Saint Paul School of Theology Course of Study School

4370 W. 109th St., Suite 300
Overland Park, KS 66211
Ph (913) 253-5023 · Fx (913) 253-5075
cos@spst.edu · www.spst.edu/cos

COS 123 Formation and Discipleship

Course Goals 123 – Formation and Discipleship

This course grounds the student in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship.

Students will be able 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 Christian formation.
4. Organize congregations to help people discern their callings and gifts for ministry.

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Text Book List

Unless otherwise noted, please use most recent edition.

Required Texts for 123 - Formation and Discipleship

1. Sondra Matthaei, *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples* (ISBN 978-0687649730)
2. Marjorie J Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (ISBN 978-0664239244)

Supplementary

1. Jack Seymour, *Teaching the Way of Jesus*
2. Norma Everiste, *Church as Learning Community*
3. Anne Wimberly & Evelyn Park, *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church*

Advance Assignments

Read each assignment carefully.
All assignments require advance organization of meeting / group / spirited discipline practices.
Hint: Begin your preparation well before the deadline.

1. **(Two or three pages / doubled spaced)** Make an appointment to meet with your mentor. During the meeting share with your mentor: A) The gifts and graces you have for ministry in the local church and how you have used your gift and grace for ministry. B) How your experience as a pastor in the local church has affirmed and/or questioned your calling into ministry? C) Identify areas of potential growth – such as gifts and graces for ministry that need further development. Following, reflect upon your meeting. Include personal reflection and reflection from your mentor. (Assignment number one / course objective 4: "discernment of calling and gifts for ministry.")

2. **(Five to seven pages / doubled spaced)** Reflect upon Chapter 4 ("Growing in Communion with God and All of Creation") in *Formation in Faith* by Sondra Higgins Matthaei. Your reflection should include responses to the following: A) What does it mean to grow in communion? B) What are your church's mission, values and expectations? C) How does your church extend hospitality? D) From one of the chapters "Thinking, Reflecting, Acting" boxes, identify five people in the congregation(s) you serve and their "God-given gifts." List each person / reflect upon their gifts and how they serve. E) Consider the teaching questions: Why should we teach? What should we teach? Who should teach? F) Share our reflections on Chapter 4 (above responses A-E) with a group of three lay persons in your congregation(s). Conclude your assignment with their reflection.
(Assignment number tw0 / course objective 3: "educating and resourcing a congregation;" course objective 4: "discernment of calling and gifts for ministry."

3. **(Three to five pages / double spaced)** From Marjorie J. Thompson's *Soul Feast* select two of the spiritual disciplines. Separately, practice each one for at least a week. Afterwards, reflect upon the disciplines you practiced: A) Why did you select the particular discipline? B) From its practice what insights did you gain about God? About yourself? C) What struggles, if any, did you have in following the practice? D) How might you use *Soul Feast* within your context of your ministry setting(s), especially in a small group?
(Assignment number three / course objective 1: "emphasis on spiritual disciplines and practice as means of grace;" course objective 2: "practices of a small group in a congregation."

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Saint Paul Course of Study School Expectations and Preparation

The mission of the Course of Study School is to educate and share in the formation of Local Pastors as effective and faithful spiritual leaders of the ministry of the Church, the body of Jesus Christ in the world.

Our agreement with the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville is that we will provide a year-round experiential and classroom learning process. This process assumes cooperation between the instructors, the students and clergy mentors in the annual conferences.

The Division of Ordained Ministry recommends a guideline of 15-20 pages of written work for each course. That translates into 30 to 40 pages of written work for each module. If a student takes four classes (two modules), that individual will write about 80 pages during the year. Those papers are based on the reading of approximately 4-5 textbooks per class.

In order to keep our promise of **year-round learning**, and to keep the assignments from accumulating and overwhelming a student, the book list is available for students so that they can ***begin reading*** as early as possible. We encourage students to put dates on their calendars and plan for reading days, as well as time for writing. You know the demands of certain religious seasons such as Advent, Lent, and Easter. Work around them.

The writing manual approved by the Saint Paul Course of Study School faculty is: **Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th edition.*** It is recommended that each student have a good collegiate-size American English dictionary of the student's choice in paperback or hardcover and copyrighted since 1998.

Related to Structure

- Use Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition. You may find further help at www.eturabian.com.
- Unless otherwise indicated, all papers must be typed, 1" margins on all sides, Arial 11 or Times New Roman 12, double-spaced, with indented paragraphs (no additional line spacing between paragraphs), and page numbers. Cover pages and bibliography are not included in assigned page count.
- Cite any quoted sources with appropriately formatted footnotes (not endnotes or parenthetical notes); list these and other sources within an appropriately formatted bibliography. If you use a scriptural reference, cite the translation you use in a footnote and the actual Bible in the bibliography. Each paper should have a bibliography.
- Do not begin sentences with "and" or "but." Do not use contractions. Do not include parenthetical commentary in your papers.
- Use inclusive language when referring to God and/or humankind.
- Use appropriate formatting for page numbering, book titles, etc.
- Double-check spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence fragments, tense agreement, etc.

Related to Content

- Read the assigned books thoroughly.
- Resist the temptation to write a book report! Instead, focus your writing on what the author(s) have to say about the assigned topic(s), integrating your own thoughts about the topic(s).

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Related to Critical Thinking

- Read the assigned books thoroughly, making notes of what resonates within you and what brings up resistance in you.
- Are there other books or resources that would be appropriate? Bring them into the conversation.
- Practice being in dialogue with all the authors and their material. Who would say what? How would you and the other writers respond? This practice dialogue will not be included in your papers, but it will help you to move into critical reflection.
- If you strongly agree or disagree with an author's point of view, offer your own affirmation or disagreement, supporting your view with additional resources.
- Watch for unsupported "leaps" made by a writer. What, in your opinion, is missing? Use additional resources to fill in the gaps.

Related to Timeliness

- Submit all your assignments on time.

In the event of an emergency situation, a student may request an **extension** from the Director (not assigned faculty) to the due date for advance assignments. This request may be made via email, and if granted, may extend to a *three-week maximum*. A student may only receive *two extensions during their tenure* as a Saint Paul Course of Study student – so use them wisely. If assignments are not completed, the policies of the COS are such that the student may be asked postpone participation in a particular session of COS until that individual can complete all of the work.

Learning can be fun! Consider your reading as a dialogue with authors – some will be more interesting than others. All will have something to teach us. Share the learning process with friends or colleagues or interested members of your congregations.

Book List

Each course has **assigned texts**. Students are required to read them, use them in their assignments and are accountable in the classroom for any discussion or presentation of materials. **Reference books** are also required; assignments assure the use of the reference books; they are not classroom texts. Assigned texts and reference books help the student build their own library. **Supplemental texts** (when applicable) are valuable, but optional texts if a student wants to pursue an area of ministry.

Students may acquire the books in a variety of ways: Order from Cokesbury.com; order from another vendor; purchase a used book; or borrow from a colleague.

Instructions for sending assignments to COS office at Saint Paul School of Theology

Course of Study Students are to upload their papers through Moodle. You will need to set up a Moodle account in order to submit your assignments. If you need assistance in setting up your Moodle account, please contact cos@spst.edu for informational handouts. Additional questions on Moodle can be directed to our IT help desk at helpdesk@spst.edu (hours: M – F 8:00am – 5:00pm).