

**NORTH TEXAS EXTENSION COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL**  
*An Extension of Perkins Course of Study School*

**COS #123 – Formation and Discipleship**

**2021 Summer Quarter**  
**June 5, July 10, August 7, 2021**

**Instructor:** Marsha Engle Middleton, D. Min.  
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**Course Objectives**

This course grounds the student in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship. Specific objectives, as defined by the Course of Study School, include the ability to:

1. Articulate a theological basis for the Wesleyan emphasis on spiritual disciplines and practice them as means of grace;
2. Explain and implement the General Rules and the practices of small groups in a congregation;
3. Educate and resource a congregation in the disciplines of Christian formation;
4. Organize congregations to help people discern their callings and gifts for ministry.

**Required Textbooks**

- Matthaëi, Sondra. *Formation in the Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008.
- Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005. (Note that newer editions of this book are available and are acceptable for use in this course as well. This edition is the one listed by GBHEM, although I personally use a 2014 edition).
- **You may be asked to make use of one more written resources that you may want to purchase.** There are several options for this, and I will have more information at our first class session.

**Supplementary Textbook**

- Heath, Elaine A. *Five Means of Grace: Experience God's Love the Wesleyan Way*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017.
- McLaren, Brian. *Finding Our Way Again: The Return of Ancient Practices*. Thomas Nelson, 2008.
- Wilhoit, James. *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008

**Class Requirements and Recommendations**

It is expected that Course of Study courses be **rigorous and theologically robust educational experiences**, designed and taught to satisfy the Course of Study objectives established by the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. To that end, **students shall complete significant reading and writing assignments**. Students and faculty are required to read and work with the material in the assigned texts. **It is expected** that students complete **assignments, papers, and projects equivalent to 20 pages per course**. The standard number of class hours for each of the basic courses is a minimum of twenty (20) hours (*Administrative Policies, Course of Study for Licensed and Ordained Ministry and Advanced Course of Study*, GBHEM, September 2015).

### **Class Attendance**

Students are expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing twenty percent (20%) or more of the classroom experience shall not receive credit for that class (*Administrative Policies, Course of Study for Licensed and Ordained Ministry and Advanced Course of Study*, GBHEM, September 2015).

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO READ PRIOR TO WRITING YOUR ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Please go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/02/> and read about the different types of academic writing. After you have written your assignments, please go back over your work and edit with the academic writing guidelines in mind.
- Our written works for this class are not sermons. Please do not use truncated language.

### **Written Assignments**

- All written assignments should be emailed to [middleton@ntcumc.org](mailto:middleton@ntcumc.org) by no later than 11:59 p.m. on the day a given assignment is due.
- All written assignments shall be in paragraph/essay form unless otherwise described.
- Submit written work in a MS Word compatible document.
- Use Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial fonts, 12 point.
- Set margins at 1" on all sides.
- Double space all writing in paragraph form.
- All papers must include page numbers as well as your last name in the header or footer.
- Note the question you are answering at the beginning of each new section or page.
- All papers must be properly cited.

### **How Your Final Course Grade is Determined**

10%	Assignment #1 due June 19, 2021
25%	Assignment #2, due July 17, 2021
25%	Assignment #3, due July 31, 2021
25%	Presentation to be scheduled either for Session Two (July 10, 2021) or Session Three (August 7, 2021)
15%	Class Participation

### **ECOSS Grading Scale**

Grades are awarded based on the following guidelines:

A, A-	Excellent scholarship
B+, B, B-	Good scholarship
C+, C, C-	Fair scholarship
D+, D, D-	Poor scholarship
F	Failure (no grade received in COSS office)
I	Incomplete (incomplete grades that are not resolved within 60 days of the final class session will be recorded as an F. An F or Administrative Withdrawal will grade will remain on the transcript even if the course is retaken and passed)
NC	No credit received
W	Withdrawal
AW	Administrative Withdrawal

Final authority in the determination of grades rests with the instructor.

