

## SYLLABUS FOR NOVITIATE COURSE ON MONASTIC HISTORY/MONASTIC STUDIES

Estimated duration: 40-45 weeks, with 1-3 hrs/wk

Note: below are five main historical epochs in monastic history, with significant topics and persons under each, but it is anticipated that each monastery will emphasize some things over others and even omit some things; not everything can be covered. This syllabus is a resource to draw from.

- \* Pre-Benedictine (10-12 wks)

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- \* Antony / Life of Antony by Athanasius

- \* Desert Fathers

- \* Pachomius

- \* Holy Land monasticism

- \* Origen, Evagrius, Cassian

- \* Martin of Tour

- \* Basil

- \* Augustine

- \* Celtic monasticism

- \* RESOURCES:

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- \* Authors: Columba Stewart, Jeremy Driscoll, Luke Dysinger, William Harmless, Adalbert de Vogue, Matthias Neumann, Gert Melville, Luc Bresard

- \* Benedict's Rule, and its spread (7-8 wks)

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- \* Gregory's Dialogues

- \* Charlemagne

- \* Benedictine of Aniane

- \* RESOURCES:

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- \* Authors: Sr. Mary Foreman, Matthias Neumann, Adalbert de Vogue, Columba Stewart, Gert Melville, Luc Bresard

- \* Medieval monastic reforms (10-12 wks)

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- \* Cluny

- \* Cistercians (Bernard, Aelred)

- \* Anselm of Canterbury

- \* Medieval women mystics: Hildegard, Gertrude the Great

- \* Norbertines

- \* Camaldese

- \* Carthusians

- \* RESOURCES:

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- \* Authors: Hugh Feiss, Eric Hollas, Sr. Mary Foreman, C.H. Lawrence, Peter King, Gert Melville

- \* Revival after French Revolution (5-6 wks)

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- \* Boniface Wimmer & beginning of our congregation

- \* Solesmes
- \* Beuron
- \* Liturgical movement (Virgil Michel)
- \* Marmion
- \* RESOURCES:
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- \* Authors: Joel Rippinger, Gert Melville, Sr. Mary Foreman, Jerome Oetgen
- \* Local history of one's own monastery & post-Vatican II monasticism (8-10 wks)
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- \* Council documents (e.g., Sacrosanctum Councilium, Perfectae Caritatis, ...)
- \* Renew & Create
- \* RESOURCES:
- \*
- \* Authors: local histories, Joel Rippinger

Second, some things we discussed in general

If the outline is divided up, one possible arrangement is: first two sections be about a semester; the third and fourth be about a semester; and the fifth be a semester.

How many hours for class per week (for all classes)? 5-6 hrs/wk, but one case 10 hrs/wk  
 How many hours for week per week? 20-25 hrs/wk

What about video recordings?

- \* Could record class lectures.
- \*
- \* PROS = some people are doing this already
- \* CONS = might be too high a level (grad. studies), might not be willing (since it is what they do professionally)
- \* Should there be an ideal time-length? Such as 20-25 min. segments (corresponding to basic attention time spans)

Online courses?

- \* Trappist/Cistercians has cohorts with St. John's Abbey

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

I: Pre-Benedictine

Luc Bresard, Course on Monastic Spirituality  
 Basil, Longer and Shorter Rules

- \* Fathers of the Church for at least the Longer Rules
- \* first six rules can be found in A Life Pleasing to God by Augustine Holmes

Wisdom from the Desert Fathers (and Mothers)

## Topics:

- \* Overview of different collections, Alphabetic by author and Systematic by theme
- \* Anecdotal type of Wisdom literature
- \* Eremitical/Abba-Disciple model vs. Cenobitic monasticism
- \* Intellectual ("Origenist") tradition in the desert

## Benedicta Ward, Sayings of the Desert Fathers

- \* Note that there are two collections, alphabetic by author and systematic by theme
- \* T4 has some lectures on Desert tradition

## William Harmless, The Desert Christians (Oxford)

- \* first 100 or so pages esp. useful

## St. Athanasius, Life of Antony

- \* Many editions available, including Classics of Western Spirituality series (1980) and Post-Nicene series, the latter of which is available online

## Evagrius, Ad Monachos with introduction by Jeremy Driscoll Evagrius, Praktikos

- \* Online version by Luke Dysinger
- \* John Eudes Bamberger trans.

## John Cassian, Conferences

- \* Post-Nicene series available online but harder to read and certain sections not translated
- \* Modern translation by Boniface Ramsey in Ancient Christian Writers, v. 57

## John Cassian, Institutes

- \* Post-Nicene series available online but harder to read and certain sections not translated
- \* Modern translation by Boniface Ramsey in Ancient Christian Writers

## Columba Stewart, Cassian the Monk

- \* Probably want to use simply selections, as whole work might be too academic for novitiate

## Luc Bresard, Course on Monastic Spirituality

- \* Has sections on Desert Fathers and what came down to Benedict that are accessible at a beginner's level

## Derwas Chitty, The Desert a City

- \* Perhaps a classic on desert monasticism

## II: the Rule and its spread

### Gregory the Great Dialogues II

- \* Adalbert de Vogue The Life of Benedict with commentary has book 2 of Dialogues and commentary (more beginner friendly than other works by this author)
- \* Also, a translation is available online via [osb.org](http://osb.org)<<http://osb.org>>

### C.H. Lawrence, Medieval Monasticism

- \* Has sections on the spread of the Rule

### Peter King, Western Monasticism

- \* Has sections on the spread of the Rule

### Gert Melville, The World of Medieval Monasticism: Its History and Forms of Life

- \* Has sections on the spread of the Rule

## III: Medieval monastic reforms

\*See histories above on medieval monasticism

### Bernard, Sermons on the Ascension

### Bernard, Book on Loving God

- \* Cistercian Fathers series, n. 13

### Bernard, Sermons on the Song of Songs

- \* Very long; would need to pull out select passages

### John of Salerno, Life of Odo

- \* trans. and edited by Gerard Sitwell

### Hildegard Scivias

- \* ed. by Barbara Newman
- \* very long; you'd probably want to use select passages

### Hildegard Explanation of the Rule of St. Benedict

- \* trans. Hugh Feiss

### Gertrude Spiritual Exercises

\* in Cistercian Fathers, n. 49

Dom Guigo the Carthusian The Ladder of Monks

- \* contains four steps of lectio divina
- \* in Cistercian Studies series

Aelred Spiritual Friendship  
Aelred Mirror of Charity

IV: Revival after French Revolution

Jerome Oetgen An American Abbot  
Columba Marmion Christ the Ideal of the Monk  
Prosper Gueranger Liturgical Year

- \* multi-volume, a PDF version seems available online

Joel Ripinger Benedictine Order in the U.S.  
Peter King (book cited above)

V: Local history & post-Vatican II

\*Local histories will vary from monastery to monastery

Second Vatican Council Sacrosanctum Concilium

- \* Perhaps better left to class on liturgy

Second Vatican Council Perfectae Caritatis

- \* Concerning the renewal and adaptation of religious life; note sections on monasticism

Renew & Create issued by 1969 General Chapter of the American-Cassinese Congregation

- \* available online through [osb.org](http://osb.org)<<http://osb.org>> and perhaps on congregation's website