

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

APRIL 2005

**LAS 472**

**Beneath the Surface of Our Lives**

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar will explore spirituality as a tool for developing a meaningful life. How can we create meaning while living in today's world? Beneath the surface of our lives, what spirit motivates, challenges, and defines us personally, communally, globally? Students will explore their own personal spirituality and ethic for life, and compare and contrast this to particular personal and/or cultural spiritualities that seek truth and give meaning to life. Students will study the material through reading, critical and creative writing and service learning.

Through this seminar students are invited to take up the Questions common to the Senior Seminars:

- What does it mean to be good, to lead a good life?
- How does one reconcile self-interest with a broader sense of responsibility?
- How does one negotiate conflicts between social norms and personal convictions?

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To explore virtues, values, and the meaning of leading a good life through the authors and characters of our texts.
- To engage in daily reflection and the on-going development of one's own spirituality.
- To practice engagement through service learning.
- To reflect on social justice as it impacts development of a broader sense of responsibility.
- To sharpen skills of communication: writing, discussion, and listening.
- To develop critical thinking skills.

### REQUIRED READINGS:

Aristotle. Nichomachean Ethics, trans. Martin Ostwald. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1999.

Janet W. Parachin. Engaged Spirituality. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999

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Monica Furlong. Visions and Longings – Medieval Women Mystics. Boston, MA: Shambala, 1997

Parker Palmer. Let Your Life Speak. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000

Other selected Essays and Articles

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- All readings as assigned
- Regular class attendance
- Journal
- Participation in discussion
- Leadership in class presentations
- Completion of all assignments on time
- 2.5 hours of in-class work; 6 hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, Service Learning engaged spirituality projects, discussion, research.)
- Completion of CONCERN World Hunger Project.

**CLASS STANDARDS:**

Never turn on or use cell phones, pagers, etc. in class.

Listen with your mind and your body.

Respect differences of opinion.

Express your ideas, thoughts and beliefs in an audible and respectful manner.

Be in class on time!

If you *must* miss class, email or call your professor. You are responsible for all missed work. More than 1 absence will lower your grade.

Absence does not allow for late assignments without penalty.

Absences and tardiness will lower your grade unless you have notified me with a truly legitimate excuse. Make up work can be negotiated for handling emergency situations, but does not substitute for class attendance.

Appropriate seminar attire.

**GRADING:**

**Oral Work:**

Participation in class discussions, presentations, & attendance  
35%

**Written Work:**

Essays/ papers; Journal; Common Assignment  
30%

**Service Learning Engaged Spirituality Projects:**

Participation in 3 volunteer service projects connected with World Hunger  
Completion of CONCERN Fast for World Hunger  
Class Presentation  
35%

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