



The Sermon on the Mount

Syllabus

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Course Description

Nowhere is the essence of Jesus' teachings more clearly portrayed than in His Sermon on the Mount. In this course learners complete an expository and reading study of the Sermon as found in Matthew 5-7. Students examine key issues in the Sermon and analyze the various interpretations therein. The lectures concentrate on both theological and practical questions raised in the Sermon, such as "How did Christ fulfill the law?" and "How should Christians relate to their world?" Throughout the course, Dr. Stott encourages learners to apply the Sermon's principles to life and ministry.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Appreciate the message of the Sermon on the Mount as God's Word for our salvation and growth.
2. Explain the special theological difficulties raised by the Sermon on the Mount.
3. Propose solutions to the theological difficulties raised by the Sermon on the Mount.
4. Compare and contrast the ways the Pharisees handled the law with the way Christ fulfilled the law.
5. Apply key principles from the Sermon to contemporary life and ministry.
6. Honor God with your life by being different from the world.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Whether you sit in a traditional classroom or study from a distance, you will benefit from interaction, collaboration, and spiritual formation (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 10,3,3,3; 10.3.4.3). In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ITS is developing structures and resources to encourage spiritual formation and community interaction in our courses. In this course, we have included three collaborative learning features:

1. [ITS Online Interactivity Forum](#) (see course requirements) - fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion (required for all students)
2. [Spiritual Formation Project](#) (see course requirements) - fosters mentor-to-learner interaction in a mentor-guided reflection, discussion and application (required for all students)
3. [Learning Community Assignments](#) (see end of syllabus) - fosters peer-to-peer collaboration in a group approach to assignments (optional but recommended where possible)

Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ for the most up-to-date ITS resources.



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Course Texts

Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: And His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5-10*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004.

Patte, Daniel. *The Challenge of Discipleship: A Critical Study of the Sermon on the Mount as Scripture*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity International Press, 1999.

Course Requirements

1. Book Evaluations

For each of the textbooks, the student will write a **6-9 page** critical evaluation. The evaluation will follow the format listed below. "Critical evaluation" means that the student is to read the entire text carefully and thoughtfully, with a view to analyzing the author's strengths and weaknesses relative to the demonstration of his main thesis(es). Papers should utilize the following guidelines:

- A. 1-2 pages of summary, synthesizing the author's overall message, noting his purpose for writing and the book's main thesis(es). This is not a "book report." Do not merely "restate" the book's contents.
- B. 3-4 pages of critical ("evaluative") interaction with the book's content, noting the strengths and weaknesses of the author's arguments as related to the book's main thesis(es). Here, the student will point out areas of agreement/disagreement with the author, including reasoned judgment as to reasons for agreement/disagreement.
- C. 2-3 pages of synthesis, articulating an understanding of how the text has helped or will help the student in personal life and ministry.

2. Term Paper

The student will write a **10-12 page** paper on any theme in the Sermon in which Christ and the Pharisees interpreted the Law differently. The student will consider this theme in its Old Testament context and discuss where the Pharisees erred in their interpretation. He/she will then explain Christ's teaching, considering how Christ both corrected Pharisaical teaching and fulfilled the Law himself. The paper should be written with a view to make relevant contemporary applications of Christ's teaching.



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3. ITS Online Interactivity Forum

Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ to register for and enter the ITS On-Line Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment *after* you have listened to *all* the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
- ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
- ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

NOTE: Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

4. Spiritual Formation Project

RATIONALE: Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind**, ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. *Identify your mentor early in the course*, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

1. **Personal Reflection and Evaluation: *Reflect on the course*** – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.



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- a. Follow these steps in your reflection:

Step 1: What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?

Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?

Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?

Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what *specific steps* should you take to *concretely* apply what you have learned?

- b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)
- c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

2. Community Reflection and Interaction: *Interview a mentor* – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

- a. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)

1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

NOTE: ***Identify your mentor early in the course***, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- b. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:

- ♦ What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
- ♦ In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
- ♦ What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?



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NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

3. **Synthesis and Application: *Draw your final conclusions*** – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:
- a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
 - b. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - ◆ What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
 - ◆ What advice did he/she give?
 - ◆ How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
 - ◆ Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
 - c. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
 - ◆ If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - ◆ Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
 - ◆ In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, *specific* changes need to occur in your life and what *concrete* steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.



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Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

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5. Final Exam

At the end of the course the student will take an exam over the lectures.

Course Grading

1.	Book Evaluations	20% (10% each)
2.	Term Paper.....	35%
3.	ITS Online Interactivity Forum	5%
4.	Spiritual Formation Project	15%
5.	Final Exam.....	25%



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Notes Regarding This Downloaded Syllabus

This downloadable syllabus is not exhaustive. It is designed to provide learners with a picture of the course, not a full outline of the course. Grader Guidelines, Appendixes, Bibliographies, Lecture Outlines, and Review Questions have been removed. The complete course syllabus is included with purchase of the course in either a digital or hard-copy format.

Likewise, individuals taking the class for credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to alter or change the syllabus as deemed necessary.