STMA 570 Spiritual Discernment
FALL Quarter, 2013
Weekend Format September 28-29, October 19-20
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SAT 8:30am – 4:30pm

SUN 9:00am – 4:00pm

"Discernment requires an authentic yearning for wisdom."
PLEASE READ ENTIRE SYLLABUS. THERE IS A PRE-FIRST WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT.

Course Description:

Discernment will be presented as a growing sensitivity and awareness to the action of God in one's life. It is the centering process at the core of one's daily life and ministry.

Tools of discernment are vital in the process of listening to the truth of one's inner self in God as distinct from the myriad of false voices from within and without. Ignatian rules for the discernment of spirits are utilized as well as ancient and contemporary means of self-awareness and self-knowledge. The course draws on spirituality, psychology and the participants' experience.

Course Objectives:

- To become familiar with the basic principles of discernment as found in Christian Traditions
- To explore the relevance of spiritual discernment for reflection on and engagement with issues of social justice
- To practice several spiritual processes that foster spiritual attentiveness and sensitivity to the life of the Spirit
- To become familiar with the principles and process of spiritual discernment in the Quaker tradition
- To recognize the gifts of discernment as found in Native American approaches to decision making and living

Specific Goals:

- Greater self-knowledge and self awareness
- Deeper appreciation of what it means to be psychospiritually mature
- Greater understanding of the ability to recognize the action of God in one's own life
- A growing facility in recognizing voices and movements that are from one's true self-in-God

 Increased confidence in guiding others in both on-going discernment and decision-making

Learning Outcomes:

- Ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian tradition (MATS)
- Ability to listen and respond to how the Spirit is active and alive in local, global and cosmic communities (MATS)
- Ability to articulate one's relationship with God, as it is informed by theological reflection in one's social context (MATS)
- Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others (MDiv)
- Demonstrate an ability to lead groups through processes of transformation and change (MATL)

Required Texts:

- Au, Wilkie and Noreen Cannon Au, The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path.Paulist Press, 2006.978-0-8091-4372-6
- Bieber, Nancy. Decision Making and Spiritual Discernment: The Sacred Art of Finding your Way, Skylight Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-59473—289-8
- Hanh, Thich Nhat, Work: Work: How to Find Joy and Meaning in Each Hour of the Day. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-937006-20-4
- Liebert, Elizabeth, The Way of Discernment: Spiritual Practices for Decision Making, Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, KY, 2008. ISBN 0664228704
- Palmer, Parker. A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life, Jossey-Bass, 2004. ISBN 0-7879-7100-6

ADDITIONAL XEROXED MATERIALS WILL ALSO BE USED.

Recommended Readings:

Au, Wilkie, By Way of the Heart. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989.

Brackley, Dean. **The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times**, Crossroad: New York, 2004

Barry, W. Paying Attention to God. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1990.

Daphne Clement, Group Spiritual Nurture: The Wisdom of Spiritual

Listening, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 373, Pendle Hill: PA, 2004.

Cornell, Ann Weiser, Ph.D., **The Power Of Focusing**, New Harbinger Publications; (May 1, 1996) ISBN 1-57224-044-X

Conroy, M. The Discerning Heart. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993.

Dawn, Marva J. Joy In Divine Wisdom: Practices of Discernment From Other Cultures and Christian Traditions, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

Dunne, T. Spiritual Mentoring. San Francisco: Harper, 1991.

Dyckman, K. and Carroll, L.P. **Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet**, Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1981.

Farnham, Suzanne et.al. **Listening Hearts.** Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 1991.

Farrington, Debra. Hearing with the Heart: A Gentle Guide to Discerning God's Will for your Life. Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Finley, J. Merton's Place of Nowhere. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1978.

Fischer, K. Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988.

Gendlin, E. Focusing. New York: Bantam Books, 1978.

Green, T. Weeds Among the Wheat. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1983.

When Life Breaks Through (The Dynamics of PRH Helping Relationships)

Gendron Monique, Gosselin Madeleine, Lacasse Denise, Larouche Lisette, Lefebvre Cecile, Morelli Esther, Nadeau Therese, Ouellet Irene, Corriveau Lucie, Editor:

Fondation Andre Rochais du Canada 2004, ISBN 2-9807684-1-3

Hauser, R. Moving in the Spirit. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

Lambert, Willi, **The Sevenfold Yes: Affirming the Goodness of our Deepest Desires,** Ave Maria Press, 2005.

Levov, Gregg, Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life, New York: Harmony Books, 1997.

Liebert, E. Changing Life Patterns. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992.

Linn, Dennis, Linn Sheila and Linn, Matthew, **Sleeping With Bread: Holding What Give You Life,** Paulist Press, 1995.

Lonsdale, David, Listening to the Music of the Spirit: The art of Discernment, Ave Maria Press, 1992.

