I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to assist students in the continued understanding of self and call through covenantal community, field education and the practice of spiritual disciplines. Students will develop a personal rule of life, explore Covenant Discipleship, and develop personal, professional and spiritual goals for greater ministry acuity.

Meeting Times:

Face-to-Face: Formation Retreat, Monday, February 16, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm
Tuesday, February 17, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm

Online: 9 Weeks: February 23 – May 1

II. TEXTBOOKS:

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:
Floding, Matthew, ed. Welcome to Theological Field Education. ISBN: 978-1566994071


Kula, Irwin, with Linda Loewenthal. Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life. ISBN: 978-1401309138


III. GOALS:

This is a core course that introduces students to field education, spiritual formation and accountable community. In this course, students will show an awareness of their own spiritual development characterized by mature self-acceptance and self-direction.

IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of the course, a student will be able to:
1. Identify the experiences in the practice of ministry that impact understanding of self and call.
2. Describe specific accomplishments and failures as well as any changes to one’s personal, professional and spiritual goals.
3. Describe spiritual disciplines/practices that contribute to personal peace, positive relationships and productive ministry.
4. Evaluate one’s experience and exposure to a variety of forms of covenantal community.

V. LEARNING/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

This semester of ministry formation integrates a variety of teaching/learning strategies:

1. Attendance/participation at a Formation Retreat (includes plenary sessions, MiNgroup, worship and common meal) and online group sessions
2. Establishment of a ministry group covenant
3. Presentation of a Rule of Life
4. Continued refinement of a statement of call
5. Submission of weekly reflection reports on the student’s personal, professional and spiritual journey that provides the student with the opportunity to reflect privately with the student’s MiNgroup facilitator and to receive confidential feedback
6. Readings with corresponding papers and/or group presentations
7. Participation with members of the MiNgroup in a year-end evaluation

If one begins Field Education this semester:
8. Creation of a Site Covenant with United, mentor and site placement
9. Service in an approved contextual ministry site during the school year for 10-14 hrs/week for 30 weeks (See the Field Education Overview document for detailed information).
10. Meeting with Site Mentor at least 4 hrs/month to reflect on ministry and learning
11. Meeting with facilitator and mentor during the semester to review the student’s ministry experience and learning and to revise/update the student’s goals
VI. DESCRIPTION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

All papers will be written with the following guidelines: Double spaced, 12 pt. font, 1” margins, Times New Roman font.

1. Weekly Reflection Reports

Description: Each student will submit a weekly reflection report to the group facilitator. The report will include a reflection on their personal, professional and spiritual journey for the week as per the document, Weekly Reflection Report Guide. Each report must be 2-3 pages. The student may also share these reflections with the MINgroup faculty guide or spiritual director, and site mentor if desired.

Due Date[s]: Reports are due each Friday at 11:59 pm EST starting with week two. There will be eight reports submitted.

2. Paper on Self and Call

Description: Using wisdom gained from Wimberly’s book and your MINgroup conversations, each student will submit a 6-7 page, double-spaced paper on self and call using the following guidelines:

• Opening – should be one paragraph summarizing the paper
• Wimberly – should be a one page summarizing Wimberly’s reauthoring process.
• 3 Myths – one page for each myth. Students are to select a total of 3 myths to write about. One ‘personal myth’, one ‘family or marriage myth’ and one ‘ministry myth.’ For each of the 3 myths, students must:
  o Summarize and name a prominent myth in his/her story. Describe and illustrate the probable positive and negative impacts of the myth on ministry.
  o Offer a character (Biblical, historical or mythical) whose life and work was affected by a similar myth. Indicate what enabled the character’s myth to be re-written or, at least, gave an opportunity for the character’s myth to be rewritten.
  o Describe how you believe your myth is or can be re-written, highlighting some positive aspects you expect in life and ministry.
  o Describe some spiritual practices you believe can assist you in God’s re-writing of the myth.
• Calling – one page. Building off of Formation 1’s work, students should present an even more articulate statement on call based on answers to these questions:
  o How have your recent experiences in seminary studies, the practice of ministry, and your personal/family life impacted your understandings of self and ministry, and yourself in ministry?
  o What have other people communicated to you about yourself that you need to take into account as you seek greater clarity in the discernment of your calling?
  o What knowledge, skills, and experiences do you believe are necessary in order for you to accept and fulfill your calling?
  o What experiences in life, or opportunities in ministry, or courses of study do you believe could help you see more clearly both the possibilities for your ministry and the focus of your ministry?
• Conclusion - a final paragraph integrating the myth work and your calling.

