

# Ignatian Spirituality: An Introduction

Redemptorist Renewal Center  
Tucson, Arizona  
Dec. 27, 2015 - Jan. 7, 2016  
Professor Matthew Ashley  
University of Notre Dame

## Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to Ignatian spirituality. Ignatian spirituality draws its strength, on the one hand, from the many ways it brings together trends and themes from the prior history of Christian spirituality. In this sense there is nothing new in it. On the other hand, Ignatius and his first followers were keenly sensitive to the multitude of challenges facing the Church and committed Christian life in the sixteenth century, which in many ways sees the beginning of the transition to our modern world and its many challenges. Thus, their genius lay in configuring the spiritual riches of the past to confront these challenges. Their success is attested by the enduring power and flexibility of this spirituality to serve as a continuing resources to meet the challenges of the current day. We will consider this process of initial configuration and ongoing reconfiguration historically, with particular attention to two foundational documents: *The Spiritual Exercises* and *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*. Then we will explore its continuing vitality by studying some contemporary figures who interpret and apply it today, including Pope Francis.

This draft of the syllabus may be changed to reflect the number of course participants.

## Course Goals:

After having completed this course students will be able to,

1. identify the principal historical events and traditions in Christian spirituality that influenced the lives of Ignatius and his first companions as they formulated their distinctive spirituality and describe how they are present to and interact in the two foundational documents for Ignatian spirituality from the sixteenth century: *The Spiritual Exercises* and *The Constitutions*);
2. identify and describe the principal dynamisms at work in *The Spiritual Exercises*, its methods of prayer and methodology for discerning God's will in one's life;
3. analyze and evaluate diverse interpretations and applications of Ignatian spirituality in different social, cultural and institutional settings through history in terms of how they take up certain strands in Ignatian spirituality (and not others) and combine them with one another and in correlation with particular elements of the situation in which it is being used;

4. identify Ignatian themes and evaluate the way they are used and combined with other traditions in Christian spirituality by Pope Francis, including from his work and writings prior to being elected pope.

5. identify those themes and dynamisms from Ignatian spirituality that are most significant for the particular challenges to committed Christian life in your context and discuss possible applications and accommodations of Ignatian spirituality for that context.

### Texts:

George Ganss, SJ, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1991). [ will be referenced below as “the Ganss collection”]

John O'Malley, SJ, *The Jesuits: A History from Ignatius to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014)

Kevin F. Burke and Eileen Burke-Sullivan *The Ignatian Tradition: Spirituality in History*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009)

Anthony DeMello, *Seek God Everywhere* (New York: Image Books, 2010)

Pope Francis, *In Him Alone is Our Hope: The Church According to the Heart of Pope Francis* (New York: Magnificat, 2013)

\_\_\_\_\_, *Evangelii gaudium* (available on the Vatican’s Website or at booksellers)

\_\_\_\_\_ *Laudato si* (available on the Vatican’s Website or at booksellers)

The following articles or book selections will be made available to students using an on-line platform:

1. Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Books I and II { available on line at:  
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/kempis/imitation.html>
2. George Aschenbrenner, SJ, “Consciousness Examen,” available at  
<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/consciousness-examen>
3. Ewert Cousins, “The Franciscan Roots of Ignatian Mysticism,”
4. Michael Buckley, S.J., “The Structure of the Rules for Discernment”
5. *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540-1640*, edited John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., pp. 156-187
6. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, “The Trinitarian Inspiration of the Ignatian Charism”, available at:  
<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/jesuit/article/view/3986>
7. Karl Rahner, “Ignatius of Loyola Speaks to a Jesuit Today,” translation made available by professor.

