

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
IN722 DISCIPLE FORMATION III
(Senior Disciple Formation)
J-Term 2018

Dr. Susan Forshey

1 credit, credit/no credit

Course Description

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. – Hebrews 10:19-25



This class, for all graduating MDiv and MAMD students, will help students reflect on and integrate their seminary experience as they look ahead to God’s next step in life and ministry. They will seek to inhabit, personally and communally, the primary vision of our seminary, namely, to unify a life of prayer, study, and service as disciples of Jesus Christ. Students will engage practices for nurturing a life of intimacy with Jesus Christ and attentive listening to the Holy Spirit. This senior course takes the discussion of spiritual disciplines to a deeper level and explores the call to vocational holiness and the challenges of dealing with addictions in the light of grace. Additional readings and discussions will focus on topics important for ministry leaders.

Course Objectives

1. Integrate theological learning and spiritual formation.
2. Provide a safe place for sharing spiritual concerns in a fellowship of accountability.
3. Build a sense of spiritual community needed to sustain pastoral ministry for years.
4. Develop the communal discipline of listening for God.
5. Learn together how Christian spirituality moves from worship to service.
6. Build Christian character by both:
 - Practicing mutual accountability and participation in community;
 - Exercising self-discipline and motivation in practices leading to growth in spirit and character.

M. Div. Curricular Goals

- Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer, and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives.
- Be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the Church.
- Educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church.
- Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

M.A.M.D. Curricular Goal

- Adopt spiritual practices that nurture their personal lives as faithful disciples and witnesses.

MACL Curricular Goals

- Identify and interpret key themes from the Christian scriptures.
- Articulate key theological affirmations of the church’s theological tradition.
- Integrate personal discipleship with leadership responsibilities.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and active participation.
2. Fulfill the agreed-upon small group covenant, including the practices of presence and confidentiality, in order to develop character in community and contribute to the life of your group.
3. Attendance at daily chapel.
4. Complete readings before class.
5. Two book reflection papers, 1000 words each, due January 7.
6. One paper reflecting back on seminary and forward to graduation, 1000 words, due February 2.
7. Designate an intentional and regular time, place, and practice(s) for listening for and responding to God that is geared toward this life transition season, and create a written Rule of Life, 300 words, due February 2.

Required Texts

1. Eugene Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*, 0802808484
2. Book of Jonah (Old Testament)
3. Gerald G. May, *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions*, 0060655372

Pre-Load Assignments (December 18-January 7)

Our focus for the course will be on vocational holiness and centered on close readings of two books. The writing assignments are ways to dig into the texts and place them into conversation with your personal and ministry experiences.

1. Read Eugene Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, Eerdmans, 1994. ISBN 978-0802808486 and Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*, HarperCollins, 2007, ISBN 9780061122439, and the **book of Jonah**, your choice of translation. (Eugene Peterson uses this biblical text as a basis for *Under the Unpredictable Plant*.)
2. **Writing Assignment #1: Under the Unpredictable Plant (1000 words – Due January 7)**
 - a. Summarize: How does Peterson understand the Jonah story in relationship to the pastoral call?
 - b. Reflect: Who has modelled vocation holiness for you? Describe the person and reflect on how they embodied holiness in their life of following Christ.
 - c. Reflect: What is your vocational “Nineveh?” What are your vocational “Tarshish” temptations?
 - d. Reflect: What practices or experiences have invited you into a deeper experience of your vocation?
3. **Writing Assignment #2: Addiction and Grace (1000 words – Due January 7)**
 - a. Summarize: Describe May’s understanding of addiction (psychological, neurological, theological) and grace’s healing of addiction.
 - b. Ministry Reflection: What is one situation in your ministry where you see addiction and the work of grace present? How might you support the work of grace in that situation?
 - c. Personal Reflection: What is one area where you experience the effect of addiction and the work of grace? What practices deepen your openness and experience of grace?

Post-Load Assignment Checklist (January 12-February 2)

1. **Writing Assignment #3:** Reflect back on your seminary experience and forward toward graduation: What are experiences, relationships, lessons, or ideas, for which you are grateful? Describe it and why it has been helpful in your relationship with Christ and in your vocation. What are ways to remember this learning after you have graduated? (1000 words, due February 2).
2. **Writing Assignment #4:** Designate an intentional and regular time, place, and practice(s) for listening for and responding to God that is geared toward this life transition season. Create a written Rule of Life that describes the particulars of your discipleship practices (300 words, due February 2).