

Wesley Theological Seminary  
Course of Study  
Winter 2023  
January (asynchronous) and February 17-18 (synchronous, online)

## Syllabus

COS 123: Formation and Discipleship

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### **Course Description:**

This course grounds the student in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship.

### **Objectives:**

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

### **Required Texts:**

1. Matthaei, Sondra Higgins, *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008). ISBN: 978-0-687-64973-0
2. Thompson, Marjorie, J., *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*, revised edition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014). ISBN 13: 9780664261153

### **Supplemental Texts:**

3. CHOOSE ONE
  - A. Campen, Tanya Marie Eustace. *Holy Work with Children: Making Meaning Together*. (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2021). ISBN: 978-1725296209
  - B. Crutchfield, Carmichael D. *The Formation of a People: Christian Education and the African American Church*. (Judson Press, 2020). ISBN: 978-0817018160
  - C. Lytle, Julie Anne. *Faith Formation 4.0*. (Morehouse Publishing, 2013). ISBN: 978-0819228314
  - D. Tye, Karen B., *Christian Education in the Small Membership Church*. (Abingdon, 2008). ISBN: 978-0687650996

## **Required Reference Document**

The General Rules of the United Methodist Church  
[Discipleship Ministries | The General Rules \(umcdiscipleship.org\)](http://umcdiscipleship.org)

## **Technical Requirements**

### **Microsoft Windows**

- Windows 8 or higher
- Intel Core i5 or higher or AMD equivalent
- At least 16GB of free storage space

### **Mac OS/X**

- OS/XMac OS X 10.14 or newer
- Intel processor and at least 4 GB of RAM

### **All Systems**

- Up-to-date browser: Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Edge ([click here for Blackboard browser checker](#))
- Up-to-date PDF reader ([Adobe](#) or [Foxit](#))
- Up-to-date version of [Adobe Flash Player](#)
- Up-to-date video player:
  - Windows Media player or
  - [VideoLAN VLC media player](#)
- Up-to-date Word processor and presentation package ([Wesley Theological Seminary offers free Office 365 Basic for students click here for instructions on how to download](#))
- High speed internet connection

## **Other Technical Requirements**

Student should have a web cam and microphone. USB headset and microphone are beneficial to block out noise.

## **Assignment Instructions**

**Students are to read all required texts before doing assignments.**

Please pay attention to the due dates for all assignments.

Please note that all assignments are in Blackboard. Click on [Learning Modules](#) found on the left-hand side when you are in the class on Blackboard. Click on it to reveal the assignments. [Follow the instructions](#) to complete the assignment. Instructions on posting to Blackboard can also be found on the COS webpage. If you run into trouble, please contact [blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu) for help.

If you are new to Course of Study at Wesley, please be sure to check Blackboard once you receive your login information from the IT department. It is the responsibility of the student to check Blackboard for posts. You should have access to your courses in Blackboard in late November.

## **Asynchronous Work**

- READ MATTHAEI, SONDRA HIGGINS, *FORMATION IN FAITH*.

### **Assignment 1: Define Christian Formation (5%)**

- A. Your response should be at least 2 paragraphs, including an explanation of your definition and evidence from required readings.
- B. Read your classmates answers and share in one paragraph any new insight or difference of opinion.

Due January 9 (respond to 3 classmates, due January 13)

### **Assignment 2: Define Discipleship (5%)**

- A. Your response should be at least 2 paragraphs, including an explanation of your definition and evidence from required readings.
- B. Read your classmates answers and share in one paragraph any new insight or difference of opinion.

Due January 9 (respond to 3 classmates, due January 13)

### **Assignment 3: Communion of Grace Assessment (10%)**

Using the tables on pages 38-39 of the Matthaei book, assess the strengths and areas of growth for the congregation(s) you are currently serving. Please complete separate tables for each congregation you are serving.

Due January 9

### **Assignment 4: Forming Faith Assessment (10%)**

Complete the table in Appendix IV of the Matthaei book. Please complete separate tables for each congregation you are serving.