Loring, Patricia, **Spiritual Discernment** Pendle Hill Pamphlet 305, Pendle Hill Publications, 1992

McIntosh, Mark. Discernment and Truth: The Spirituality and Theology of Knowledge, Crossroad, 2004.

Morris, D. and Chas, Olsen. **Discerning God's Will Together.** Nashville:

May, G. Addiction and Grace. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988.

Metz, J. **Poverty of Spirit.** New York: Paulist Press, 1968.Upper Room BKS., 1997.

Mueller, Joan, Faithful Listening: Discernment in Everyday Life. Sheed and Ward; Kansas City, 1996.

Nepo, Mark. Seventy Thousand Ways to Listen: Staying Close to What is Sacred, Free Press, 2012. 978-145167-4668

Reeves, Nancy, **Spiritual Discernment: I'd Say Yes, God If I Knew What You Wanted.**Northstone, 2001.

Sheeran, M. Beyond Majority Rule: Voiceless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends. Philadelphia: Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society Friends, 1987.

Sheldrake, Philip, **Befriending our Desires**, Novalis, 2001.

Sinetar, M. Elegant Choices, Healing Choices. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1988.

Smith, Carol Ann and Merz, Eugene, **Moment By Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life,** Ave Maria Press, 2007.

Smith, Carol Ann and Merz, Eugene, Finding God In Each Moment: The Practice of Discernment in Everyday Life, Ave Maria Press, 2006. Smith, Gordon Listening to God in Times of Choice. Downers Grove, IL.Intervarsity Press, 1997.

Toner, J.A. A Commentary on St Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirit. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982.

Discerning God's Will St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991.

Valles, C. The Art of Choosing. New York: Image Books, 1989.

Vanck, E. **Image Guidance: A Tool for Discernment** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1992.

Williams SJ, Monty, **Stepping Into Mystery: Four Approaches to a Spiritual Life,** Toronto, Novalis Press, 2012.

Wolff, Pierre, Discernment: The Art of Choosing Well, Ligouri Press, 1993.

Course Requirements:

- Written Assignments- 50%
- Class participation indicating assimilation of course content-50%

This course is highly experiential and process oriented. In order to acquire the skills that are needed, significant practice is required as well as reflecting and journaling about these experiences. This will be discussed further on the first day of class.

Written Assignments:

A. First mini-Reflection Paper on mindfulness practice- Due September 28, 2013

B. Three PRH Discernment Processes; Journaling Assignments Due October 19

C. Synthesis Presentation Due October 20

Tentative Schedule (may change according to the needs of the class and at the teacher's discretion.)

I have assigned half of each of the required texts for each weekend session. If you prefer you can read the books straight through. I would advise taking one of the discernment texts (Au or Liebert) and one of the more reflective texts (Bieber or Palmer) for each weekend session should you decide to read the entire book. It is important that you note in some way the content in each of the texts that you find helpful, challenging or confusing so that together we can reflect and have meaningful conversations.

Prior to this class meeting participants would have read

THICH NHAT HANH'S entire book.

You are invited to select one of the mindfulness exercises found in of Thich Nhat Hanh's book *Work: How to Find Joy and Meaning in Each Hour of the Day* and practice it for a week before the course begins. Journal about this experience.

Write a one page reflection on this experience for the first weekend class noting:

- What practice did you select?
- What was your experience of practicing this mindfulness practice for a week?
- What did you notice in your body, in your awareness?
- Please be as honest and descriptive as possible.
- DUE on September 28, 2018

September 28, 2013

It is important that you note in some way the content in each of the texts that you find helpful, challenging or confusing so that together we can reflect and have meaningful conversations.

Read for the First weekend sessions the following texts:

- Au, pp. 1-130
- Liebert, pp. 3-54
- Bieber, pp. 1-48
- Palmer, pp. 3-88

Themes of the first weekend:

- Overview and Introduction
- Refining the Acoustics of the Heart
- Mindfulness and awareness
- Listening and attending
- Discernment and Christian and Human Growth
- The Art of Focusing
- A Method for Discernment

October 19 – 20, 2013

Read:

- Au, 131-226
- Liebert, pp. 55-158
- Bieber, pp. 49-175
- Palmer, 89-186

Themes of the Second Weekend:

- Tapping other sources of self-knowledge and wisdom
- Ignatian Discernment
- Discernment in different traditions
- Dynamics and description of Circles of Trust
- Discernment in the Quaker Tradition
- Clearness Committee-Practice
- Discernment: A way of Life.
- Academic Honest
- The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy concerning Academic Honest as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook.

Additional Help

For additional help consider the following resources:

Learning Center Loyola 100 www.seattleu.edu/SAS/LA

Writing Center Engineering 307 www.seattleu.edu/writing enter.

Disabilities Services Loyola 100 <u>www.seattleu.edu/SAS/LA</u>. Disability based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.