### **Incomplete Policy**

Instructors will turn in grades at the end of each session. Students who do not complete their work and receive a grade must obtain permission from the instructor to receive an Incomplete. Students and instructors must agree on a due date for work to be completed. The student will send the required work to the instructor so that he/she can submit a grade to Course of Study office within 30 days of the final class session. If a grade change has not been received to replace an Incomplete, the grade becomes an F and the student must take the course over again.

### **Actions Taken for Academic Dishonesty**

When an instructor determines that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty on a course assignment, the instructor will normally (a) assign a grade penalty for the offense and (b) notify the COSS director of the incident. The normal penalty for the first offense is a zero on the assignment, though in the case of a particularly flagrant offense a more severe penalty can be assessed, up to failure in the course. A second offense can be grounds for dismissal from the school and will be reported to the student's conference officials. See Perkins COSS Handbook for more information.

### **Sexual Harassment and Racial Harassment Policies**

Sexual harassment and racial harassment will not be tolerated in the North Texas Course of Study environment. Complaints and resolution shall be handled according to the Perkins Course of Study School handbook, available online.

### **Assignments**

<b>Pre-Class Work:</b>	<b>Read Matthaiei introduction, and chapters 1 through 3</b>
<b>Due June 19:</b>	<b>Assignment #1 due</b>
<b>Due for class July 10:</b>	<b>Matthaiei reading due</b>
<b>Due July 17:</b>	<b>Assignment #2 Begin Reading Thompson introduction, chapters 1 through 7, and chapter 10. Due July 31 in conjunction with Assignment #3</b>
<b>Due July 31:</b>	<b>Thompson reading due Assignment #3</b>
<b>Due in Sessions 2 or 3:</b>	<b>Spiritual Practice and Presentation (see p. 6)</b>

**ECOSS #123 – Formation and Discipleship  
Written Assignment #1 due Saturday, June 19, 2021**

Write a brief essay of two (2) to four (4) pages describing the nature and function of the small group ministries within your current or recent past appointment. Pay special attention to how the small group ministry address the faith development of its members. In the event your setting of service has no small groups, write your essay based upon the small groups within your home church setting. In the event your setting of service has many small groups, focus on the ones you perceive to be the most and least functional for developing disciples of Jesus Christ.

**ECOSS #123 – Formation and Discipleship**  
**Written Assignment #2 due Saturday, July 17, 2021**

1. Complete your reading of the Matthaëi book, which you began prior to the first class.
2. In **Chapter 1**, Matthaëi argues that three elements must be present for individuals to grow in faith: authentic relationship, faithful community, and deeper meaning. On page 17 you will find a chart asking you to address these three elements within the context of your local congregation/s in three ways: (1) Where do you find these things in your congregation? (2) Where do you see the need for these things in your congregation? (3) How could you create these things in your congregation? Write an essay describing your responses for all three elements. Note that this should be in the form of an essay, not a chart, and that you should follow the rules of academic writing discussed in the class syllabus. The essay will be no less than two (2) and no more than three (3) pages in length. The challenge here is to be descriptive and concise at the same time.
3. In **Chapter 2**, Matthaëi identifies attempts to answer the question, *How do people grow in faith?* She identifies several models of faith development, including those of Westerhoff/Bushnell, James Fowler, Harris and Moran, and her own. Using outside sources, research the four models, and write an essay dealing with the following: (1) What assumptions are being made about God and about humanity by the authors of each model? (2) Describe the model, giving examples of how this might apply in your specific place of service. (3) Evaluate the models based upon your understanding of the tool of theological thought popularly known as the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” as well as the usefulness of the models in a local congregation. Be sure to use at least one additional source for the first three models in addition to the book we are reading for class. Chapter 4 will be helpful in discussing Matthaëi’s own model. This essay will be no less than five (5) and no more than seven (7) pages in length. All the rules of writing apply.
4. Choose one of the following options, and write an essay of no less than two (2) and no more than three (3) pages in length.
  - a. A member of your congregation went to Annual Conference for the first time and came home confused about the roles of Elder, Deacon, and Local Pastor. Write an “article”/essay for the church website describing the differences and similarities, and *specifically discussing the roles of each in our mission of making disciples* of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. In **Chapter 3**, Matthaëi describes Servant Leadership in terms of the offices of Deacons and Elders. Use her ideas, your understanding from the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, and other resources in your response.
  - b. Describe your own process of coming to/growing in faith using Matthaëi’s model of Invitation to Communion, Deepening Communion, and Full Communion (**Chapter 4**). In which ways was your home church strong? Where did the congregation need to improve? In what ways has this experience informed your own practice of ministry?
  - c. Discuss the sacramental ministry of your congregation in the manner of **Chapter 5**, but be sure to discuss both sacraments. How does this ministry equip your congregation to meet the challenges it will continue to face as the Body of Christ in the world? In what ways could your sacramental ministry be improved and/or expanded upon?

