

Formation and Discipleship

COS 123

Spring 2021

Spring Heights Extension

Goals and Objectives:

According to GBHEM, the goals and objectives of this course are to ground the student in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship.

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a theological basis for the Wesleyan emphasis on spiritual disciplines and practice them as a 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.

Instructor:

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Required Textbooks:

Sondra Matthaei, *Formation in the Faith*

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

Kevin M. Watson, *The Class Meeting*

Junius B. Dotson, *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations* (Copies of this text are available at no cost to the student, compliments of Discipleship Ministries. It is available as a free PDF at www.umcdiscipleship.org. Should the student desire to purchase a printed copy, instructions are available on the same website)

Supplementary Textbooks:

Jack Seymour, *Teaching the Way of Jesus*

Norma Everiste, *Church as a Learning Community*

Anne Wimberly and Evelyn Park, *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church*

Course Requirements:

Reflection Paper One	25%
Reflection Paper Two	25%
Essay One	25%
Essay Two	25%

Course Grading:

A	Excellent Work
B	Good Work
C	Satisfactory Work
D	Below Average Work
F	Unsatisfactory Work

Assessment:

Written work will be assessed on both form and content. In terms of form, students are expected to use proper spelling and grammar. In terms of content, written work should demonstrate an integration of reading, classroom discussion, and personal and professional experience.

Turning in written work of insufficient length (described below) will result in grade reduction at the discretion of the Instructor. Turning in written work after the due date will also result in grade reduction, also at the discretion of the Instructor, unless a compelling circumstance is communicated to the Instructor in writing.

Attendance Principle and Policy:

Attendance is required for all online ZOOM sessions. Login credentials will be issued at a later date.

March 20, 9-11 am

April 10, 9-11 am

April 24, 9-11 am

April 24, 1-3 pm

May 8, 9-11 am

Assignments:

Reading: *Formation in the Faith* and *Soul Feast* should be read before the first ZOOM session on March 20, 2021. *The Class Meeting* and *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System* should be read before the third ZOOM session on April 24, 2021. Supplementary texts can be read at the discretion of the student.

Reflection Paper One: 4-6 pages. Due March 15, 2021. Please reflect on your own experience of being a disciple of Jesus. What is a disciple of Jesus? Please offer a working definition. How did you become a disciple? What does it mean to you? Who were the influential people in your experience? How did they guide you? What were the influential events in your experience? How did they impact you? Did you become a disciple of Jesus through the ministry of the church or through some para-church experience?

Essay One: 4-6 pages. Due April 5, 2021. Based on your reading of *Formation in the Faith* and *Soul Feast*, and on the presentations and discussions held online to date, please describe and assess *broadly* the current disciple-making ministry of the mainline church, both UM and other traditions about which you might be aware. What are the strengths of that ministry? What are the shortcomings? What are the opportunities and challenges? How does that ministry impact you directly as a pastor?

Reflection Paper Two: 4-6 pages. Due April 19, 2021. Describe *specifically* the current disciple-making practices of the church or churches that you serve. What are the inherent expectations of

that/those congregation/s? Are those practices effective? If so, please describe the manners in which that effectiveness enhances congregational life. If not, please describe the challenges that the lack of effectiveness brings to bear on congregational life. Share at least one example of a person who lives life as a disciple of Jesus in the context of your appointment. You might want to interview her/him in preparation for this assignment. How do the current disciple-making practices of this/these church/churches impact you as the pastor?

Essay Two: 4-6 pages. Due May 14, 2021. Compare and contrast Wesley's disciple-making system to the system currently utilized generally by the churches of our Connection and the specific appointment to which you are assigned. What can we learn from Wesley? What is the relationship between the current state of the mainline church in North America and our disciple-making practices? What would need to happen in your appointment to make disciples more effectively and efficiently? How would current stake-holders (congregation members and leaders, DSs) respond? In what special areas might you need to concentrate? How does any of the reading that you might have done in the supplementary (optional) texts influence your thoughts or passions?

Additional assignments (discussion boards and/or videos) will be made through email or during the online ZOOM sessions scheduled above.

And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

*Matthew 28:18-20
NRSV*