

Ashland Theological Seminary

DM941

Formational Guidance

Dr. JoAnn F. Watson

Feb 4-8, 2008

**I. Theme Statement:** Positioning yourself and others to encounter and respond to God in daily living.

**II. Why We Are Teaching This Class**

This course will expose the student to the disciplines that enhance an intimate pursuit of God's embrace, including the history and practice of spiritual direction, formative prayer, and formational reading of God's word. The practice of direction will be included as part of the class experience.

**III. What We Will Accomplish In This Class**

To create an atmosphere in class that is open to the Lord's presence and guidance

To provide foundational instruction in Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Guidance

To expose students to the movements and literature of Spiritual Guidance

To equip students for the ministry of Spiritual Guidance

To encourage students to be attentive and responsive to the purposes of God in "the sacrament of the present moment"

To help students move from an information driven ministry to a transformational style of servant leadership

To enable students to help others recognize and respond to God in the circumstances of daily living

#### IV. How The Class Is Set Up

This course integrates lecture, group process, discussion, case study, and student reflection. Class attendance is outlined in the *Student Handbook*. Except for emergencies, which do not include regular parish responsibilities, attendance at all sessions is required.

#### V. What the Time Allocation Is For This Class

It is expected that the student will devote roughly 150 hours total to this course. A suggested breakdown of these hours is: 30 hours in classroom, 70 hours of reading (required texts and other related works), and 50 hours of writing.

#### VI. Assigned Texts

Anderson, Keith R. and Randy D. Reese. Spiritual Mentoring. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8308-22100

de Caussade, Jean- Pierre. The Sacrament of the Present Moment. San Francisco, CA: Harpers, 1989. ISBN 0-06-061811-6

Fenelon, Francois. The Seeking Heart. Beaumont, TX: The Seed Sowers, 1992. ISBN 0-940232-49-9

Peterson, Eugene. The Wisdom of Each Other. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998. ISBN 0-310-20198-5

Wardle, Terry. Helping Others on the Journey. A Guide for Those who Seek to Mentor Others to Maturity in Christ. Kent, England: Sovereign World, 2004. ISBN 1-85240-402-7

#### VII. What You Expected To Do In Class

- Two reflection papers- **due the first day of class, February 4, 2008**  
One for the Wardle text.  
One for the Anderson/ Reese text.

Each paper should be two to three pages in length, double-spaced, 12 point type. Choose one concept within the assigned text and interact with it personally and professionally. Identify the chosen section and answer the following questions within the paper:

- 1) Why did this concept stand out to you?
- 2) What impact does it suggest for you personally?
- 3) Where do you agree with the author? Disagree?

4) How should this concept be translated into practical ministry?

- **Journal- due the first day of class, February 4, 2008**

The remaining three texts are to be read reflectively, with journal and pen available. Entries should be made whenever you sense the Lord speaking to you through the material, or feel particularly enlightened or stirred by the section you are reading. The journal should indicate:

Date

Book, page and reference

Reflections on such questions as:

- What you are sensing the Lord saying?
- What are the implications of that “inspiration”?
- What is your emotional response?
- How this “inspiration” relates to your past, present, future?
- What questions does it present?
- What answers?
- What tensions?
- What, if any, transformational dynamics have occurred?

- **Minor Paper-due 60 days after the last day of class due April 8, 2008**  
8-10 pages

After reading the de Causade, Fenelon, and Peterson texts, write a paper which synthesizes the principles of spiritual guidance that have emerged from the material. Remember, these texts are not about spiritual guidance, they are written as spiritual guidance. Thus, the principles will be implied and inherent in the texts. In this paper you must:

- 1) Identify the principle(s)
- 2) Cite the reference(s) where the principle has upon spiritual guidance
- 3) Dialogue/ discuss the implications this principle has upon spiritual guidance
- 4) Give one practical suggestion for each principle on how, where, when you would embrace this principle in guiding another.

- **Project-due 60 days after the last day of class due April 8, 2008-12-15**  
pages

For a minimum of 6 weeks you must serve another person as a spiritual friend/guide. The relationship can certainly be informal (non-professional) but must be structured. You must:

- 1) Spend time praying that God will identify who this person is and how to approach him/her.
- 2) Once identified, you must establish a specific formational purpose for meeting, as well as weekly time together.
- 3) Remember, the purpose of guidance is always to help another meet and respond to God in “the sacrament of the present moment”

Reflect in writing (typed, double-spaced, with cover page) about the experience. Be detailed about the entire process, answering such questions as:

Who did you meet with and when?

What brought you together?

What was the format of your time together?

How did you prepare for you sessions?

Where, and when did God meet you?

When was the process positive? Negative?

What were the “present moment” struggles, blessings, and challenges you faced together?

What direction did you offer?

What disciplines did you embrace?

How did this experience impact you personally?

What summary conclusions can you now make about spiritual guidance?

The person being guided must know about this assignment and agree even though they are to remain anonymous. Also, they are to include a one page summary description of the experience.

## VIII. Evaluation- Grade Components

Reflection Papers	10%
Journal	20%
Minor Paper	30%
Project	40%

## IX. Preliminary Outline

- 1) Introductory Considerations
  - A brief overview of Spiritual Formation.
  - Spiritual Guidance Defined
  - The Basic Goals of Spiritual Guidance
- 2) Is Spiritual Direction a Biblical concept?
- 3) What have been the historical considerations of Spiritual Guidance?
- 4) What are the essentials of Spiritual Guidance?
- 5) What should be true of people giving/receiving Spiritual Guidance?
- 6) What are the tools of Spiritual Guidance?
  - Solitude
  - Spiritual Empowerment
  - Scripture
  - Spiritual Community
  - Spiritual Disciplines
  - Sacraments

**Note:** There will be a variety of symbolic exercises experienced within class. In preparation, please bring to class; a symbol that represents what God is doing in your life in the present moment.

### **Students With Disabilities**

For students who have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let the professor know prior to start of class so that your learning needs can be met. In order to receive accommodations, documentation concerning your disability must be on file with Classroom Support Services, 105 Amstutz Hall, Ashland University, 419-289-5953. Please contact them with any questions you may have.

### **Ashland Theological Seminary Academic Integrity Policy**

Ashland Theological Seminary seeks to model servant leadership derived from biblical standards of honesty and integrity. We desire to encourage, develop, and sustain men and women of character who will exemplify these biblical qualities in their ministry to the

church and the world. As members of the seminary community, students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of academic, personal, and social integrity. All students, therefore, are expected to abide by the academic integrity standards outlined in the Student Handbook.