths?

What is progressive sanctification? How does one achieve it? How does it differ from other views of sanctification?

What is burn-out in the ministry? How can one avoid this? How does one overcome burn-out? What steps can a minister take to keep himself (and his family) spiritually healthy and refreshed?

Is evangelism a spiritual discipline? Or is it a spiritual gift? If it is a spiritual gift then how can those without the gift be held accountable for evangelism? If it is a spiritual discipline, then how can it be cultivated and taught?

It has been said that “one of the great spiritual memoirs of all times is John Bunyan’s Grace Abounding.” What can a believer learn from this memoir? What struggles and victories can one see in his life? What does his memoir teach modern day believers?

How does a Christian grow? What does the Bible teach about transformation? Why do we see so little transformation taking place in churches today? What is a “carnal Christian?” Does the Bible really teach this?

Is sanctification a total work of God? Or does it require human cooperation? If sanctification requires both, which is primary and which is secondary? How does one draw a line between the divine and human elements in sanctification?

In the 17th century Brother Lawrence made popular the concept of “practicing the presence of God.” What did he means by this? What does the Bible teach about the presence of God? Can this be lived out in today’s world? Does this replace a person’s “quiet time?”
Christian Counseling is very popular today. Does it differ from basic discipleship? Does Christian counseling and discipleship overlap? Do churches need strategic counseling ministries or solid discipleship ministries?

What is a spiritual discipline? What does the Bible say about them? Is there an authoritative list of them? Are they only for individuals? Or is there a corporate dynamic to them?

If Christians are “more than conquerors,” then why do we struggle? What is the “victorious Christian life?” Is struggle in the Christian life normal? What is the battle that Paul talks about in Romans 7?

Do parents have a responsibility to disciple their children? What does the Bible have to say about this? How can parents make their home a spiritually nurturing place?

In-class Assignments:
Be prepared to participate with in-class discussion and be ready to make your presentations following the schedule provided on Blackboard in the “Content” section.

Assignment Due Date:
All assignments (except for the final exam) are due Friday, September 25th by 11:59 p.m. Assignments submitted after this due date will receive a deduction in points. Exceptions to this are only granted due to extreme circumstances and must be approved by the professor.

VI. Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipleship Model Paper</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Critique</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Scale
Grading Scale for this Course:

- 91 to 100  A
- 81 to 90   B
- 71 to 80   C
- 61 to 70   D
- 60 or Below F
V. Classroom Etiquette

Cell phones, smart phones, and other email devices should be turned off during class (not on vibrate). Students are asked not to take calls during class or leave class to take a call. Calls should be returned only during breaks. It disrupts class when students leave to take messages and is disrespectful to other members and the instructor.

Wireless internet access is available in the classroom. Students should not use their computers to surf the internet or check email during class. This can be highly distracting to the class process. Internet searches should only be conducted as part of the class discussion or process.

Business casual is the appropriate dress for class.