

Starr King School for the Ministry ~ Spring Semester 2018 ~ DRAFT syllabus

FTSP-5050 Deepening the Well: Resources for Ministry (and Life)

Instructor: Rev. Liza J. Rankow, MHS, PhD

Meeting: Wednesdays 2:10-5pm / Fireside Room

Course Description:

This course will invite students to explore the nature of their own spiritual formation and to cultivate an awareness of the Divine presence and action in every dimension of life. Through readings, audio and film resources, discussion, reflection, and a variety of experiential activities we will consider the practices, struggles, and commitments that deepen and nourish our souls. Materials will be drawn from an array of religious traditions. We will look at the role of spirituality in ministry and in social action, and the impacts that the demands of ministry and activism can have on our spirituality. We will examine the importance of developing an ongoing spiritual discipline to foster balance, integrity and vitality in our relationships with God, self, family, friends, colleagues, congregation, community, and world.

Class Format:

This class is both didactic and experiential. A highly interactive lecture-discussion format will be supplemented by audio and video resources, a variety of contemplative practices, guided exercises, and practicum. Each session will begin with a centering meditation and end with prayer. Some time will be spent outdoors, weather permitting, and we will take a field trip to a local Labyrinth as part of class activities. The creative arts will be incorporated to enhance multi-dimensional involvement with the material. In a very real sense this course will be a laboratory to invite, encourage, and nurture your growth.

Relevance:

Spiritual maturity is essential to effective ministry and community leadership. A central concern at the root of this class is: *where do we minister **from***? What are the experiences and disciplines that shape us into instruments of ministry, service, and social transformation... and how can we live into an ever-deepening relationship with the Divine that inspires and replenishes us as we do the work of our callings. Although crossing Thresholds, this class fits primarily under *Spiritual Practice and Care of the Soul*. The relevance to ECO is perhaps most emphatic in the cultivation of integrity and wholeness; the commitment “*To be what we want to see*” and “*To work for the common good.*” The course will guide students in processes of critical reflection, discernment, reconciliation, and spiritual companionship -- among others. We will consider synergies between spirituality and social action, and the risks of burnout when operating from shallow or dry wells (to return to the title metaphor).

Instructor Contact Information:

SKSM now requires school-related correspondence be done through official faculty email addresses – LRankow@sksm.edu, but also please copy dr.liza99@gmail.com to expedite my reply. *Please put “SKSM Class” as the subject line so I will be able to recognize it as coming from you.* You may also leave a voice message on the OneLife Institute voice mail line (510.595.5598); I am the only one who receives those messages. From there we can arrange to meet or talk, as needed.

Learning Outcomes:

Through full and committed participation students will be able to:

- Define spiritual formation and describe its relevance for religious leadership and service
- Identify and evaluate their own journey of spiritual formation
- Assess areas of ongoing personal growth and development
- Discuss the role of spirituality in ministry and social action
- Create a “took kit” of spiritual practices to draw on personally and professionally
- Develop an ongoing practice of spiritual discipline(s)
- Develop a personal Rule of Life

Student Expectations:

- Attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities.
- Timely completion of all readings and assignments.
- Teach about and/or facilitate a spiritual practice for the class.
- Two extended reflection papers: (1) an autobiography of your (ongoing) journey of spiritual formation -- identifying and exploring key people, experiences, learnings, growth, and growing edges; (2) addressing questions related to your core values, purpose, and “rule of life.” (Specific guidance will be provided.) Both papers will draw on class readings and discussion to inform your personal exploration of the themes.
- Final project – a creative expression in any medium (visual art, poetry, music, dance, spoken word, film, etc) demonstrating your engagement with the course content and how you have been impacted as a result.
- Regular journaling will reflect on reading assignments and in-class questions, and will be useful both for personal processing and to fuel and focus class discussions, papers, and the final project.

Course Evaluation:

Assessment will be based on the quality and depth of engagement with the material and learning community, as evidenced by class participation and contributions, written assignments, and final project presentation. Please let me know within the first two weeks if you will need a letter grade for your particular program of study, otherwise the course will be conducted on a pass/fail basis, with narrative evaluations as required for SKSM students.

Readings:

Course materials will be compiled in a reader (R). Purchase info TBA. Additional resources will be posted on Moodle (M). Please be sure you have the necessary log-in credentials for accessing Moodle. (You will need to get this from your school.) Readings noted in the outline below will be supplemented by shorter pieces from Rumi, Hafiz, The Tao Te Ching, and other sources. Print or electronic copies (M) of those will be supplied.

