

Formation and Discipleship

COS 123

Spring 2023

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:

The Rev. Dr. Joseph W. Patterson III
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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*. This text is available for free as a PDF at: <https://store.umcdiscipleship.org/product/developing-an-intentional-discipleship-system/>

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	40%
Classroom Participation	10%

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. Classroom participation will be assessed on the ability of the student to engage with others in helpful discussion about the topics reviewed. The Instructor fully understands that introverted persons will participate in those discussions in a manner consistent with their personality type.

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 sessions during the two intensive weekends.

Assignments:

Reading: *Formation in the Faith* and *Soul Feast* should be read before the first intensive weekend commences on March 17, 2023. *The Class Meeting* and *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System* should be read before the second intensive weekend commences on April 14, 2023. Supplementary texts can be read at the discretion of the student.

Reflection Paper One: 5-7 pages. Due on the first day of class, March 17, 2023. 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?

Your paper will be scanned and returned to you through email. The original hard copy will be returned on the first day of the second intensive weekend.

Reflection Paper Two: 5-7 pages. Due on the first day of the second intensive weekend, April 14, 2023. 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?

Your paper will be scanned and returned to you through email. Should you desire to receive back the original hard copy, please provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Instructor.

Essay: 5-7 pages. Due on May 2, 2023. Please send a hard copy to the Instructor at the USPS address provided above. 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 the reading that you have done in the assigned and supplementary texts influence your thoughts or passions?

This is the most highly weighted assignment of this course. The Instructor will be looking for ways in which the student is able to integrate the material with real-life circumstances, and apply these matters to the life of the church in ways that will make substantial changes.

Your paper will be scanned and returned to you through email. Should you desire to receive back the original hard copy, please provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Instructor.

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*