

**COS - 123-Formation & Discipleship**  
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Summer 2015

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***This course begins face-to-face and concludes online.***

June 19-20                      Face-to-face meeting at United Theological Seminary  
June 21-August 1              Online work

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course grounds the student in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship.

**II. TEXTBOOKS:**

**Required Reading:**

Marlene D. LeFever, *Learning Styles: Reaching Everyone God Gave You to Teach*. ISBN: 978-0781451178  
Sondra Matthaei, *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples*. ISBN: 978-0687649730  
Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. ISBN: 978-0664239244  
Kevin M. Watson, *The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience*. ISBN: 978-1628240580

**Supplementary:**

Jack Seymour, *Teaching the Way of Jesus*  
Norma Everiste, *Church as Learning Community*  
Anne Wimberly & Evelyn Park, *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church*

**Recommended:**

Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*  
Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*

**III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Students will be able to:

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

## IV. SCHEDULE

### On Campus Weekend – June 19-20, 2015

#### **Before you arrive:**

- 1. Read pages 11-35 of *Learning Styles*, completing the ‘What’s My Learning Style?’ section on page 29-30.**
- 2. Bring an item from your life that tells a story or marks an occasion of a time when you felt significantly formed by the Spirit of God. Be prepared to share about that season or event: what was happening in your life? How did God form you? What was your role in the formation? How did it affect life change? We will take time to hear one another’s stories.**

#### *Friday*

1:30–2:30 pm	Arrival, check-in; refreshments available
2:30–5:00 pm	Class session
5:00 pm	Dinner – Thie Fellowship Hall
6:00–8:30 pm	Class session

#### *Saturday*

8:00–8:30 am	Light breakfast/beverages available
8:30–11:00 am	Class session
11:15 am-12:00 pm	Chapel – Thie Fellowship Hall
12:00–12:45 pm	Lunch – Thie Fellowship Hall
12:45–2:30 pm	Class session

#### On Campus Topics:

- Defining the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ of distinctive Wesleyan discipleship
- Understanding how learning styles, cognitive development and church ethnographies affect discipleship systems
- Tracing your own formation
- Developing strategies to form, reform or maintain healthy discipleship processes in the church.
- Spiritual Gifts
- Humble, empowering leadership.

### Online Work – June 21-August 1, 2015

#### **A Note on Writing**

Follow approximate length given for each item of written work. Written work should be double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font with 1” margins.

Put your name, the course number and date on the first page. Please add page numbers too.

If you quote from a printed text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including pages) in parentheses at the end of each usage. Quotations should never be more than a sentence or two long. For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the first letter of each word in the title. For example, *Formation in Faith*, could be abbreviated, (*FIF*, pp. 24-25). If you refer to books that are not listed on the syllabus, please footnote them so that you can give proper credit.

## **DESCRIPTION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**

All papers are due by 11:59 pm EST on the date given below.

### **1. Course Review**

Description: Each student will submit a 2-page paper evaluating the on campus teaching through the lens of LeFever's 4 learning styles. Which learning style(s) were emphasized? Which were minimized? How could the teaching strategy have been more effective for more types of learners?

Due Date(s): June 27.

Grading: **5%**

### **2. Congregational Plan for Discipleship**

Description: Each student will submit one final paper that summarizes the bulk of the class work. It should be divided into the following 3 sections. The 19-21 pages look intimidating, but each online week will assist the student in building this assignment.

#### ***Theological Framework (this section will be 8-9 pages)***

After reading *The Class Meeting* and incorporating conversations from class:

1. Describe your current ministry context (if you are beginning a new appointment July 1, choose either your current or future context). Where is it (rural, urban)? How would you describe its identity? Its members? (1/2 page)
2. Chapter 1. Discuss the strengths and weakness of the three types of small groups discussed in the chapter. Which ones have you experienced? How effective were they in making disciples? Which type does your current context(s) focus on and why? (1 page)
3. Chapter 2. Summarize the role that class meetings had in early Methodist revival. How would you describe the difference between a class meeting and most church small group? (1 page)
4. Chapter 3. Summarize the theological argument for class meetings. (1 ½ pages)
5. Chapter 4. Describe both the author's reasons to reclaim the class meetings and your reaction to them in light of your context. (1 page)
6. Chapters 5-8. Write out a summary of the author's plan that you could give to a colleague who was starting a church with a commitment to discipling others through class meetings. How should they begin? What are the key roles? Etc.? This may be an outline with bullet points. (2-3 pages)
7. Look again at your context. Share your thoughts as to how this text intersects your understanding of how disciples are made in your church(es). (1 page)

#### ***Personal Formation (this section will be 4 pages)***

In this section of the paper, you will reflect on both your life of faith and the insights gained from *Soul Feast* by Marjorie Thompson. The chapters listed below are from her book.