**ECOSS #123 – Formation and Discipleship**  
**Written Assignment #3 due July 31, 2021, 11:59 PM**

1. Read the Thompson book: introduction and chapters 1 – 7, and chapter 10
2. In one or two sentences, identify the following terms as used by Thompson. Double space between terms, but single space within each definition. (2 points each)
  1. spirituality
  2. spiritual disciplines
  3. tradition
  4. *lectio*
  5. *meditatio*
  6. *oratio*
  7. *conemplatio*
  8. listening
  9. prayers of intercession
  10. imaging intercession
  11. contemplative prayer
  12. prayer of presence
  13. breath prayer
  14. centering prayer
  15. liturgy
  16. preparation
  17. trust
  18. food fasting
  19. fast of repentance
  20. life review
  21. daily self-examination
  22. life-centered prayer
  23. journal writing
  24. rule of life
  25. principle of stretch and balance
3. Write an essay of approximately three pages dealing with the following: What indications of spiritual hunger and thirst do you perceive in our time? In your congregation? What do you think are the reasons for this spiritual condition? Give examples. (worth 25 points)
4. Write an essay of approximately three pages detailing your own “rule of life.” If you implemented the rule, what do you anticipate to be the benefits? What might be challenging? Do you intend to implement the rule for at least a period of time? Why or why not? (worth 25 points)

**ECOSS 123 Formation and Discipleship  
Assignment: Practice and Presentation**

**1. Your assigned spiritual discipline**

Draw a specific spiritual discipline/practice out of the container as it passes. Each student will have his or her own, distinct from that of other students in the class. Please do not “trade” disciplines, except in specific cases as described by the instructor in class.

**2. Research and design**

Each student will research the designated spiritual discipline and will design her or his own personal practice of this discipline to begin no later than **Saturday, June 12**. Each student should practice the given discipline at least three times each week between now and **June 12 and July 17**, except in specific cases as described by the instructor in class. Students should design their practices in such a way that they experience something new, and are stretched beyond their usual spiritual practices and comfort zone.

**3. Record**

Students should record their experience of their practice each time, including the manner in which she or he engaged the practice on a specific day and time, the duration of the practice, and any learning and observations they experience during each individual time period. Students will then record, for each session of practice, answers to the following:

- In what way did my practice of this discipline on this particular day connect me with God?
- In what way did it not serve to connect me with God on this occasion?
- What positive developments am I noticing since I practiced this discipline the previous time?
- What can I do to enhance the quality of my experience next time?

**4. Write**

Each student shall develop a one-page summary of his or her designated spiritual discipline, which will be compiled into a collection to be made available to all students at the end of the class. Students shall also turn in to the instructor their record of spiritual practice.

**5. Present**

Students should prepare a fifteen-minute oral presentation of their specific spiritual discipline including a description of the practice, a high-level historical background of the practice, and information compiled from her or his record-keeping from #3, above. Presentations will be timed. Presentations will be cut-off before they are complete should they go longer than fifteen minutes.

Presentations will be made during class on **July 10 and August 7**. Students may indicate their preference as to their day of presentation, but their choice cannot be assured. The instructor will finalize the presentation schedule during the week of **June 7** and will email the schedule to all students by **June 10**.