

Overview:

The Stance is an integrative essay, developed during the final year of VFCL, completed by the beginning of the spring term, and reviewed by a team from the field during the spring term. Students will register for: 33-600 Christian Education, and 34-600 Spiritual Formation/Evangelism in the spring semester for 1 semester hour of P/F credit. Successful completion is required for graduation.

Process:

MA in Christian Education:

Students in this degree would take VFCL along with the first year MDiv students. MA CE students would enroll in 10-500 for 2 semester hours of credit both fall and spring of their first year.

MA CE students would enroll in 10-501 (field placement) and 10-502 in the second year. They would be in the same plenary groups with second year MDiv students but in a small group with a leader chosen by the CE field in consultation with the Field Education staff.

For additional one semester hour of credit they will register for 33-602 Christian Education Stance. They will meet in a group with teacher under whose guidance they will write a *stance*. This will then be graded by two CE faculty as either pass or fail. This group will be a hybrid course that will accommodate both on-campus and in-ministry students in their last year prior to graduation .

Each of the MA programs has in place a final integrative paper, project, or practicum appropriate to the degree.

MA in Music Ministry:

The stance is built into the course 31-690 Music Ministry Project taken in the final year.

MA in Pastoral Care and Counseling:

The stance is built into the course 32-852 Practicum in PCC taken the final year.

MA in Spiritual Formation and Evangelism:

The Spiritual formation or Evangelism stance is integrative work within context of field education or practicum/supervision in spiritual direction. Students will reflect on the degree goals listed below. Spiritual Formation students will integrate their stance with Core Competencies for Professional Certification in Spiritual Formation. Evangelism students will integrate their stance with Core Competencies for Professional Certification in Evangelism.

A. **Knowing:** To know practices and disciplines of inviting, welcoming, and nurturing persons in Christian faith and to understand how these are affected by differing cultural contexts. This goal includes the following sub-themes:

1. To know historic forms of spiritual disciplines, including personal and corporate prayer, processes of self-reflection and the discipline of a personal rule of life.
2. To understand the historical connection between present congregational concerns and mystical/ascetical theology and Wesleyan traditions.
3. To read cultural contexts when developing ministries of spiritual formation.
4. To understand how spiritual formation may be a tool for evangelism.

B. Doing: To examine, assess, and lead a variety of approaches to spiritual formation and evangelism appropriate to a particular faith community. This goal includes experience or practice in the following:

1. To be able to read, evaluate and engage the culture of a congregation and its community with particular sensitivity to culture, age, race, class and gender.
2. To teach Christian spiritual formation practices and prayer in a variety of congregational settings, small groups, and retreats.
3. To utilize biblical and theological scholarship in practices of spiritual formation.
4. To coordinate and lead ministries of spiritual formation.
5. To work in mutual ministry with laity and other clergy staff.

C. Being: To be a confident leader in guiding in ministries of spiritual formation and evangelism. This goal includes the following:

1. To be deeply grounded in the practice of spiritual disciplines.
2. To be able to describe one's particular areas of expertise with confidence. These competencies may include retreat leadership, spiritual direction one-on-one or in small groups.
3. To be comfortable "telling the Christian story" in ways that are compatible with particular cultural contexts.
4. To understand oneself as a life-long learner, able to describe areas for continuing education for leadership, integrating theological, biblical, historical and contemporary practices for ministry, with particular focus on Wesleyan heritage.

Core Competencies for UM Professional Certification in Spiritual Formation

Utilize these Core Competencies, together with knowing, being, doing competencies, for setting personal learning objectives – and evaluating your progress toward achieving professional competence in spiritual formation leadership. You may submit your Certification Application to the instructor.

1. Regular practice of spiritual disciplines with their own lives.
2. Ability to teach others diverse spiritual disciplines (including, but not limited to, *lectio divina*, various forms and types of prayer, confession and examination of consciousness, processes of discernment, leadership of worship, fasting and self-emptying, ways of hospitality).
3. Understanding of and engagement in the essential link between spiritual formation and congregational life (e.g. in worship leadership and preaching, Christian education, pastoral care, community outreach, mission and evangelism, church administration, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue).
4. Knowledge of and ability to teach history and practices of Wesleyan spirituality.
5. Ability to lead retreats with persons of various ages.
6. Ability to offer spiritual direction, both in one-to-one and in group modes.

Core Competencies for UM Professional Certification in Spiritual Formation

1. Know biblical themes and passages that provide introduce and inform the practice of evangelism, including being able to answer the question why we engage in evangelism.
2. Understand how theology informs and directs the practice of evangelism. This includes have a basic

knowledge of at least three approaches to theology (e.g., Pentecostal, Liberation, Fundamentalist, Black, Feminist) and the ability to explain how evangelism is practiced under these three theologies. In all cases, a competency with Wesleyan theology is required, with the ability to explain the evangelistic nature of Wesleyan theology and traditional Methodist practices of evangelism.

3. Develop a personal conceptualization of evangelism, including the ability to articulate the vision that motivates the practice of evangelism, the normative goal of engaging in evangelism, and the theology that informs the ethos of the practices entailed in this conceptualization.
4. Recognize the connection between evangelism and the life of the local congregation, including developing a clear ecclesiological vision of how the local congregation should participate in the *missio Dei*.
5. Know several practices of evangelism, including how these practices interact with the various ministries of the local congregation.
6. Able to present several practical ways that congregations can adopt evangelistic practices in the various ministries of the local congregation.

Course will be supervised by one faculty member in the congregational leadership field. Course is concurrent with second semester of either 34-603 Practicum/Supervision in Spiritual Direction or 34-502 VFCL.