



Practicum in Spiritual Direction II | DM749

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

In-person Retreat in Evanston | August 8-10, 2024

Virtual sessions | September 9, October 7, November 11, December 2

Monday Mornings, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (Central)

Recurring Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87526672288>

Instructor: Dr. Sharon Conley Cottingham | Pronouns: she, her
Office hours: Telephone or Zoom, By Appointment

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“When individuals take seriously the responsibility to stay grounded in the Mystery of Love, a group can give itself to the process of group spiritual direction. Then transformation occurs. The group emerges no longer merely a collection of people who want to be present to one another. Instead, members experience themselves as co-participants in the Mystery of Love. The group has become a spiritual community which celebrates the uniqueness of each individual’s desire for God yet the commonality of that desire.”

Rose Mary Dougherty, *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will truly be a *practicum* with ample opportunity for experimenting with various forms of group spiritual direction. We will both experience and lead as “co-participants in the Mystery of Love.” The course will include readings on the nature of group spiritual direction, practice in leading spiritual direction groups both in and outside of class, and review and discussion of key issues experienced by groups engaged in communal spiritual direction.

During the semester, learners will:

1. Participate in in-person group spiritual direction during an on-site retreat August 8-10.
2. Prepare and guide (in partnership) an in-class group spiritual direction session.
3. Guide and report on six group spiritual direction sessions (2 per month) in the learner's own context.
4. Write a Final Integration paper identifying key learnings and offering a vision for contextualized group spiritual direction.

The on-site retreat will include an overview of the format for subsequent class sessions including the expectation for group leadership.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To apply theoretical material from previous DMin course work in spiritual direction to the practice of group spiritual direction. [See the required course textbooks]
2. To deepen and expand the learner's capacity for guiding various forms of group spiritual direction. [In-class guidance and guidance in learner's context]
3. To further develop the theological assertions that guide the learner's ministry. [Theological reflection in reports submitted on group leadership]
4. To describe an informed vision for contextualized spiritual direction groups. [Final Integration paper]

Please consider this syllabus a flexible but relatively stable effort to address what you can expect in the course. The Moodle platform will "open" by July 15, 2024.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Through course readings, interaction with peers and the instructor, and personal reflection, the learner will:

- Become increasingly at ease in inviting and recognizing the Holy in group spiritual direction.
- Find styles of group spiritual direction compatible with one's gifts, abilities, and context.
- Grow capacity for ease with and celebration of difference—cultural, theological, experiential.
- Deepen theological thinking about the work of the Holy in people's lives and in the practice of group spiritual direction.
- Develop a vision for development of contextualized spiritual direction groups.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

1. Presentation of personal faith pilgrimages. (Aug 8-10)
2. Participation in Group Spiritual Direction. (Aug 8-10)

3. Guidance of and reflection on Group Spiritual Direction in learner's context.
 - Two sessions each month (totaling six sessions).
 - Three reflection papers reviewing Group Spiritual Direction experience. (1-2 pp each)
4. Partner in guiding an in-class Group Spiritual Direction session.
 - submit plan three days prior to session
5. Final Integration paper (8-10 pp)
 - Defining Group Spiritual Direction
 - Integrating texts (primary texts and any others you have found insightful)
 - Key learnings from your leadership experience
 - Vision for contextualized Group Spiritual Direction

COURSE DELIVERY:

- Synchronous: In-person retreat (Aug 8-10)
- Synchronous: Virtual/Zoom utilizing recurring link (Sept 2, Oct 7, Nov 11, Dec 2)
- Asynchronous: Moodle Learning Platform (video, course material, submission of assignments)

Student accommodations for documented conditions to learning should be developed and requested before the beginning of the course. Information can be found on MyGETS under the Registrar and Advising tab > Accommodations.

EXPECTATIONS FOR COURSE ENGAGEMENT:

1. Inclusive/Expansive Language

In our time together learners are expected to use respectful, inclusive and expansive language for God and humans. This does not mean that you may never use masculine pronouns for God, but it does mean that it is not the only way to describe God. The same is true for referring to each other. For instance, we expect to avoid using "man" for all human beings and "mankind" for humanity. In this course, you are invited to stretch your metaphoric language.

2. Confidentiality

The Practicum course material is especially sensitive. Students are invited to discuss personal and sensitive content at their own discretion, as well as "case" presentations of their work with spiritual directees. Confidentiality generally means what is discussed in class stays in class. And, at the same time, a learning environment requires we learn from the varied settings that compose a course that is synchronous and asynchronous. Please: 1) share only what you feel ready to share in the course, and 2) seek explicit permission from a peer to share something outside of class about their experience, and 3) regarding reflection paper material, use discretion in sharing information offered by Group Spiritual Direction participants.

