

**Wesley Theological Seminary
Course of Study
April 22-23 and May 13-14, 2016**

COS 123: Formation and Discipleship

Instructor Information

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I office at Washington National Cathedral, so am not available by phone through Wesley Seminary. Office hours at the Cathedral are 9 AM – 5 PM, Monday through Friday. These are the best times to reach me. I check email, text and phone infrequently on the weekends.

Course Objectives

To ground the student in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship.

Course Goals

Students will be able to:

- Articulate a theological basis for the Wesleyan emphasis on spiritual disciplines and practice them as a means of grace.
- Explain and implement the General Rules and the practices of small groups in a congregation.
- Educate and resource a congregation in the disciplines of Christian formation.
- Organize congregations to help people discern their callings and gifts for ministry.

Textbooks

To obtain textbooks or view the list go to My Wesley on the website

<https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/my-wesley/>

Click on the button that says “Textbooks”.

Select your program (Course of Study)

Select your course number.

You may order books on-line directly from our e-store. Or you may choose order your books from Cokesbury or any other bookseller. Be sure to also reach out to other COS students to see if they may have books to lend to you. This will help reduce the out of pocket costs of the program.

Required Texts

Matthaei, Sondra Higgins, *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008) ISBN 978-0-687-64973-0.

Thompson, Marjorie J., *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville: Westminster John Know Press, 1995) ISBN 0-664-25548-5.

2012 United Methodist Book of Discipline

Note: If you do not own, please try to borrow. A new Book of Discipline will be published after this spring's General Conference.

Job, Rueben P. *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007) ISBN – 13:978-0-687-649662.

Supplemental Texts

Berryman, Jerome. *Teaching Godly Play: How to Mentor the Spiritual Development of Children* (Denver: Morehouse Education Resources, 2000) ISBN – 978-1-60674-048-4.

Yaconelli, Mark. *Practicing the Presence of Jesus: Contemplative Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006) ISBN – 13-978-0-310-26777-5.

Seymour, Jack. *Teaching the Way of Jesus. Additional information to be provided.*

Wimberly, Anne and Evelyn Park. *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church. Additional information to be provided.*

Assignments

Specifications for all papers:

- Margins: One inch, pages numbered, stapled, and please put your name on your paper
- Font: 12 pt, Times New Roman or equivalent
- Spacing: Double

Assignments:

- Complete all required reading, and reflect this effort by contributions made in class and in all written work. Participate in class with curiosity, and in ways that invite deeper conversation, and are reflective in nature.
- Submit all papers at the beginning of class on date due. **No late papers will be accepted.**

- **Please note that a portion of Assignment one and two requires two weeks preparation. Please plan accordingly.**

Assignment Part 1 due April 22, 2016

Completed assignment not to exceed 10 pages.

- Read *Formation in Faith*, Sondra Higgins Matthaei
- Read *Three Simple Rules*, Rueben Job
- Answer the questions on page 16 under “Personal Experience in the Church.”
- Complete the table on page 17 (no more than two pages).
- Using the models of how people grow in faith, identify your experience with each model. Compare and contrast each model in your own words. Describe how you see each model serving a program for Christian formation in your congregation.
- Complete Appendix 1 on page 109.
- **You will need two weeks to complete this assignment!!!** Spend two weeks, practice the daily cycle of prayer outlined by Job, reflecting daily on the discipline in writing. Notice what you notice about the shape of this practice of prayer. Write a final reflection to include your sense of this Wesleyan practice of prayer; to include your sense of this prayer as a means of grace. How might you introduce this discipline to others?

Assignment Part 2 due May 13, 2016

Completed assignment not to exceed 10 pages

- Read *Soul Feast*, Marjorie J. Thompson
- Read one of the suggested supplemental texts, choosing one that seems most applicable to your setting.
- **You will need at least two weeks to complete this assignment!!!** Choose one of the spiritual disciplines described by Thompson that is unfamiliar to you, or one with which you have limited experience. Spend two weeks practicing the discipline, reflecting daily on the discipline in writing. Notice what you notice each day. Write a final reflection to include your sense of this discipline as a means of grace. How might you introduce this discipline to others?
- How do you understand the role of spiritual disciplines in Christian formation and discipleship?
- In Chapter one, Thompson describes the factors contributing to spiritual hunger in our time. Do you see these factors at work in your congregation and community? What other factors do you see contributing to spiritual hunger?
- Reflect on the supplemental text you chose. What, specifically, does it suggest to you concerning ministries of formation and discipleship in your work context? In your own words, describe specifically an adjustment you might make in your thinking and practice of ministry in light of the material presented by the author.

Course Content

- Thinking theologically about Christian Education and Spiritual Formation
- Wesley's contributions to the Christian tradition through the General Rules, his thinking about grace and the means of grace, and the role of small groups in spiritual formation and maturation
- Faith development and human development concepts important to ordering congregational life, education, formation, and practices
- Choosing settings and curriculum for Christian Education and opportunities for spiritual formation
- Creating a space for welcoming the learner: styles of learning, multiple intelligences, differences in learning styles and needs
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Grading

- An "A" level grade is for outstanding work, with a creative edge, that demonstrates a student's capacity to integrate class materials, discussions, and assigned readings into new understandings, perspectives, and meanings.
- A "B" level grade is for good work, demonstrating sound engagement with class materials, discussions, and assigned readings. This understanding is well articulated and coherent.
- A "C" grade is for satisfactory work that does not indicate significant engagement with the materials, discussions, and assigned readings and does not move beyond reporting what has been read or heard.
- Any grade below "C" clearly indicates that the student should see the instructor immediately.

Inclusive Language

The language we use in theological reflection has great power. To that end, students are expected to attend to the importance of inclusive language in classroom discussion and in written materials for the course. The use of inclusive language demonstrates a student's awareness that language about God and persons (minimally, gender and racial identity) reflects values and seeks to bring justice to theological conversation..

Academic Policies

Class Participation:

- Attendance is required. Chronic tardiness and extended breaks will negatively affect a student's grade. No absences are excused. This class is an intensive experience and attendance is simply mandatory.
- Use of electronic media for purposes that do not relate the course content will also reflect negatively on the student's grade. Cell phones should be silenced and calls should not be answered in the classroom.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is regarded as serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal.
- The Faculty regards the following as forms of plagiarism or dishonesty:
 - copying from another student's paper.
 - giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination.
 - using unauthorized material during an examination.
 - borrowing and presenting as one's own (i.e., without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another, whether from books, a friend, or the Internet.
 - submitting as one's own work a paper written (or partially written) by another.

Wesley Student Handbook

- Please refer to your Wesley Student Handbook (on-line) for more information about Wesley's academic policies or contact the Course of Study office 202-885-8688.