

## **STMA 5710 The Art of Spiritual Direction**

**Valerie Lesniak, PhD**

**Summer, 2014**

**June 23, 2014-July 3, 2014**

**Monday-Friday 9:00-11:50 am**

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*“Oh heart,  
sit with someone who  
knows the heart;*

*Go under the tree  
Which has fresh  
Blossoms.”*

*-Rumi*

### Course Description:

This course is designed for those who are interested in becoming spiritual directors. It seeks to introduce participants to the art of spiritual direction and to assist them in developing practical skills for this ministry. Participants will consider various approaches to spiritual direction, the nature and purpose of spiritual direction, its historical roots, and some dynamics of the process of direction. Participants will also have the opportunity to discern their own call to the ministry of spiritual direction.

### Course Objectives:

- To become familiar with roots, traditions, and various models of spiritual direction
- To explore the nature and purpose of spiritual direction and how it is being defined today
- To reflect on the dynamics of the process of spiritual direction
- To consider theological and anthropological assumptions underlying the practice of spiritual direction
- To reflect upon the roles of prayer and desire in the spiritual direction conversation
- To become responsive listeners and engage in the practice of spiritual direction
- To consider obstacles to life in the Spirit and various forms of desolation

### STM MATS Learning Outcomes:

In particular, this course is designed to assist students in helping to meet the following STM MATS learning outcomes:

- Ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian Tradition;

- Ability to listen and respond to how the Spirit is active and alive in local, global and cosmic communities;
- Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others;
- Ability to be a responsive discerning listener who can enter another's worldview

### Pre-Session Preparation:

Please review the syllabus below. The readings designated for each day will be the primary focus for our discussions. **It is critically important that you read the material before hand. I suggest that you take each book and take notes that will help you review the material before each class during the summer session. Two books (the one by Allen, Bumpus) we will be reading ONLY the chapters designated in the syllabus and listed above. We will be reading and using the entire books by Bidwell, Dunne, Millis, Phillips and Silver. You may find it helpful to read and take notes according to the assigned readings for each day found in the syllabus.**

Pertinent articles assigned in the syllabus can be found in the **Course Reader** which can be purchased at Seattle University's Reproduction Department. Please check with the Reproduction Department (206-296-6180) for availability of the Course Reader. Articles are designated with a "\*" in the syllabus.

### **Required Texts**

Allen, Joseph J. Inner Way: Toward a Rebirth of Eastern Christian Spiritual Direction. Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000.  
ISBN: 1-885652-34-8

Portion of the book we will be using:

- *Inner Way*, pp. ix-57.

Bidwell, Duane R. Short Term Spiritual Guidance. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.  
ISBN: 0-8006-3658-9

Bumpus, Mary Rose and Rebecca Langer, editors. Supervision of Spiritual Directors: Engaging in Holy Mystery. A Spiritual Directors International Book. Harrisburg/London: Morehouse Publishing, 2006, 65-81, 125-145.  
ISBN: 0-8192-1994-0

The TWO Chapters that will be used in class:

- Bowen, Maria Tattu. "Dimensions of the Human Person in Relationship and the Practice of Supervision." In *Supervision of Spiritual Directors: Engaging in Holy Mystery*, 65-81.

- Liebert, Elizabeth. "Supervision as Widening the Horizons." In *Supervision of Spiritual Directors: Engaging in Holy Mystery*, 125-45.

Dunne, John S. Eternal Consciousness. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.  
ISBN:13: 978-0-268-02610-3/10:268-02610-6

Millis, Diane M. Conversation: The Sacred Art: Practicing Presence in an Age of Distraction. Woodstock, Vermont: Skylight Paths Publisher's , 2013.  
ISBN: 978-1-59473-474-8

Phillips, Susan. Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2008.  
ISBN 978-0-8192-2297-8

Silver, Anne Winchell. Trustworthy Connections: Interpersonal Issues in Spiritual Direction. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2003.  
ISBN: 1-56101-252-1

### Course Requirements

1. Class attendance each day
2. Participation in small group exercises, dyads and triads
3. Keep a journal reflecting upon one's own sensibilities, skills, and challenges for the ministry of spiritual direction
4. Three 5-6 page reflection papers: due June 23; June 30; July 3  
**(See description below)**
5. Oral review and interview (if requested by instructor)
6. Critical and engaged reading of texts and articles

Paper 1: **Due JUNE 23:** Exploring your own experience of Spiritual Direction

This paper is primarily a reflection paper. It is intended to foster a critical awareness of your own experience of Spiritual Direction. Please use the following questions to help frame your reflection paper. We will use this reflection paper as part of our conversation on the first day of the class.

Exploring your experience of being a directee

- How long have you been in spiritual direction? How often do you meet with your director? Describe the environment in which the spiritual direction conversation takes place. Where do you sit etc.
- In what ways do you prepare for a spiritual direction session?
- How do you open the spiritual direction conversation with your guide?
- What topics do you discuss in the spiritual direction conversation? Have you noticed that you do not discuss certain topics? Why is this so?
- What interior movements have you experienced within the spiritual direction conversation itself? How do you know when something strikes home to you? Does your body play any role in your process?
- Has silence played a role in your direction sessions? Prayer?
- Can you recognize any “rituals” that surround your spiritual direction process?
- What image or metaphor do you have of yourself as directee? That you have of your director? That you have of what you are experiencing in direction?
- What criteria do you use when you describe your spiritual direction session as being a “good” session?
- If you have changed spiritual directors, why did you do so? How did you do this?
- How do you know interiorly that the spiritual direction session is over?
- How do you end your sessions?
- Do you have any after session process? If so what is it?

