

## **The Short Story: A Pathway to Explore Spirituality**

Week 1:

Topic: MYSTERY

- Review the course outline together and discuss what will be encouraged from each participant. The outline will include suggested readings for each session.
- We will explore the intersection between the arts and spirituality, and how the arts encourage us to approach spiritual issues with humility, a sense of wonder, an appreciation for ambiguity and openness to surprise.

Week 2:

Topic: MYSTERY (continued) and DOUBT

- A discussion of “A Father’s Story” by Andre Dubus will be followed by viewing a brief interview of Dubus, in which he discusses this story.
- The topic of DOUBT will be introduced as we discuss John L’Heureux’s “The Expert on God.”

Week 3:

Topic: DOUBT (continued)

- A discussion of John Updike’s “Pigeon Feathers” will be followed by a brief video, in which Updike discusses how he sees his faith and his writing intersecting.

Week 4:

Topic: EVIL

- The focus in this session is on Flannery O’Connor and her short story “Good Country People”, which will be followed by a brief video documentary on the life of O’Connor.

Week 5:

Topic: EVIL (continued)

- The topic of “evil” will be continued as we focus on Irwin Shaw’s “Act of Faith”.

Week 6:

Topic: THE SUPERNATURAL

- Louise Erdrich's "Love Medicine," is the focus of this session.

Week 7:

Topic: RECONCILIATION

- Raymond Carver's story "Cathedral," introduces the topic of reconciliation. Following that discussion, there will be a brief video in which Carver talks of his faith and of this story.

Week 8:

Topic: RECONCILIATION (continued)

- Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" will be used to continue the discussion, followed by a brief video in which Walker discusses her writing and her faith.
- In this final class, there will be a discussion of how participants may continue to explore spirituality through resources that will be suggested by the teacher and the group.