### Course Evaluation:

1) Students will be given a take-home exam to be completed over the weekend of January 2 and 3.  
[30%]

2) Students will serve as a “summarizer” of the day’s lectures and discussion: [20%]

- The last 30 minutes of the afternoon session will be given to this “summarizer” (probably a team of students) to discuss with the other students the principal insights that they came to during the day’s work and any questions that students have to discuss.
- During the evening session the summarizer will give his or her “bullet point” version of these main insights and questions (20 minutes) and lead a 20 minute discussion on the remaining questions.
- I will take the first session for this (December 28), and students will sign up for sessions beginning on December 29, with sessions on December 30, January 1, 4, 5, and 6.
- The team will submit their written summary of the day’s session to the instructor for his use for a recap at the beginning of the next day’s sessions.

3) Leading discussion of figure in Ignatian tradition: [10%]

- Students (working singly or in teams) will lead a discussion of one of the figures presented in the book by Kevin Burke and Eileen Burke-Sullivan, *The Ignatian Tradition*, excepting Ignatius himself, Pierre Favre, Jerome Nadal, or the materials in Part VII.

4) Final Research Paper: [40%]

Students will agree with the instructor on a theme for a final research paper before leaving Tucson. This paper will be due on March 31, as an attachment to an email.

A student’s final grade may be adjusted by up to ½ grade level up or down based on informed and constructive seminar session participation.

## Course Schedule:

Typically we will follow this schedule.

### **Morning**

(8:00 a.m.: breakfast)

- Morning session 1: 9:15-10:30
- 10:30 - 10:45: break
- Morning session 2: 10:45-12:00

(12:00 noon: lunch)

### **Afternoon**

- Afternoon session: 1:30 – 3:15 (with last 30 minutes for student feedback)
- 3:30 - 4:15: instructor available for meetings

(6:00 pm: dinner)

### **Evening Discussion:** 7:30 – 8:45 pm

This session will be devoted (a) to a discussion of issues that the students have identified as important over the course of the day's sessions, and (b) to a discussion of one of the figures represented in *The Ignatian Tradition*. Both discussions will be led by students.

### **Exceptions to the Standard Schedule:**

On Sunday, December 27 we will begin with an evening session (7:30 – 8:30), which will be an introduction to the course. There will be no evening session on December 31 or morning sessions on January 1. On Saturday, January 2 we will have only morning sessions. Sunday, January 3 is free. We finish at noon on January 7 (no afternoon or evening session).

## Daily Topics and Readings:

### Sunday Evening, December 27:

7:30 – 8:30 pm: At this session we will make introductions, including sharing of local contexts and interest in Ignatian spirituality by seminar participants. I will also walk us all through our schedule, including any last-minute adjustments I have made. Student-participants will sign up for the work of leading evening sessions (beginning on December 29).

## Monday, December 28

Morning session 1: In this session we will look at the historical background and context for the birth and development of Ignatian spirituality. For this session please review and be prepared to discuss Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*<sup>1</sup> Books I and II,

Morning session 2: In this session we will look at Ignatius's own life and context for writing the principal texts that we will be considering during this course: *The Spiritual Exercises* and *The Constitutions*. Please review and be prepared to discuss his *Autobiography* (Ganss collection) and O'Malley, *The Jesuits*, pp. 1-17.

Afternoon session: In this session we will discuss basic features of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Please read §§1-23<sup>2</sup>, and DeMello, *Seek God Everywhere*, "Introduction" and Chapter One – First Principle and Foundation.

Evening session: Besides discussing the issues raised for the day, I will lead us in a discussion of the contributions to Ignatian spirituality by Pierre Favre. Please read selections from his writings in Burke/Burke-Sullivan, *Ignatian Tradition*.

## Tuesday, December 29

Morning Session 1: *Spiritual Exercises*: Week 1 [Sin] and the Examen of Conscience. Please review and be prepared to discuss the material in the first week (§§24-90), DeMello, chapter 2 and 3, and George Aschenbrenner, SJ, "Consciousness Examen," available at <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/consciousness-examen>

Morning Session 2: *Spiritual Exercises*: Week 2 – "The Call of the King," "The Two Standards," "Three Classes of Person," "Three Ways of Being Humble." We start our consideration of the Second Week by looking at prayer exercises or independent considerations that frame the work of the Second Week. Review and be prepared to discuss the relevant sections of the *Spiritual Exercises* [§§ 91-100, 135-157]. Review and be prepared to discuss as well DeMello's commentary on these materials in *Seek God Everywhere*, chapters 4 and 5.