Due Date[s]: Saturday, April 18, 5:00 pm.
3. Rule of Life

**Description:** Students will create a one-page Rule of Life that illustrates a posture of personal and social piety. A detailed description and editable final document will be shared at the Retreat.

**Due Date(s):** Wednesday, April 29.

4. Collaborative Inquiry

**Description:** Each student must complete the Collaborative Inquiry Questions, offering three areas of reflection for you to consider: 1) your sense of self in your peer group, 2) your sense of each peer in your group, and 3) your sense of your group’s facilitator. Each member in the group—including the facilitator—will be reflecting on these three areas. Each participant will share responses in MINgroup.

**Due Date(s):** April 19. These will be shared via Google Hangout the week of April 19.

**If you have completed the First Unit of Field Education:**

5. Evaluation of Site & Mentor by Student/Evaluation of Student by Mentor

**Description:** All students must assess both the Site and the Site Mentor in conversation with the Mentor. The document becomes part of the student’s personal contextual ministry file. The Mentor must also submit an evaluation of the student to be placed in the file. We encourage both of these documents to be discussed in a face-to-face meeting with the student and the Mentor. Students are responsible for both files being signed and submitted.

**Due Date(s):** The final day of class. Submit via dropbox.

**If you are completing a summer Unit of Field Education:**

6. Site Covenant

**Description:** Each student that begins his/her Field Education must submit a signed Site Covenant to the facilitator evidencing a relationship with a Ministry site for the summer (students need at least 300 hours). This form must be signed by the student and the site mentor before submitting.

**Due Date(s):** The final day of class. Submit via dropbox.

**VII. OTHER EXPECTATIONS**

**Participation & Attendance:** Each student will be assigned an attendance grade based on his or her participation. Each student must participate in ALL of the Formation Retreat and weekly online interaction.

Students who are absent for more than 1/6 of the course will be unable to complete the course with a passing grade. Since PT504 (Formation 1) and PT505 (Formation 2) together total 3 credits, a student may not miss more than 3 academic hours (1 class) each semester. That means if there is no online interaction for more than one week each semester, the student cannot pass the course. Requests for exceptions must be made directly to the facilitator prior to absences.
VIII. CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND READINGS:
(all times EST)

Pre-Work
Each student is expected to share his/her Spiritual Autobiography at the Formation Retreat. Bring a printed copy for each participant to the Retreat.

Formation Retreat (February 16-17)
All students must attend all of the Formation Retreat on February 16-17 at Christ UMC in Kettering Ohio. Arriving late or leaving early warrants failure of the course.
   Monday, Sept. 15 9:00 am-6:00 pm
   Tuesday, Sept. 16 8:30 am-5:30 pm
Retreat Contents: Sharing of spiritual autobiographies, creating a Rule of Life and semester overview.

Week One (Feb 23-28)
Tasks:
1. Visit your MiNgroup’s ‘Goals’ forum and upload your SMART Goals created last fall. Include in your post an honest assessment on your progress and any revisions that need to be made immediately to these goals. Initial post is due Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to two others before Saturday 5 pm.
2. Download the ‘Preparing for next week’ document. Be prepared to share in Week 2.
3. Read Recalling Our Own Stories Chapters 1-2.

Week Two (March 1-7)
Tasks:
1. After reading and completing the ‘Preparing for next week’ document from last week, enter your responses in the ‘Calling Clarified’ forum by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to two others before Saturday 5 pm. A Google Hangout can replace this exercise. Keep notes of this conversation, as it becomes the final part of your paper on self and call.
2. Read Recalling Our Own Stories Chapters 3-4.
3. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR)1 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Three (March 8-14)
Tasks:
1. Summarize and post ONE prominent myth (personal, family, marriage or ministry) from your life in the ‘Myth’ forum by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Describe and illustrate the probable positive and negative impacts of the myth on ministry. Respond to two others by Saturday 5 pm.
2. Read Recalling Our Own Stories Chapters 5.
3. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR)2 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Four (March 15-21)
Tasks:
1. Visit the ‘Character’ forum. Offer a character (Biblical, historical or mythical) whose life and work was affected by a similar myth as the one you posted last week. Indicate what enabled the character’s myth to be re-written or, at least, gave an opportunity for the character’s myth to be rewritten. The initial post is due Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to two by Saturday 5 pm.
2. Read Recalling Our Own Stories Chapters 5.
3. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR)3 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.
Week Five (March 22-28)
Tasks:
1. Watch the ‘Re-authoring & Mary Poppins’ video. Then visit the ‘New Story’ forum and describe in at least 300 words how you believe your myth is or can be re-written, highlighting some positive aspects you expect in life and ministry. Also, describe some spiritual practices you believe can assist in God’s re-writing of the myth. The initial post is due Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to two by Saturday 5 pm.
2. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR) Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

