

Southern Methodist University  
Perkins Regional Course of Study School  
Summer 2024

123 Formation and Discipleship  
Pre-Class Assignments

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### **Course Description**

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

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

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.
5. Create a “rule of life” and “plan for self-care”.

It is my goal as your instructor to not only help you to discover ways to help people in your congregations grow in their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ but I hope to also help you appreciate the value and importance of giving attention to your own spiritual growth. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this course.

### **Textbooks**

1. *Formation in Faith* by Sondra Matthaei, 2008 Abingdon Press
2. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* by Marjorie J. Thompson, 2005 Westminster John Knox Press
3. *As If The Heart Mattered: A Wesleyan Spirituality* by Gregory S. Clapper, 2014 Wipf & Stock (available at Amazon and at Publisher’s web sites)
4. *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations* by Junius B. Dotson, 2017 Discipleship Ministries. Booklet available for purchase or free PDF download at [www.seeallthepeople.org](http://www.seeallthepeople.org).

Supplemental Reading (Not required, but recommended)

*Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living* by Ruben P. Job. Abingdon Press, 2010.

### **Assignment Instructions:**

Papers should be typed, double space, in 12 pt. Times New Roman font.

Pages should be numbered.

Be sure to include your name, date, and course description.

Within the title, include the assignment number.

### **Pre-Class Assignments:**

Each of the assigned questions should be answered in the body of the paper. These two papers together will count for 20% of your grade and will be graded according to: 1) content—well thought out and complete answers to all questions, and 2) fulfilling instructions for the assignment including length and deadline.

#### **Pre-Class Assignment #1**

Answer all of the following questions after reading the book *Formation in Faith*.

Length of assignment: 4-6 pages

This is not a research assignment where you are to write about what the author has to say on each of these topics. Rather, it is expected that your answers will include personal reflection that will be informed by your reading of the book.

1. How do you think the church should address the need for authentic relationships, a culture of hospitality and the search for deeper meaning in life?
2. What does it mean to make disciples? How do persons grow in faith? How does the church grow as a communion of grace?
3. What type of leadership is needed for a pilgrim people traveling and learning together in faith? What are the tasks of leadership? What is the church's role in equipping leaders for ministry?
4. What must be included in an intentional process of faith formation and the cultivation of Christian discipleship?
5. With the challenges that lie ahead for the church, what do you think would be the best way for the church to move forward in love?

#### **Pre-Class Assignment #2**

Answer all of the following questions, after reading the book *Soul Feast*.

Length of Assignment: 4-6 pages

The questions are not asked in such a way that you have to state what the author says about each question. Rather, it is expected that your answers will be informed by your reading of the book.

1. What indications of spiritual hunger and thirst do you perceive in our time? What do you see as the reason for this hunger?
2. What is your typical way of reading Scripture? What is your understanding of the nature of Scripture?
3. How would you define prayer? What different prayer forms have you practiced? What new prayer forms would you like to practice?
4. What has been your experience of "corporate" worship? How do you keep Sabbath?
5. How does the concept of fasting or abstinence work in relation to our North American consumer culture?
6. What are some practical ideas for the practice of hospitality at home and at church?
7. What is the difference between natural growth and spiritual transformation?
8. What might be the advantages to having a personal "rule of life"?