1. Chapter 1. Reflect on the understanding of spirituality as the "Christ within" to which Thompson refers. Write your own definition of "spirituality." What is the importance of practicing regular spiritual disciplines? Which disciplines have been most helpful in your spiritual journey? Explain. (1 page)

2. In Chapter 2, Thompson teaches steps to practice *Lectio Divina*. Write out how to read Scripture via *Lectio Divina* in a format that you could give a Sunday School teacher. How do you do it? What texts could they use? Refer back to your in class work. (1 page)

3. Write a working Rule of Life compiled from Chapter 10 of Thompson's book and the work we did in class. (1 page)

4. Reflect upon your Rule. Which disciplines or practices from Thompson's book are included and why? Which are not on there and why? What are your next steps? (1 page)

### **Discipleship System (this section will be 7-8 pages)**

From our class discussion and examples and after reading *Formation in Faith* by Sondra Matthaei, reflect upon the following questions:

1. Study Chapter 1, and then discuss the importance of what Matthaei calls "authentic community" as it relates to "meaning making" and Christian faith formation. How do you see this happening in your setting in ministry? (1 page)

2. After studying Matthaei's presentation about how one grows in faith in Chapter 2, reflect on your own faith journey. How has the concept of "growing in communion with God," as described by Matthaei, apply to your own faith journey? In your story, what role has been played by what Matthaei calls the "communion of grace"? (1 page)

3. Study Chapter 3. Discuss Matthaei's understanding of Christian faith formation as it applies to the making of disciples. Reflect on the concept of working toward a "communion of servant leaders" (p. 50). How do you see this happening in your setting? Explain. (1 page)

4. Study Chapter 4. Also study the section in *The Book of Discipline* covered in Paragraph 104, pp 75-78 "The Nature Design, and General Rules of our United Societies." Draw a comparison between the General Rules that stem from John Wesley and Matthaei's presentation of "a ministry of forming faith" on pages 69-75. (Up to 2 pages).

5. Putting it all together. Using all the course resources (**all** required reading, course lectures and conversations, online work) sketch out a workable, Wesleyan discipleship model for your context. This model should address the following:

- **Why?** A statement of purpose for a congregational ministry of making disciples.
- **How?** What is a process or plan to make disciples? (Learning styles may fit here)
- **What?** What is the essential content that is shared and when?
- **Who?** How can I develop a team in this work of disciple-making? (2-3 pages)

Your final paragraph should identify one SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) goal for your next step in helping your church form disciples.

Due Date(s): August 1, 2015

Grading: **80%**:

**This final paper can be submitted in 3 different sections if that helps. If you choose this method, I can offer feedback to you along the way but a grade will only be given for the complete, final project.**

## **V. CALENDAR:**

### **Theological Framework**

Week 1 – June 21-27

*June 27 – Course Review paper due*

Week 2 – June 28-July 4

### **Personal Formation**

Week 3 – July 5-11

Week 4 – July 12-18

### **Discipleship System**

Week 5 – July 19-25

Week 6 – July 26-August 1

*August 1 – Final Paper due*

## **VI: 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.

## **VII: 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>.

### VIII. EVALUATION:

80%	Final Paper
15%	Attendance
	10% for on campus <b>participation</b> (not just attendance)
	5% for online interaction
5%	Review of on campus course through lens of learning styles

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

100 – 95	A
94 – 90	A-
89 – 88	B+
87 – 84	B
83 – 80	B-
79 – 75	C+
74 – 70	C
69 – 00	F

UW -Unofficial Withdrawal (A student stops attending prior to semester's end)

W -Withdrawal (A student officially withdraws by the proper date)

### IX. 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.