

CRE 528AK A Ministry of Christian Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers a basic study of Christian faith formation in the Wesleyan tradition, with particular focus on leadership in a ministry of Christian faith formation. Students have an opportunity to explore relationships, structures, and practices that contribute to spiritual growth. Students design a Christian formation project for their particular ministry settings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- ◆ Articulate and utilize in-depth knowledge of Christian faith formation in the Wesleyan tradition.
- ◆ Identify and articulate an understanding of relationships that shape faith.
- ◆ Complete basic assessments of disciple making in one's own congregation.
- ◆ Identify her or his preferred learning style and gain awareness of the other ways people learn and use this information to articulate one's own teaching identity.
- ◆ Demonstrate ability in critical reflection skills in written and oral communication.
- ◆ Create a design for Christian faith formation in the Wesleyan tradition to use in one's own congregation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

The purpose of class *participation* is to form a community of learning that is much more than the sum of our individual efforts. In this course, learning necessitates informed, open, and appreciative interaction. Class participation also demonstrates comprehension and integration of assigned material. Good participation involves adequate preparation, mutual interactions, appropriate attitudes, and sometimes, extra efforts in addition to attentive listening, and a welcoming spirit. *Attendance* at all class sessions is mandatory. (*Handbook: 2008-2009*, 121.)

2) READING

Class members are expected to have completed all readings by the class session for which they are assigned. *The right to participate in class discussion is based on having read the assigned texts for the session.* The instructor strongly encourages class members to employ strategies they have found useful in other courses for successful completion of assigned readings.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sondra H. Matthaei. *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000).

Sondra H. Matthaei. *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008).

3) WRITTEN WORK

The primary purpose of the written work is to be a means by which your thinking is enhanced. Writing is an indispensable skill that demonstrates ability to think carefully and incisively. The reflection papers also demonstrate that you have command over the material assigned. This means that you know the basic issues and positions taken on them by the authors, and how to integrate those issues with your ministry setting. You are expected to utilize these positions as resources in your discussion. For all written assignments, the grade will reflect both the content and the style of your communication. In other words both what you say and how you say it count. If you have concerns about your writing, please see the instructor.

Note: The instructor stops reading at the end of the allotted pages, so use the space to your advantage by constructing focused, substantive reflections.

ADVANCED ASSIGNMENTS

Submit these papers in Word 1997-2003 or rtf format by email to matthaei@spst.edu. Email a copy to yourself to make sure the attachment goes through. Keep a copy of the paper for yourself. **THESE PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN JUNE 5 IN ORDER FOR YOU TO BE ADMITTED TO THIS CLASS. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

1. Reflection Paper: Spiritual Growth Experience (3-5 pages)

- Reflect on your own spiritual journey over the last ten years. Think about a relationship or event that significantly shaped your growth in faith.
 - Pick **one** relationship or event. Think about how this relationship or even shaped your growth in faith.
 - Then **write a reflection paper** about the relationship or even that significantly shaped your journey. Tell the story in as much detail as possible. Include positive and negative aspects.
 - After you complete this reflection, think about the questions below and revise your reflection so that your description includes answers to as many of the questions as possible.
- a) If you are describing a significant relationship that shaped your faith?
Where and when did this relationship take place?
How did the relationship happen?
When did it begin? Did it end? When and why?
What characteristics or qualities describe the other person?
Was this person a family member, a teacher or pastor, a friend?
How did this person influence your relationship with God and growth in faith?
- b) If you are describing a significant event that shaped your faith?
Where and when did this event take place?
How did the event happen?
When did it begin? End?
Who was involved in the event, e.g. congregation, seminary class, etc.?
What words describe this event, e.g. challenging, hospitable, peaceful, etc.?
How did this event influence your relationship with God and grow your faith?

2. One academic paper

(5 pages)

Drawing on Dr. Matthaesi's *Making Disciples* text, reflect on these questions

- How does John Wesley talk about what we would call "Christian discipleship"?
- What is John Wesley's understanding of how the communion of the Trinity is related to a persons' growth in faith?
- What are two or three important elements in a Wesleyan ecology of Christian faith formation?
- Do Wesley's proposals connect with the relationship or event you discussed in the reflection paper on your spiritual journey?

Note: an academic paper is focused around a central theme and involves critical reflection on that theme, dialoguing with the argument of the source, and constructing your own creative proposals in relation to your reflection. An academic contains proper documentation for sources.

3. One Congregational Assessment Paper

Using the ideas and assessment suggestions in *Formation in Faith*, **work with at least two persons from your congregation** to do the following:

- a. Select one activity from "Personal Experience in the Church" and two activities from "Your Church and its Community" on pages 16-17. Describe what you did and what you found out (2 pages). Then complete the chart on page 17 (1-2 pages).
- b. Discuss and complete the chart on pages 38-39 (2-3 pages).
- c. Have each person in your group complete exercise #2 on page 61 and do the reflection described in exercise #3. (1 page summary discussion of implications for servant ministry and servant leadership)
- d. Follow the instructions for reflecting and planning on pages 90-91. (Summary of what you did 3-4 pages)
- e. Share exercises #1 and #2 on page 107 (1-2 pages discussion of your sharing)

Note: You will be using what you have learned in designing your final project for this class.