STMM 571 Introduction to the Art of Spiritual Direction
Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number: STMM 571
Instructor: Valerie Lesniak, Ph.D.
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"Oh heart,
sit with someone who
knows the heart;
Go under the tree
which has fresh
blossoms." *-Rumi*

Prerequisites:
STMM 561 Contemporary Spirituality and Prayer
STMM 553 Pastoral Care Skills

Time and Place

Day:	Wednesday
Time:	9:00-11:50 a.m.
Place:	Hunthausen
First Day of Class:	September 19, 2012
No Class:	Wednesday November 21, 2012
Last day of Class:	November 28, 2012

Auditors: Auditors must meet all requirements for this course: required reading, papers, class discussions, and exercises.

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

Appointments

Please call or email for a specific appointment time. The office phone number is 206-296-6936. I can also be reached by email: vlesniak@seattleu.edu.

Special Needs

If you have or think you may have a disability (including an "invisible disability" such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center.

Class Procedures

Class procedures will vary for each three-hour class period and depend upon the nature of the material to be discussed during each. In general, classes will contain lecture, discussion, contemplative listening group exercises, and spiritual direction praxis.

Course Requirements

1) Class attendance
2) Participation in small group exercises, dyads, and triads
3) Journal writing that reflects upon noticings of the signs or glimpses of the life of God in self and others as well as your growing understanding of the ministry of spiritual direction (see further description below)
4) Three 5-6 page reflection papers (see description and dates due below)
5) Interview (for those who desire to go on in the spiritual direction track of the MATS) during the last two weeks of November**. Scheduling will be discussed in class.**
6) Critical and engaged reading of texts and articles (see readings listed below)

Journal

You are asked to keep a journal throughout the quarter. You are the only person who will read this journal. At the same time, your journal entries will be the basis for your final paper for the course. In this journal, make two types of entries. 1) After each class, write what you noticed about the signs or glimpses of the life of God as you heard the discussion and stories of other students in class. 2) As you do your reading for this class, jot down what you believe is important in shaping your own understanding of spiritual direction.

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.

Kisly, Lorraine, ed. The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition. Parabola Anthology Series. Sandpoint, IN: Morning Light Press, 2006:
ISBN 978-1-59675-008-1
The eight Chapters that will be used in class:

- Christopher Bamford, “The Gift of the Call,” 2-11.
- Bede Griffiths, “Winding the Golden String,” 14-19.
- Thomas Hopko, Living in Communion,” 179-192.
- Thomas Keating, “Awakening to the Present,”46-53.
- David Steindl-Rast, “Become What You Are,” 66-79.
- David Steindl-Rast, “Learning to Die,” 236-249.
- Kallistos Ware, “Image and Likeness,” 148-161.
- Irma Zaleski, “The Door to Joy,” 162-168.

Sheldrake, Philip. Befriending Our Desires. Toronto: Novalis Press, 2001.
ISBN: 2-89507-177-2

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

Rahner, Karl. *Encounters with Silence*. 2nd Rev. Ed. Trans. James M. Demske. South Bend Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 1999, 3-25.
ISBN 978-1890318222

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 **October 3, October 31, and November 14.**
   (See description below)
5. **Ora**l review and interview
6. Critical and engaged reading of texts and articles

Paper 1: **Due October 3:** 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 in 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: October 31: 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 November 14: 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 Schedule of Classes and Assigned Reading

(Additional articles may be given out at the discretion of the instructor to meet the needs of the class.**)**

September 19: ***Responsive Listening***

Introductory Matters – Syllabus, etc.
Active Listening
Contemplative Listening
Responsive Listening
Praxis in Responsive Listening

September 26: ***Glimpses and Signs of the Life of the Spirit***

What Is Experience?
Experience of God in the World Today: A Rahnerian Perspective
Arenas of Human Experience: Elizabeth Liebert
Experience of God: Biblical Perspectives on Life of the Spirit
Small Group Praxis – Responsive Listening

Required Reading Articles

*Burghardt, Walter, "Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real."

*Edwards, Tilden, “Immediate Givenness to God in the Spiritual Direction Relationship.”
* Hart, Thomas, “Establishing an Orientation.”

Required Reading Books:
Bidwell, Duane R. *Short Term Spiritual Guidance.* Chapter 2: 13-25

Liebert, Elizabeth. “Supervision as Widening the Horizons.” In *Supervision of Spiritual Directors*, 125-45.