**Paper II: Due: June 30:** Assumptions and Images of God and the Human Being

This paper is a synthesis paper. It is intended to invite you to reflect more deeply on the underlying assumptions you bring to spiritual direction about God and the human person. Describe some of the assumptions and image you have of God and the human person. Compare and contrast those assumptions with any of the authors we have been reading such as Hart, Johnson, Bidwell, and or Rahner. How do you understand God to be present in spiritual direction?

**Paper III: Due: July 3:** Sensibilities, Skills, Challenges, Call to Ministry of Spiritual Direction

This paper represents part of an ongoing discernment process about call and readiness for the ministry of spiritual direction. Reflect upon the journal you have been keeping during the quarter. In this paper, describe the basic sensibilities you have for the ministry of spiritual direction. What skills do you possess what would assist you in discovering with another the life of the Spirit?

What challenges confront you as you think about yourself as a spiritual director? At this moment in time, what is your sense of your call to the ministry of spiritual direction? This paper will provide the basis of a final review and interview.

### Tentative Course Schedule

(Schedule may be adjusted at the discretion of the instructor to meet the learning needs of the participants.)

June 23: Experience of Spiritual Direction

Introductions- Our Experiences of Spiritual Direction

**FIRST REFLECTION PAPER DUE**

Description of Responsive Listening

Large Group Exercise in Responsive Listening

June 24 Glimpses and Signs of the Life of the Spirit

What is Experience?

Experience of God in the World Today

Arenas of Human Experience

Experience of God: Biblical and Mystical Perspectives

Small Group Praxis

Assigned Readings:

\*Burghardt, Walter. "Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real." Found in the Course Reader.

Required Reading Books:

- Bidwell, Duane R. *Short Term Spiritual Guidance*. Chapter 2, 13-25.
- Bowen, Maria Tattu. "Dimensions of the Human Person in Relationship and the Practice of Supervision." In *Supervision of Spiritual Directors: Engaging in Holy Mystery*, 65-81.
- Liebert, Elizabeth. "Supervision as Widening the Horizons." In *Supervision of Spiritual Directors: Engaging in Holy Mystery*, 125-45.
- Millis, Diane. *Conversation*, 1-62.

June 25: Historical Perspectives on the Practice of Spiritual Direction

Assigned Readings:

- Allen, Joseph, *Inner Way*, pp. ix-57.
- \* Ruffing, Janet, "Typological History of Spiritual Direction."
- Bidwell, *Short Term*, pp. 1-12.

June 26 Theological and Anthropological Assumptions  
Assumptions about God and Human Beings

Assigned Readings:

- \*Hart, Thomas, "Toward a Healthy Spirituality: Ten Guiding Principles.
- \*Johnson, Elizabeth Ann, "Classical Theology."
- \* James J. Bacik. "Rahner's Anthropology: The Basis for a Dialectical Spirituality."

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June 27 What is Spiritual Direction?

Relationship: Hospitality, Compassionate Loving, Respect  
Diversity  
Mystery of Encounter  
Small Group Praxis

Assigned Reading:

- \*Hart, Thomas, "Pastoral Counseling or Spiritual Direction: What's the Difference?"
- \*Taylor-Stinson, Therese. "Black Spirituality and the Art of Spiritual Direction."
- Millis, Diane. *Conversation*, 63-110.
- Phillips, Susan. *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Preface, Introduction, and Part One, xi-xiii, 1-18, 21-92.

June 30: The process of Spiritual Direction

Preparation  
Initial Sessions  
Dialogical Process  
Ethical Issues  
Small Group Praxis  
**SECOND PAPER DUE**  
Assigned Readings:

- Silver, Anne Winchell. *Trustworthy Connections: Interpersonal Issues in Spiritual Direction*. Chapters 1-7, Appendix 1 and 2, 1-79, 111-143.

July 1: Prayer and the Hopeful Imagination

Imagination as Source of Transformation/Hopeful Imagination  
 The Place God Comes to Meet Us  
 Small Group Praxis

Assigned reading;

- \*Gill, Jean “Distractions in Prayer: Stumbling Blocks or Steeping Stones?”
- \*Bumpus, Mary Rose.
- Bidwell, Duane R. *Short Term Spiritual Guidance*. Chapters 3 and 4, 26-51.
- Phillips, Susan. *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Part Two, 95-162.

July 2: Desire and Transformation

Prayer in the Spiritual Direction Relationship  
 Befriending our Desires  
 Desire as a Source of Transformation  
 Small Group Praxis

Assigned Reading:

- Dunne, John S. *Eternal Consciousness*, 1-60
- Phillips, Susan. *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Part Three and Conclusion, 165-252.

July 3: Obstacles to Life in the Spirit/Obstacles to Effective Direction

Assigned Readings

- \*Aufauvre, Brigitte-Violaine, “Depression and Spiritual Desolation.”
- Dunne, John S. *Eternal Consciousness*, 61-112.
- Bidwell, Duane R. *Short Term Spiritual Guidance*. Chapter 6, 69-83.

Purpose of Spiritual Direction  
 Ending of Direction Relationships  
 Small Group Praxis

- **Paper III due**

Closing and Evaluation