Due January 16

- READ THOMPSON, MARJORIE J., *SOUL FEAST*.

### **Assignment 5: Spiritual Disciplines and Faith Formation (5%)**

- A. Respond to the question Thompson asks on page 15, "How do you understand the connection between inward growth and outward expressions of faith." In other words, how are spiritual disciplines relevant to Christian formation and discipleship?  
Your response should be at least 2 paragraphs, including evidence from required readings.
- B. Read your classmates answers and share in one paragraph any new insight or difference of opinion.

Due January 23 (respond to 3 classmates, due January 27)

### **Assignment 6: Forced Isolation (5%)**

- A. In the margins of page 57, Thompson asks "Do you think forced isolation makes a person more conscious of the gift and importance of common worship?" and "What might we learn in such

circumstances?” Respond to these questions given the forced isolation many experienced at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

Your response should be at least 2 paragraphs, including evidence from required readings.

- B. Read your classmates answers and share in one paragraph any new insight or difference of opinion.

Due January 23 (respond to 3 classmates, due January 27)

### **Assignment 7: Spiritual Hunger (15%)**

In chapter 1, Thompson writes about the factors contributing to spiritual hunger in our time. Which of these factors do you see at work in your congregation and community? What other factors do you see contributing to spiritual hunger? (2 page max)

Due January 30

### **Assignment 8: Works Righteousness (15%)**

If we are saved by grace, what is the role of spiritual disciplines? The concept of “works righteousness” says that we are saved because God approves of the good things we do, and if we do enough good things we get into heaven. What would you say to a member of your congregation who complains that emphasizing spiritual disciplines such as fasting and prayer is a form of works righteousness? (2 pages max)

Due January 30

- CHOOSE A TEXT FROM THE SUPPLEMENTAL LIST ON PAGE 1 OF THIS DOCUMENT.

### **Assignment 9: A Model for Christian Formation (20%)**

Develop a model for Christian Formation using the supplemental text you chose from the book list on page 1. The required readings should also be referenced. This model should be designed with the congregation you are serving in mind. If you are serving more than one congregation, please select only one congregation for this assignment. (3 pages max)

The model should include the following:

- Vision Statement – include the purpose of Christian formation from a biblical perspective, and understanding of the role of Christian formation in ecclesia life.
- Contextual Analysis – description of the congregation with demographic data, socio-cultural factors relevant to providing Christian Formation.
- Content – Scripture, doctrine, and resources.
- Curriculum – Selection of materials to meet the faith formation need in your congregation.
- Methods – Creatively incorporate a variety of learning opportunity opportunities sensitive to the population (children, adults, teens, hybrid, in person, virtual). What methods are you planning to use and how?
- Recruiting – outline strategies that reflect awareness of how to identify and motivate gifted teachers.
- Training – outline a training for the teachers that accommodates a variety of learning styles and provides training for specific contexts and age groups.

A rubric has been provided to assist you in developing a Christian Formation Model. Attention should be given to creativity, usage of class resources, and grammar.

**Due February 6**

### **Synchronous ZOOM Sessions**

February 17-18 Mandatory

### **Class Participation (10%)**

#### **Submission**

Each assignment should be submitted in its entirety in electronic format through Blackboard by the deadline stated above.

#### **Formatting**

All assignments should be 12pt font, Calibri (or equivalent) font, double spaced, 1" margins, with inserted page numbers.

#### **Footnotes**

Parenthetical notations are preferred.

#### **Grading:**

Grades will be based on proficiency of assignments, preparedness for class, and class participation. The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a "B" grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

An "A" means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student's prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student's imagination at work; it has a creative edge.

A "B" means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.

A "C" means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from the readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.

A "D" means the individual needs to see me.

An "F" means the individual needs to see me immediately.

**Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for each day the assignment is handed in after the due date.**

#### **Inclusive Language**

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values

and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:

- Copying from another students paper
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
- Using unauthorized material during an examination
- Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.

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.