

ARTS/SPIR 536: The Arts, Empathy, and Spiritual Formation

Mary McCampbell

July 24–28; 1:30 – 4:30pm

1 or 2 graduate credit hours; or 1 audit hour

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A malnourished capacity for empathy is connected to an equally malnourished imagination. To truly love and welcome others, we need to exercise our imaginations and see our neighbors more as God sees them, resisting hasty and inadequate labels. While reductionist art often works to constrict the imagination, there is a wealth of complex, redemptive art that can grow the imagination in the way of life and truth. In this course, we will look at narrative art—literature, film, television, and popular music—that can enrich and expand the empathetic imagination. While convicting us about our own sins of omission or commission, it also helps us to see beyond ourselves and into the internal and external worlds of our neighbors.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon the successful completion of this course, students should have a clearer understanding of:

1. Differentiate between Christian and popular understandings of empathy.
2. Develop a theological framework for engaging works of art that ask us to be empathetic.
3. Understand the ways that the imagination can help us to love our neighbors.
4. Examine the ways in which several works of art ask us to expand our imaginations for the sake of empathetic love.

COURSE OUTLINE

Day 1 July 24 The Significance of Christian Empathy: The Centrality of the Incarnation)

Day 2 July 25 Empathy for the Human Condition: The Importance of Christian Anthropology

Day 3 July 26 Art as a Model for the Empathetic Imagination

Day 4 July 27 Who is Our Neighbor?

Day 5 July 28 The Empathetic Imagination as a Means to Love

REQUIRED TEXTS

Endo, Shusako. *Silence*. New York: Picador, 2016. (assignment option)

Greene, Graham. *The Power and the Glory*. London: Penguin, 1940. (assignment option)

Greene, Graham. *The End of the Affair*. London: Penguin, 1951. (assignment option)

Malick, Terrence, dir. *The Tree of Life*. Fox Searchlight, 2011. Streaming on Amazon Prime, 2012.

Stevens, Sufjan. *Carrie & Lowell*. Asthmatic Kitty Records, 2015, Streaming on Bandcamp.

Yang, Gene Luen. *American Born Chinese*. New York: Square Fish, 2008.

Looking for textbooks? Please [contact](#) the Regent Bookstore, or check out their [direct-fulfillment website, Aerio](#).

Note: Aerio prices are in USD.

Please Note: This Course Information Sheet is meant to assist in selecting courses. The official syllabus should be consulted for more detailed information. A full syllabus with drop deadlines, policies, and course assignment details is available on Moodle for registered students: moodle.regent-college.edu/login