3. Minimum Technological Requirements:

- *Internet Connection* - learners must have regular, reliable access to a high-speed internet connection that is sufficient to run streaming video with no difficulty. Usually, cable or DSL would work.
- *Web Browser* - Students must have the latest version of a standard web browser (Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, etc.)
- *Operating System* – Students must have access to a reasonably up-to-date computer and operating system (Windows, Mac OS, etc.). Computers must play sound. The Styberg Library has a limited number of laptop computers available for check-out. The Northwestern University Library has a computer center as well.
- *Moodle Learning Management System* – Students should have access to the Moodle LMS and know how to post in discussion forums as well as submit writing assignments on Moodle.
- *File Format* – Students must be able to work with files normal to the Microsoft Office environment, especially .doc/.docx. Many students with Apple computers can manage such files with the iWork suite of applications. Students without MS Office or Apple iWork might try the freely available OpenOffice applications: <http://www.openoffice.org>. Also available to students is the Google Drive suite to create documents and presentations (<http://drive.google.com>).

Assessment of Course Work

Grading will be based on:

1. Class participation: 35%
 - a. Attentiveness (camera on)
 - b. Engagement in conversation related to readings and reflection on experience.
2. Three Reflection Papers (1-2 pp), 35%
 - a. Brief description of Group Spiritual Direction setting and focus;
 - b. Integration of reading from required texts;
 - c. Assess leadership strengths and areas for growth;
 - d. Attention to the interaction of identity variables (e.g. culture, race, economic levels, gender/sexual identity, theological differences).
3. Final Integration paper (8-10 pp), 30%
 - a. Defining Group Spiritual Direction;
 - b. Integration of reading from required texts (primary texts and any others you have found insightful);
 - c. Key learnings from your leadership experience including strengths and areas for growth;
 - d. Vision for contextualized Group Spiritual Direction.

GETS Applicable Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the Academic Handbook for the DMin program. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

Writing

- Academic integrity and [plagiarism](#): (See 19-20 Handbook, 12, 78-83) All professors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.
- Writing and citations: The *Turabian Manual for Writers* and the *Chicago Manual of Style* footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online [here](#). In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
 - Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services> "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

Attendance and Class Participation

- Inclusivity/Diversity: The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed . . . All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues. (See 19-20 Handbook, 9)
- Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions will be in jeopardy for passing the course. If you know you will be absent or significantly late, please alert the instructor via text: 312-415-1527.

Extensions

See the Doctor of Ministry Handbook for relevant policies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Dougherty, Rose Mary. 1995. *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment*. New York, Paulist Press.
- Kropf, Marlene and Schrock, Daniel, eds. 2012. *An Open Place: The Ministry of Group Spiritual Direction*. New York, Church Publishing.
- Prechtel, Daniel L. 2012. *Where Two or Three are Gathered: Spiritual Direction for Small Groups*. New York, Morehouse Publishing.
- Weiner, Roslyn G. 2021. *Seeking in the Company of Others: The Wisdom of Group Spiritual Direction*. Bellevue, WA, SDI Press.

SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bryant, Stephen D.; Grana, Janice T.; Thompson, Marjorie J. 2006. *Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation, Leader's Guide*. Nashville: Upper Room Books.
- Bryant-Johnson, Sherry, Norman-McNaney, Rosalie, and Taylor-Stinson, Therese, eds. 2014. *Embodied Spirits: Stories of Spiritual Directors of Color*. New York: Morehouse Publishing.
- Dawson, Gerrit Scott; Gonzales, Adele; Hinson, E. Glenn; Job, Rueben P.; Thompson, Marjorie J.; Wright, Wendy M. 2006. *Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation, Participant's Book*. Nashville: Upper Room Books.
- Dougherty, Rose Mary, ed. 2003. *The Lived Experience of Group Spiritual Direction*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Guenther, Margaret. 1992. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*. Boston, MA: Cowley Publications.
- Holmes, Barbara A. 2017. *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Keen, Karen R. 2020. *The Jesus Way: Practicing the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises*. Garland, TX: Contemplatio Press.
- Vest, Norvene, editor. 2003. *Tending the Holy: Spiritual Direction Across Traditions*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Mabry, John, editor. 2014. *Spiritual Guidance Across Religions: A Sourcebook for Spiritual Director and Other Professional Providing Counsel to People of Differing Faith Traditions*. Nashville, TN: Skylights Path Publishing.

Tucker, Lucy Abbot. 2020. *Spiritual Direction Supervision: Principles, Practices, & Storytelling: A workbook designed to support the care and growth of your spiritual direction practice*. Bellevue, WA: SDI Press.