

Syllabus: Fall, 2014

34 507 Spiritual Direction/Companionship

Instructor: The Rev'd. Dr. Frederick W. Schmidt

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Course Description

Explores biblical texts, historical traditions, and modern approaches to the art of spiritual direction/guidance and its place in the church today; relationship of spiritual direction to counseling, therapy, and mentoring. No prerequisite.

Course Outcomes

This is an introductory course and is devoted to an exploration of the history, theology, and practice of spiritual direction. This is not a practicum course and while the course could contribute to certification in spiritual direction, it does not adequately prepare students to practice as spiritual directors. Therefore, the student should not expect to practice spiritual direction in class, nor should the student assume that successful completion of the course certifies the student to serve as a spiritual director.

What students can expect to leave class with is:

- A basic outline of the history of spiritual direction

- The variety of ways in which direction is understood and deployed

- The necessary theological framework for understanding and evaluating the practice of spiritual direction

- An introduction to the practice of spiritual direction and some of the major tools deployed in this ministry

- A core understanding of the differences between spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, and therapy

- A basic awareness of the ethical and vocational obligations of the director

- An introduction to the ways in which diversity shapes the direction process

- A knowledge of the ways in which a basic understanding of spiritual direction can shape other ministries

Texts

Barry, William A. and Connolly, William J. *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. 2nd ed., San Francisco: Harper One, 2012.

Barry, William A. *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God*. rev. ed., Manawah: Paulist Press, 2005.

Benner, David and Crabb, Larry. *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction*. Downer's Grove: IVP, 2004.

Empereur, James. *Spiritual Direction and the Gay Person*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1998.

Fischer, Kathleen. *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction*. Manawah: Paulist Press, 1989.

- Guenther, Margaret and Jones, Alan. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*. 6th ed.; Lanham: Cowley, 1992.
- Nemeck, Francis Kelly. *The Way of Spiritual Direction*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1985.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*. 20th ed.; Downer's Grove: IVP, 2009.
- Ruffing, Janet. *Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings*. Manawah: Paulist Press, 2000.
- Schmidt, Frederick W. *What God Wants for Your Life*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.
- Hausherr, Irene. *Spiritual Direction in the Early Christian East*. Cistercian Study Series, No. 116. Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 1990.

Calendar and Assignments

History & Theology of Spiritual Direction

- September 4 Introduction to the class and the syllabus / Defining Spiritual Direction: History and Conceptualization

Reading: Barry & Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, Part 1; Gunther, *Holy Listening*, chapter 3
- September 11 A Theology of Spiritual Direction: The nature of theology, theology and spirituality, ideational nature of knowledge, multiple intelligences and the knowledge of the divine, implicit and explicit knowledge/
Triage Theology: Its character, sources, criteria for its assessment, listening for triage theology, listening with a triage theology / the fundamental nature of discernment: God-questions, We-questions, I-questions

Reading: Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction*, chapter 3; Barry, *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God*; Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 1 and 2; Schmidt, *What God Wants for Your Life*, Chapters 1, 2, and 6
- September 18 Images and understandings of God: obscuring and opening ourselves to the presence of God, false Dichotomies: truth and love, transcendence and immanence, / Anthropology: Bodies with spirits and psyches, psyches with spirits and bodies, spirits with bodies and psyches, children of God

Reading: Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 3 and 4
- September 25 Providence: The Reformed and Catholic divide, freedom of will and responsibility, divine sovereignty, implications for vocation, relationships, and suffering

Reading: Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 5 and 6; Schmidt, *What God Wants for Your Life*, Chapter 4

First integrative essay due

October 2 The Redemptive Journey: Positional and realized righteousness, sanctification / Resistance and the theological roots to emotional and spiritual dislocation: Pride and false selves, fear, shame, disordered love / the place of signs and wonders

Reading: Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction*, chapter 2; Nemeck & Coombs, *The Way of Spiritual Direction*, chapters 1, 5; Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 7 and 8; Schmidt, *What God Wants for Your Life*, Chapter 3; Barry & Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, Part 2

October 9 No class

October 17 Charting Spiritual Progress: Ignatian categories, desire, consolation, desolation, emotional and spiritual progress, a Christian cosmology

Reading: Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction*, chapter 1; Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 9 and 10; Schmidt, *What God Wants for Your Life*, Chapters 7 and 8

The Practice of Spiritual Direction

October 23 No class: Reading Day

October 30 Direction and Diversity

Reading: Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction*, chapter 5; Fischer, *Women at the Well*; Empereur, *Spiritual Direction and the Gay Person*; Gunther, *Holy Listening*, chapters 1, 4; Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 11 and 12

November 6 Spiritual Direction, Therapy, and Pastoral Care: Definitions, goals, complementary contributions, critical differences

Reading: Gunther, *Holy Listening*, Introduction; Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 13 and 14; Benner, *Sacred Companions*, Part one

Second integrative essay due

November 13 Listening skills, asking questions, confrontation, transference, counter-transference

Reading: Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction*, chapters 4, 6; Nemeck & Coombs, *The Way of Spiritual Direction*, chapters 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; Gunther, *Holy Listening*, chapter 3; Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Chapters 15, 16, and Epilogue; Schmidt, *What God Wants for Your Life*, Chapter 5

November 20 The Director: The issue of authority, the spiritual life of the director, emotional and relational boundaries, health, supervision

Reading: Nemeck & Coombs, *The Way of Spiritual Direction*, chapter 3; Benner, *Sacred Companions*, Part Two

Recommended: Barry & Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, Part 3

- November 27 No class: Thanksgiving Recess
- December 4 Ethics and Practice of Spiritual Direction
- December 10 Make up session for Reading Day: Special Issues and Applications of Direction Training: Spiritual Direction practice, leadership and spiritual direction, group spiritual direction
- Reading: Benner, *Sacred Companions*, Part Three

Third integrative essay due / Reading journal due

Assessment

Attendance & Participation

Given the nature of the course material attendance, participation in and preparation for class discussions is essential. 10% of the assessment is devoted to this dimension of the student's work and attendance is taken.

Reading Journal

Each student will be required to keep a reading journal. One entry for each class session is required and each entry should be a minimum of one page (type-written). The entry should record items from the reading that provoked questions or insights and the student should plan to bring her / his journal to class in order to contribute to in-class discussion of the readings. The journal, in its entirety is due the last day of class. 15% of the assessment will be devoted to the journal.

Integrative Essays

Each student will be required to complete three integrative essays. Each essay will address a question drawn from the material and students will be expected to respond, drawing in an integrative fashion on the reading and class material. The essays should not quote material from either source at length, but students will be required to demonstrate a familiarity with the reading and course material (citing the relevant author, title, and page numbers or dates).

Each essay must be between 6 and 8 pages in length (typewritten, double-spaced, one inch margins, 12 point font). The essays should draw critically and thoughtfully from the material, but advance an argument, not simply summarize, list, or report on what was heard or read. N.B.: The language "critically and thoughtfully" is chosen intentionally here. These are analytical essays and language involving how the student "feels" about the material is not germane. Note, too, that these assignments will only be manageable if students remain current in their reading and actively participate in the class. 75% of the assessment is devoted to the student's work on these essays.