Afternoon Session: *Spiritual Exercises*, Week 2 (cont): the scriptural contemplations. Review and be prepared to discuss the contemplations [§§101-134] and other instructions for this "week" [§§100, 162-163]. Review and be prepared to discuss as well Ewert Cousins, "The Franciscan Roots of Ignatian Mysticism," in *Ignatian Spirituality in*

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<sup>1</sup> You may use any edition. It is available on line at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/kempis/imitation.html> .

<sup>2</sup> These numbers refer to the standard paragraph numbers used in subdividing the *Spiritual Exercises*, not to page numbers.

*a Secular Age*, ed. George Schner (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 51-64.

Evening Session: Besides discussing the issues raised by our session-summarizer, we will consider the work of Jerome Nadal. Please read relevant selections from *The Ignatian Traditions*.

## Wednesday, December 30

Morning Session 1: Second Week, concluded, and Discernment. Please review and be prepared to discuss remaining materials from the Second Week and also the Rules for Discernment for the First Week [§§313-327], as well as DeMello, *Seek God Everywhere*, chapter 6.

Morning Session 2: Rules for Discernment of Spirits for the Second Week. Please review and be prepared to discuss the second set of “rules” [§§328-336] and DeMello, chapter 7.

Afternoon Session: Discernment, concluded. Please go over the materials in the Second Week on the election [§§ 169-178] and all the Rules for Discernment [§§313-336]. Please review and be prepared to discuss as well as Michael Buckley, S.J., “The Structure of the Rules for Discernment,” in Philip Sheldrake, ed., *The Way of Ignatius of Loyola: Contemporary Approaches to the Spiritual Exercises* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), 219-37

Evening Session: Discussion of issues raised by our session-summarizer and first student-led discussion of a figure in “the Ignatian tradition.”

## Thursday, December 31

Morning Session 1: Third and Fourth Weeks: Please read and be prepared to discuss materials from the Third and Fourth Weeks, except for the concluding Contemplation to Attain Love [§§190-229]. Read as well DeMello, chapter 8.

Morning Session 2: The Contemplation to Attain Love. Please read this prayer exercise very carefully and be prepared to discuss it along with DeMello, Chapter 9.

Afternoon Session: We will wrap our discussion of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and have our next student-led discussion of a figure in the Ignatian tradition.

**No evening session: Happy New Year!!!**

## Friday, January 1

Morning sessions are cancelled so that you can sleep in, catch up on reading, etc. I will be available to discuss paper topics with you between 10 a.m. and noon, if you wish.

Afternoon session: We will take up Ignatius's own personal application of the principles he developed, looking at his correspondence and at his labors as Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Please be prepared to discuss his correspondence from the Ganss collection.

Evening session: No session summarizer, but we will have another student-led discussion of a figure from the Ignatian tradition.

## Saturday, January 2

Morning Session 1: We will look at the application and accommodation of his principles that Ignatius developed (with the help of Diego Lainez) for the newly founded Society of Jesus, as given in the *Constitutions*. Please read and be prepared to discuss the sections in the Ganss collection, pp. 271-296.

Morning Session 2: We will complete our survey of the *Constitutions* and also talk about the Jesuits' engagement with university education. Please review and be prepared to discuss the selections from the Ganss collection, pp. 297-321; pp 361-365 and O'Malley, pp. *The Jesuits*, pp. 10-26.

The take-home mid-course exam will be distributed at the end of the second morning session and will be due by the end of the day on Monday, January 4.

