

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
Junior Spiritual Formation Group, Second Semester

Course Description

IN 422/522D

Winter/Spring, 2010

1 credit, credit/no credit

Prerequisite: IN521

Dr. Leicester Longden
Dr. Matthew Schlimm
Dr. Timothy Slemmons

Course Description

This class, for all M.Div. junior students, will help prepare students for their seminary and pastoral careers by providing tools for nurturing the life of the spirit. In small groups of eight to ten, students will meet with a faculty member for the purpose of prayer and spiritual formation. They will covenant together to practice individual and corporate spiritual disciplines, combining academic reading with experiential practice. They will seek to inhabit, personally and communally, the primary vision of our seminary, namely, to unify a life of prayer, study, and service. Through this second semester of spiritual formation, students will build upon disciplines studied in the fall, and consider new disciplines that often are practiced in community.

Course Objectives

1. Integrate theological learning and spiritual formation.
2. Provide a safe place for sharing spiritual concerns in a fellowship of accountability.
3. Build a sense of spiritual community needed to sustain pastoral ministry for years.
4. Develop the communal discipline of listening for God.
5. Learn together how Christian spirituality moves from worship to service.
6. Build Christian character by both:
 - Practicing mutual accountability and participation in community;
 - Exercising self-discipline and motivation in practices leading to growth in spirit and character.

M. Div. Curricular Goals

1. Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer, and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives.
2. Be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the Church.
3. Educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church.
4. Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance and conscientious participation in class is required as a spiritual

discipline (no more than one absence for unforeseen reasons). Attendance affects meeting each of the course objectives.

2. Keep a spiritual journal reflecting upon your reading and experience of the discipline under discussion. Provide copies of two journal reflections to your faculty instructor. This will be a useful tool especially for objectives 1, 4, 5 and 6.
3. Complete the daily or weekly readings before class. The reading has been selected to be meaningful to individuals and groups in meeting all course objectives.
4. Prepare and facilitate a session on one spiritual discipline for the group. Present a lesson plan to the instructor prior to the session.
5. Bring Bible to every class.
6. Fulfill the agreed-upon small group covenant, including the practices of presence and confidentiality, in order to develop character in community and contribute to the life of that community. Covenant keeping contributes to all course objectives.
7. Participate in a retreat experience before the semester's end.

Required Texts

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*

Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Introduction to Christian Spiritual Life*

Additional required and recommended articles provided through e-reserves.