HOLY WEEK – NO CLASS – March 29-April 4

Week Six (April 5-11)
Tasks:
1. Visit your MINgroup’s ‘Virtual Coffee Shop’ forum and offer an original prayer for the group’s final 4 weeks.
2. Read Covenant Discipleship Chapters 1, 4-5.
3. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR) Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Seven (April 12-18)
Tasks:
1. Read Covenant Discipleship Chapters 6-8.
2. Review your thoughts on Covenant Discipleship. If your MINgroup were to be in a Covenant Discipleship group next fall, what would you offer in terms of a preamble and two clauses for each of the 4 quadrants (acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion)? Write them in the ‘Accountability’ forum by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Feel free to include any reactions (positive or negative) to the idea of Covenant Discipleship (we’ll revisit this post in week 9).
3. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR) Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.
4. Paper on Self & Call due. Submit to drop-box by Saturday 5 pm.

Week Eight (April 19-25)
Tasks:
1. Participate in Collaborative Inquiry via Google Hangout to share self and other reflections. Be sure to post both self-reflections and reflections on others (from your completed Collaborative Inquiry Word document).
2. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR) Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Nine (April 26-May 1)
Tasks:
1. Check in with one another in the ‘Celebrating’ forum (or Google Hangout). Are there tensions or words of blessings that need spoken? How
2. Final Draft of Rule of Life Due
3. Site Covenant Due if you are doing a summer Field Ed Unit.
4. Evaluation of Site & Mentor Due (if completing a Field Ed Unit).
5. Evaluation of Student Due (if completing a Field Ed Unit).
6. We’ll see you (MDiv students) in Formation 3 this fall. We’ll see you (MACM students) in Formation 5.
IX: SEMINARY STANDARDS:

A. Inclusive language: United Theological Seminary has an official policy regarding the use of Inclusive Language. The policy may be found in the Seminary Catalog and further explained in the Student Handbook. If you have specific questions, please see the instructor.

B. Academic Integrity: Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the Seminary community. A detailed policy regarding what constitutes a violation of academic integrity can be found in the Student Handbook.

C. Online Confidentiality: One of the highlights of the online classroom is that students can draw from the experiences shared during class discussions and in written work. However, it is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing online conversations with those outside of the classroom.

D. Statement on Disability: Any student who may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Registrar’s office.

X: USING ONLINE RESOURCES:

Information about how to access United Online and where to find help can be found on the seminary website at http://www.united.edu.

XI. METHOD OF DETERMINING FINAL GRADE:

PT504 (Formation 1) and PT505 (Formation 2) are together a 3-credit hour course. Therefore, each student will be assigned one of the following grades for BOTH semesters.

A. Factors in Evaluation of Student

1. Attendance/participation in Formation Retreat and all online sessions
2. Writings on Self & Call and a Rule of Life
3. Submission of weekly reflection reports
4. Presentation of Collaborative Inquiry
5. Evaluation of personal, professional and spiritual goals

If beginning Field Education:
6. Creation and submission of a Site Covenant representing the required service in an approved contextual ministry site.
7. Participation in Site Visit with Facilitator and Site Mentor

B. Method of Assigning Grades:

Grades will be assigned by the ministry group facilitator in consultation with the faculty guide or spiritual director and the contextual ministries’ directors in accord with the standardized evaluation sheet. The various assignments will be weighted in terms of their value in relation to the whole of the work assigned. The weight given to each part of the work is listed below:

25% Paper on Self & Call
24% Submission of Eight (8) Weekly Reflection Reports (3% each)
18% Attendance and participation. This contains all online videos, forum discussions, MINgroup time, online chapel and ALL elements of the Formation Retreat. If you miss more than one week of interaction online, you cannot pass the course.

13% Submission of a Rule of Life

10% Participation in MINgroup Collaborative Inquiry

10% Field Education Materials Submitted (could include SMART goals, Site Covenant, Evaluations of Site, Mentor & Student and Site Visit reports)

The total scores determine the grades assigned according to the following scale:

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<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>100 – 95</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>94 – 90</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>89 – 88</td>
<td>B+</td>
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UW – Unofficial Withdrawal (A student stops attending prior to semester’s end)
W – Withdrawal (A student officially withdraws by the proper date)

XII. COURSE EVALUATIONS:

It is very important for students to submit course evaluations toward the end of the semester. Instructors do not see the student evaluations until they have submitted the students’ final, official grades. Students should feel free to evaluate the course without any negative ramifications.