

Wesley Theological Seminary
Course of Study
Summer 2025 (online)
June (asynchronous) and July 14-18 (synchronous)

NEW: Opening Worship and Class Orientation

May 27th at 11 AM (ZOOM information to be provided by the WST COS Office)

Syllabus

COS 123: Formation and Discipleship

Faculty: Dr. Sherri E. Wood-Powe

Primary E-mail: spowe@wesleyseminary.edu

Secondary E-mail: pastorsewp@gmail.com

**Please use both email addresses. NOTE: Communicating with me through Blackboard will likely have a delayed response since the Blackboard email is NOT connected to our Wesley email.*

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. Matthaui, 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

Assignments should display a knowledge of and understanding of the book's contents.

References to the readings should be included throughout ALL assignments.

Please pay attention to the due dates for all assignments.

Please note that all assignments are in Blackboard under Course Content. [Follow the instructions](#) to complete the assignment. Instructions are also included for Navigating Blackboard and Tech Info. If you run into trouble, please contact edtech@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. It is the responsibility of the student to check Blackboard for posts.

Orientation and Opening Worship May 27 at 11 AM

The Course of Study Programs Office is offering a time of worship followed by class orientation. Participation is included as part of the course, so non-participation may impact your final course grade. The class orientation will provide an opportunity to review the syllabus and ask questions about the assignments.

Asynchronous Work

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

Assignment 1: Communion of Grace Assessment (10)

Using the tables at the end of chapter 2 of the Matthaie 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. (NOTE: I prefer you submit this assignment formatted a table. If you are unable to do so, please be diligent in providing a similar format – columns)

Due June 5

Assignment 2: Forming Faith Assessment (10)

Complete the table in Appendix IV of the Matthaie book. Please complete separate tables for each congregation you are serving. (NOTE: I prefer you submit this assignment formatted a table. If you are unable to do so, please be diligent in providing a similar format - columns)

Due June 9

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

Assignment 3: Spiritual Disciplines and Faith Formation (15)

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.

Due June 12

Assignment 4: Spiritual Hunger (10)

In chapter 1, Thompson writes about the factors contributing to spiritual hunger in our time. There are two different ways to interpret hunger. Be certain you understand which way she is using the term.

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 June 16

Assignment 5: Works Righteousness (10)

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 June 19

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

Assignment 6: Curriculum for Teaching the General Rules (15)

Develop a curriculum for teaching the General Rules OR base this assignment on an existing curriculum. If using an existing curriculum, please be sure to reference the curriculum. This curriculum should be developed using the required and supplemental readings for this course. Be sure to reference them **throughout** the assignment. This curriculum should be designed with the congregation AND community you are serving in mind. If you are serving more than one congregation, please select only one congregation for this assignment. (5 pages max)

The model should include the following:

- Organizational structure provided by Matthaëi so a plan for persons new to the faith, maturing Christians, and mature Christians.
- Address spiritual hunger in congregation and community.
- Progression from information to transformation – process for assisting to incorporate learnings into daily living. (5 pages max)

Due June 23

Assignment 7: A Model for Christian Formation (25)

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. NOTE: This model is **not** necessarily based on current Faith Formation practices at your churches. This model **IS** something for you to implement at your churches to enhance/improve your current practices by incorporating learnings from this course. (5 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 understanding grading and expectations for a Christian Formation Model. Attention should be given to creativity, usage of class resources, and grammar.

Due June 26

Synchronous ZOOM Sessions

July 14-18 Mandatory

Class Participation (25%)

Submission

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

Late assignments may be received with a 5 point penalty.

No assignments will be accepted after June 30. All assignments must be completed before classes begin in July in order to attend class.

Formatting

All assignments should be 12pt font, Calibri (or equivalent) font, 1" margins

Footnotes

Parenthetical citations 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 5 points for assignments submitted 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 forms of plagiarism or dishonesty:

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

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.