The Spiritual Journey: Practicing the Presence of God
Bangor Theological Seminary
Bangor Campus
Instructor: Rev. Kate Winters, Ph.D.

Session I: The Call to Spiritual Formation
Friday, July 22, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Saturday, July 23, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Session II: The Practice of Community: Church as Vocation
Friday, July 29, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Saturday, July 30, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Session III: Incarnational Worship: Transforming Space and Time
Friday, August 5, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Saturday, August 6, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Purpose:
In the Christian tradition, the vocation of the faith community is to incarnate the love of Christ in every time and setting. Our congregations are called to embody a living Spirit, to provide an environment in which God is experienced as well as studied, loved as well as revered, and known, not simply “known about.” In session one of this course, we will study the nature of spiritual formation with a focus on the individual. In session two, we will look at the faith community as an essential spiritual practice and as a rich environment for faith development. In session three, we will explore the worship, particularly the liturgical year, as an effective tool for practicing the presence and answering the call of God.

Format:
This 3 credit sequence taken over three Friday/Saturday sessions can be taken as three separate one credit courses. Each session will involve the student in prayer, presentation of material, and discussion. The student is encouraged to do the bulk of the required reading for the class before the class session. A reflection paper will be completed prior to the first meeting and a second following the session. All work is due by Friday, August 12th.

Evaluation:
This course is offered pass/fail unless the student requests a letter grade in writing prior to the first meeting. In this case, arrangements will be made with the instructor for evaluation. A passing grade will require full participation in the class, reading and writing assignments completed as assigned, and a final evaluation of the class process.

BTS Program Goals:
Each session of the course is planned to “foster growth in the spiritual traditions and practices of the Church” by having each student take part in as well as articulate the purpose and meanings of various traditional sacred practices. This articulation is essential in order to “develop and express mature personal faith,” “engage in [wise] pastoral care,” and exercise responsible spiritual leadership in any setting.*

*Quotes are taken from Bangor Theological Seminary 2010-2011 Online Catalog
Syllabus for Session I
The Call to Spiritual Formation
Friday, July 22, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.; Saturday, July 23, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Overview:
In this session we will explore the landscape of spiritual hunger and practice. Through presentation, prayer, and discussion, we will study the nature of individual spiritual formation. How it may be defined, how is it expressed, lived, and developed in a life of “unceasing prayer.”

Objectives:
- to develop language and a comfort in using the language of prayer and formation
- to acquaint students with traditional practices of spiritual formation
- to develop leaders able to articulate and model the life-long process of spiritual growth

Required Texts:

Friday, July 22
- Opening Prayer
- Introduction to each other and weekend rhythm
- The land/lifescape of spiritual formation
- Cultural challenges to life of the spirit
- The purpose of practice
- The challenge of silence
- Evening Practice

Saturday, July 23
- Morning Practice
- Nouwen’s movements of the Spirit
- Many faces of prayer
- Afternoon Practice
- Examining traditional practices
- The Rule / Rhythm of Life
- Sending Prayer

Before Class Assignment:
Read Nouwen’s, *Spiritual Formation.* Write a reflective paper (3-4 pages) on one of the movements of the spiritual life that he describes (from opaqueness to transparency, from illusion to prayer, from sorrow to joy, from resentment to gratitude, from fear to love, from exclusion to inclusion, from denying to befriending death). How do you understand this growth of the spirit? How have you experienced this movement? What are its challenges? How does it relate to your understanding of “spiritual formation”?

Final Assignment:
Construct your own rule/rhythm of life toward growth in the Spirit (3-4 pages). Name and describe the practices you have or will try to incorporate according to your own needs, temperament and life right now. Include goals, hopes, and challenges you expect to encounter.
Syllabus for Session II
The Practice of Community: Church as Vocation
Friday, July 29, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.; Saturday, July 30, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Overview:
In this session we will study the community of faith as the primary practice of spiritual formation as an assembly called for a sacred purpose. We will read James Fowler’s classic text, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, which explores the nature of church as an “ecology of care and vocation” and introduces the field of faith development theory.

Objectives:
- to develop an understanding of the faith community as spiritual practice
- to give students a working knowledge of James Fowler’s faith development theory and how it sheds light on the life of developing congregations
- to explore essential spiritual practices of thriving faith communities

Required Text:

Friday, July 29
- Opening Prayer
- Introduction to each other and weekend rhythm
- The nature of the church as an “ecology of care and vocation”
- Community as spiritual practice
- The nature of spiritual leadership
- Evening Prayer

Saturday, July 30
- Morning Prayer
- Introduction to Faith Development Theory
- Fowlers “Stages of Faith” Today
- Dynamics of Change in Congregations
- Developing Spiritual practices in and of the community
- Sending Prayer

Before Class Assignment:
In Chapters One and Two, James Fowler writes of the community of faith, the church, as “ecology of care” and an “ecology of vocation” whose calling is partnership with God in the work of ongoing creation. In 2 – 3 pages, reflect on your own community of faith. How is it, or does it fail, to be an ecology of care? How is it, or does it fail, to be an ecology of vocation? Make sure to describe your understanding of those terms. If you do not take an active part in a community of faith right now, choose another community essential to your life.

Final Assignment:
Reflect on your own growth / changes in faith from childhood until now. Write a 5-6 page paper on the role your faith community played in those changes. How might your understanding of faith development theory affect your practices of education and leadership within the faith community?
Overview:
Worship, as Word made flesh among us and flesh made Word, is the primary spiritual practice of Christian community. Focusing on the stories and rhythms of the liturgical year, we will explore the ongoing incarnation of the divine heart in our own. We will both experience and develop resources for congregational worship and formation.

Objectives:
- to foster an understanding of worship as an event of incarnation
- to explore the historical development of the liturgical year and its power as a tool of spiritual transformation
- to grasp various movements of the heart that accompany each season
- to gain confidence in preparing effective resources for the worshiping community

Required Text:

Friday, July 29
- Opening Worship
- Introduction to one another and our experience of time
- Incarnational worship – “in the fullness of time”
- Background and rhythm of the liturgical year
- Worship environment as prayer
- Evening Worship

Saturday, July 30
- Morning Worship
- Implications of various developmental levels of faith for keeping the year well
- Exploring seasons of the year as eight movements of the heart
- Afternoon Worship
- Developing seasonal communal practices of the spirit
- Preparing closing worship
- Closing Worship

Before Class Assignment:
Read *Receiving the Day* by Dorothy C. Bass. In the preface she writes, “How we live in time shapes the quality of our relationship with our innermost selves, with other people, with the material world, and with God.” (p.xiii) In 2-3 pages, reflect honestly upon how you “live in time.” What is your relationship to time? How is time a dimension of your relationship with God?

Final Assignment:
Choose two of the following:
- Write an original “Call to Worship” or “Closing Prayer/Benediction” that involves two or more senses and is meant to be used during one particular season of the year.
- Write a hymn (public domain tunes are certainly acceptable!) that evokes a particular liturgical season for use at some point of the worship service.
- Design or create a symbolic focal point for prayer during one season of the liturgical year. This may be done in any medium and for any setting.
Further Suggested Resources:

For Session I:


For Session II:


For Session III:


**For ALL Sessions:**