Course Outline

- Week 1**
Jan 31
Introductions & Overview: What is Spiritual Formation?
What we mean by “spiritual formation” (spiritual development, spiritual maturity) and why it is essential to a life of ministry. What are the experiences that “form” us?
- Week 2**
Feb 7
The Inward Journey: Prayer, Meditation, and Contemplation
Exploration of different methods of contemplative practice. Everyday sacraments.
Readings Desmond Tutu (R), Chögyam Trungpa (R), Avram Davis (R), Thich Nhat Hanh (M), Beverly Lanzetta (M), Zenju Earthlyn Manuel (M), Fatima Fariha al-Jerrahi (M)
- Week 3**
Feb 14
Discernment: Listening Within
Class discussion of discernment practices. Visioning exercise. Dadirri. Ignatian examen.
Readings Mark Nepo (R), Parker Palmer (R), Debra Farrington (R), Howard Thurman (M), Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann (M), resource packet (M).
- Week 4**
Feb 21
Spiritual Companionship: Listening Together
Spiritual direction vs pastoral counseling. Quaker Clearness. Practicum/Discussion.
Readings Barbara Holmes (R), Cynthia Bailey Manns (R), Estelle Frankel (M), Parker Palmer (M)
- Week 5**
Feb 28
Walking Life’s Labyrinth: Embodying our Wholeness
Field trip to walk the Labyrinth (2138 Cedar St). Living an integrated life.
Readings Lauren Artress (R), Jack Kornfield (R), Rangimarie Rose Pere (M), Kahlil Gibran (M)
- Week 6**
Mar 7
Suffering, Struggle & the ‘Dark Night’
Engaging suffering as a spiritual discipline or doorway. Growing edges.
Readings Howard Thurman (R & M), Parker Palmer (R), Liza Rankow (M), Kahlil Gibran (M), Soka Gakki Int’l (M)
- Week 7**
Mar 14
Forgiveness: Keep Open the Door of the Heart
Love as a spiritual discipline. Compassion. Reconciliation. Ho’oponopono. Naikan. Metta.
Readings Desmond Tutu (R), Stephen Levine (R), Thich Nhat Hanh (M), Howard Thurman (M), Fred Luskin (M) **** Paper #1 due – Spiritual Autobiography**
- Week 8**
Mar 21
Commitment: Practicing the Presence
Living with integrity and intention. Soul’s purpose. Ikigai. Rule of Life (discuss final paper)
Readings Howard Thurman (R), Barbara Brown Taylor (R), Mark Nepo (R), Twyla Nitsch (M), Rule of Life materials (M)
- Week 9**
Mar 28
Reading Week – no classes
(mid-semester evaluations due by March 30)
- Week 10**
Apr 4
Transitions / Transformations: Navigating Grief, Loss & Dying
Broken-open heart. Midwifing the thresholds. Who dies?
Readings Sogyal Rinpoche (R), Stephen Levine (R), Sobonfu Somé (M), Omid Safi (M), Rachel Naomi Remen (M), Howard Thurman (M), Rashani Réa (M)

- Week 11**
Apr 11
 Readings
- In the World but Not of It: Spirituality and Social Action**
 Filling the well, carrying the water. Preventing burnout. Resilience. Balance.
 Vimala Thakar (M), Clarissa Pinkola Estés (M), M.R. Bawa Muhayaddeen (M),
 Claudia Howritz & Jesse Marco Vega-Frey (M), Burnout resources (M)
- Week 12**
Apr 18
 Readings
- Spirituality in Ministry & Community / Servant Leadership**
 Nurturing the spiritual development of the congregation or collective.
 Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (R), Howard Thurman (R), Estelle Frankel (R), Rachel
 Naomi Remen (M), adrienne maree brown (M), Laura van Dernoot Lipsky (M),
 Parker Palmer (M), Robert Greenleaf (M)
- Week 13**
April 25
 Readings
- Simplicity, Sabbath & Gratefulness**
 Practicing awe. The fullness of living.
 José Hobday (R), Abraham Joshua Heschel (M), Arthur Waskow (M), Haudenosaunee
 Thanksgiving Address (M), Angeles Arrian (M), David Steindl-Rast (M)
- Week 14**
May 2
 Readings
- Integration, Reflection & Review**
 Filling in the gaps. Going deeper. Sustainable practice. Your questions?
 Readers Choice – what do you want more discussion of?
- Week 15 ***
May 9
- Study Week – no classes**
(final evaluations due by May 16)
- Week 16 ***
May 16
- Creative Project Presentations**
 Summary and closing activities.
Final papers due via email by May 20th

Please Note: *In embodiment of the principles central to this class, the above outline is subject to amendment as we follow the leadings of the Spirit on our journey together.*

** We may have our final class, with creative project presentations, on May 9th and not meet on May 16 - TBD*