- Griffiths, Bede. “Winding the Golden String.” In *The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition,* 14-19.
- Keating, Thomas. “Awakening to the Present.” In *The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition,* 46-53.
- Zaleski, Irma. “The Door to Joy.” In *The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition,* 162-68.

October 3: ***Historical Perspectives on Practice of Spiritual Direction***

Biblical Foundations/Eastern Beginnings
Models of Direction

Small Group Praxis – Spiritual Direction

Required Reading Articles:

*Ruffing, Janet, “Typological History of Spiritual Direction.”

Required Reading Books:

Allen, Joseph, *Inner Way*, Preface, Foreword, Chapters 1 and 2, ix-57.

Bidwell, *Short Term, 1-12.*
Kallistos Ware, “Image and Likeness,” in *The Inner Journey,* 148-161.

FIRST PAPER DUE

October 10: ***Theological and Anthropological Assumptions***

Assumptions about God and Human Beings:

Karl Rahner
Elizabeth Ann Johnson
Thomas Hart
Small Group Praxis – Responsive Listening

Required Reading Articles

*Hart, Thomas, "Toward a Healthy Spirituality: Ten Guiding Principles."
*Johnson, Elizabeth Ann, "Classical Theology."

Required Reading Books:

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.

Rahner, Karl, "God of My Life," "God of My Lord Jesus Christ," God of My Prayer." In *Encounters with Silence*, 3-25.

October 17: ***What Is Spiritual Direction?***

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

Required Reading Articles:

*Fischer, Kathleen, "Spiritual Direction for Women."

*Hart, Thomas, "Pastoral Counseling or Spiritual Direction: What's the Difference?"

*Taylor-Stinson, Therese. "Black Spirituality and the Art of Spiritual Direction."

Required Reading Books:

Bidwell, Duane R. *Short Term Spiritual Guidance*.
1-51, 69-83.

Phillips, Susan. *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction.* xi-xiii, 1-18, 21-92.

October 24: The Process of Spiritual Direction

Preparation
Initial Sessions
Dialogical Process
Ethical Issues
Small Group Praxis – Spiritual Direction

Required Reading Articles:
*Guenther, Margaret, "Seasons in Spiritual Direction."

Required Reading Books:

Silver, Anne Winchell. *Trustworthy Connections: Interpersonal Issues in Spiritual Direction, 1-79, 111-143.*

October 31: Prayer and The Hopeful Imagination

Imagination as Source of Transformation/Hopeful Imagination
Exercise: The Place God Comes to Meet us.
Small Group Praxis – Spiritual Direction

Required Reading Articles:

*Gill, Jean, "Distractions in Prayer: Stumbling Blocks or Stepping Stones?
*TBA

Required Reading Books:

Bidwell, Duane. *Short Term,* 23-51 (Chapters 3 and 4).
Phillips, Susan. *Candlelight, 95-162.*

November 7: Desire

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

Required Reading Books:

Sheldrake, Philip. *Befriending Our Desires*. 2 Rev. Ed. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., 2002, 1-100.

November 14: Obstacles to Life in the Spirit/Obstacles to Effective Direction

Desolation
Invitation of God/Challenge
Obstacles to Effective Direction:
Significance of Culture

Required Reading Articles:

*Aufauvre, Brigitte-Violaine, "Depression and Spiritual Desolation."

Required Reading Books:

Bidwell, Duane. *Short Term, 69-83.*

- Bamford, Christopher. "The Gift of the Call." In *The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition,* 2-11.
- 2. Hopko, Thomas. "Living in Communion." In *The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition,* 179-92.
- 4. Steindl-Rast, David. "Become What You are." In *The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition,* 66-79.
- 5. Steindl-Rast, David. "Learning to Die." In *The Inner Journey: Views from the Christian Tradition,* 236-49.

THIRD PAPER DUE
November 28: Purpose of Spiritual Direction/Endings

Purpose of Spiritual Direction
Ending of Direction Relationships
Small Group Praxis
Closing and Evaluation

Assigned Readings;

- Bidwell, Duane R. *Short Term Spiritual Guidance*. Chapter 6, 69-83.
- Phillips, Susan. *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction. Part Three and Conclusion,* 165-252.