

## **STMA 571 CRITICAL ISSUES IN SPIRITUALITY**

Winter Quarter, 2007

Tuesdays, 9:00 – 11:50am

January 9 through March 6, 2007

Hunthausen 160

Instructor: Alexandra Kovats, csjp, PhD

E-mail: cosmicdancer@comcast.net

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will explore typical human and cultural dynamics (issues) and problems that emerge as blockages in the development of one's relationship to God, self, others and the rest of creation. Student presentations will be an important part of the process of learning. Some of the topics we will be considering are: distinction between spiritual direction and pastoral counseling; cosmological assumptions and beliefs; multi-cultural awareneses; grief and trauma; sexuality; sexual abuse; depression, dark night, desolation; addiction and co-dependency; mid-life and aging, healing and other topics raised by students' concerns.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To provide knowledge and skills to engage with a variety of human and cultural factors that support and/or impede psycho-spiritual growth.
2. To clarify the primary focus of the spiritual direction relationship in distinction to therapy/pastoral counseling.
3. To deepen awareness of the blocks and supports in one's psycho-spiritual growth.
4. To provide spiritual directors with competencies that enable them to determine the need for professional referrals.

### **REQUIRED READING**

May, Gerald. (1992) *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit: Psychiatric Dimensions of Spiritual Direction*. San Francisco: Harper.

Grant, Robert. (1996) *The Way of the Wound: A Spirituality of Trauma and Transformation*. Self-published.

Gerald L. Sittser. (1996) *Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Vest, Norvene. ed. (2000) *Still Listening: New Horizons in Spiritual Direction*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse.

**A Course Reader is available for purchase at SU Reprographics.**

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS

1. Faithful attendance and participation in all class discussions, processes and activities.
2. Read all the assigned readings and reflectively engage with the authors' ideas and your own experiences and understandings.
3. Keep a reflective notebook on the readings done for class.  
Some helpful questions:
  - A. What concrete implications for the practice of spiritual direction/pastoral practice do I find in the text/article? What implications do I agree with? Disagree with? Why?
  - B. How does the reading help me to work towards a personal definition of spiritual direction/pastoral practice? What is it? What qualities would describe the relationship and my style of engaging in ministry?
  - C. What are my personal stumbling blocks in regard to living out my desired truth/qualities/ style of spiritual direction/ pastoral practice?
4. Two required papers.

A. **A Reflection paper (3-4 pages) due on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007.**

What is it in me that really prevents me from trusting/believing and experiencing that God loves me? (What is my "no" point, critical dynamic or major block in my spiritual unfolding/evolution?)

You might find it helpful to reflect on your own spiritual direction/retreat experiences or love relationships where you might have encountered your shadow/resistance to your deeper wholeness. You might also find it helpful to write this paper after reading Gerald May's book.

- B. Students will select a critical issue or dynamic that they have a particular interest in exploring further, such as: sexuality, grief, trauma, addiction, aging, healing, shame, body, multicultural awareness, prayer development and obstacles, etc.

Please create an annotated bibliography of **five** important sources on your topic/critical issue. Make enough copies for each member of the class. You will hand these out on the last three days of class, when you will make a short presentation on the topic you selected. Further details will be given during our first class together.

### Grade Distribution:

<b>Paper and Annotated Bibliography</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>60%</b>

**PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST Class:**

**Fill out the attached Questionnaire and bring to class  
(to be handed in)**

**TENTATIVE SYLLABUS**

- January 9, 2007** Introduction to Course  
Descriptions/Images of Spirituality  
Cosmological Context of Spirituality
- January 16, 2007** Spirituality and psychology  
Spiritual Direction and Counseling
- January 23, 2007** Spirituality, Sexuality, Gender, and Multiculturalism
- January 30, 2007** Spirituality, Aging and Grief
- February 6, 2007** Spirituality, Trauma and Healing
- February 13, 2007** Spirituality, Addiction and Co-dependency
- February 20, 2007** Student Presentations
- February 27, 2007** Student Presentations
- March 6, 2007** Student Presentations

**STMA 571 CRITICAL ISSUES IN SPIRITUALITY**

***Questionnaire***

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone#** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry/Work:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Denomination:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Program/Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name you like to be called** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your favorite animal at the moment** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name three goals you hope to achieve for yourself during this course:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What fears or concerns do you have about this course?**

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**Name one dynamic or issue in spirituality that you have encountered in your own work/ministry:**

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**Name one spirituality dynamic or issue from the world in which we live that you have been concerned about recently:**

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**Name one critical issue/dynamic in spirituality that your own experience has brought to your attention:**

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**Name a spiritual practice or resource that you have found helpful:**

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**Would you be open to create a sacred space for class that would be a visual reminder of the presence of Mystery (God)?**

**Would you be willing to lead a short prayer (song, chant, poem) in class to focus us at the beginning of class or after the break?.**

**What situations/activities help you to learn best?**

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**Further comments/suggestions/information that would help me to respond to your learning needs...**

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