UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2013
Instructor: Dr. Michael D. Harris
Course #: THEO 2310
Section: 101
Course Title: Explorations in Christian Thought
Variable Topic: Human Experience of the Spiritual

Description:

Throughout human civilization people have expressed an interest in matters that we would describe as spiritual. As people have become less connected to organized religious communities, it has become common for people to describe themselves as “spiritual” in preference to “religious.” This class considers the question of humanity’s experience and approach to spirituality and things of the spirit. In different cultural contexts, "spiritual" has meant a wide variety of things, and we will explore some of those different meanings. We will begin by exploring what people have meant when referring to spirit, both as an aspect of the human person and as something outside of the person to which he or she might relate. We will pursue most of this background in classical sources, Old Testament material, New Testament passages, and in Jewish and Christian writings.

Having established some common vocabulary for talking about the spirit, we will read a range of texts that represent expressions of people’s approach to spiritual issues. These texts will be drawn primarily, although not exclusively, from Christian sources. In the course of the semester we will incorporate contemporary materials that compare or in some way relate to the historical materials we have investigated.