## Monday, January 4

Morning Session 1: We look at contributions to Jesuit spirituality by other early figures, such as Jerome Nadal and Robert Bellarmine. Please review and be prepared to discuss the selections from *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540-1640*, edited John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., pp. 156-187. Review and be prepared to discuss as well, O'Malley, *The Jesuits*, pp. 27-55.

Morning Session 2: In this session we will consider the phenomenon of the renewal of the Society of Jesus in the 1970's and beyond by returning to its roots in the spirituality of Ignatius. Please review and be prepared to discuss the materials in the

Burke/Burke-Sullivan reader from Part VII, "Renewal." Please also review and be prepared to discuss O'Malley, *The Jesuits*, pp. 55-108.

Afternoon Session: Theological Interpretations of Ignatian Spirituality. We now look at interpretations of Ignatian spirituality as a source for theological reflection. We begin with a classic essay by Pedro Arrupe on the Trinitarian inspiration of Ignatian spirituality. Please review and be prepared to discuss this essay by Arrupe: "The Trinitarian Inspiration of the Ignatian Charism", available at: <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/jesuit/article/view/3986>

Evening Session: Discussion of issues raised by our session-summarizer and a student-led discussion of a figure in "the Ignatian tradition."

## Tuesday, January 5

Morning Session 1: We continue looking at theological interpretations and applications of Ignatian spirituality, now in the work of Karl Rahner. Please review and review and be prepared to discuss "St Ignatius Speaks to a Jesuit Today" which will be made available to you in translation.

Morning Session 2: Now we consider a look at Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of the Latin American liberation philosopher and theologian, Ignacio Ellacuría. Please review and be prepared to discuss "A Latin American Reading of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius," and my introduction to these lecture notes in Ignacio Ellacuría, "A Contemplative under the Standard of Christ: Ignacio Ellacuría's Interpretation of Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises." Both of these essays are from *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, Volume 10, Number 2, Fall 2010, which you can access on-line through the University of Notre Dame's library ejournals page [https://ejl.library.nd.edu/catalog?f[starts\_with\_facet][]=Q&sort=title\_sort+asc%2C+score+desc ]

Afternoon Session: 2 We will finish our morning's work and also compare and contrast Rahner's and Ellacuría's theological appropriation of the *spiritual Exercises*. Please review and be prepared to discuss Martin Maier, S.J., "Karl Rahner: Ignacio Ellacuría's Teacher," *Love that Produces Hope*, 128-43.

Evening Session: Evening Session: Discussion of issues raised by our session-summarizer and first student-led discussion of a figure in "the Ignatian tradition."

## Wednesday, January 6

Morning Session 1: Now we will take up Pope Francis's application of Ignatian spirituality for today's Church. In our morning sessions we will look at the retreat he gave to the bishops of Spain in 2006. For the first morning session we will consider material that he presented related to the Principle and Foundation and the First Week. Please review and be prepared to discuss chapters 1-5. Review and be prepared to discuss as well O'Malley, *The Jesuits*, pp. 108-112.

Morning Session 2: We continue looking at Francis's retreat for the Spanish bishops. Please review and be prepared to discuss chapters 6-12.

Afternoon Session: Now we look at Ignatian themes in the first major text he wrote for the whole church after being elected pope: *Evangelii gaudium*. Please review and be prepared to discuss this apostolic exhortation, particularly looking for themes and spiritual practices that we have been identifying in Ignatian spirituality.

Evening Session: Evening Session: Discussion of issues raised by our session-summarizer and our final student-led discussion of a figure in "the Ignatian tradition."

## Thursday, January 7

Morning Session 1: We complete our look at Pope Francis's application and appropriation of Ignatian spirituality by considering his encyclical on the environment, *Laudato si*. Please review and be prepared to discuss this encyclical looking particular at the way he appeals to "spirituality," education and conversion in the encyclical.

Morning Session 2: We complete our course by a final review of issues and continuing questions that course participants continue to think and puzzle over after our very intensive "run" through Ignatian spirituality.

Noon: Seminar adjournment. We made it!!!!