

**STMA 570 Spiritual Discernment**  
**Summer Quarter, 2006**  
**Dr. Valerie Lesniak**  
[vlesniak@seattleu.edu](mailto:vlesniak@seattleu.edu)  
**Hunthausen Hall 218**  
**206-296-6936**  
**June 26-30; July 3-7, 2006**  
**July 4, 2006-Holiday Recess**

### **Course Description:**

Discernment will be presented as a growing sensitivity and awareness to the action of God in one's life. It is the centering process at the core of one's daily life and ministry. Tools of discernment are vital in the process of listening to the truth of one's inner self in God as distinct from the myriad of false voices from within and without. Ignatian rules for the discernment of spirits are utilized as well as ancient and contemporary means of self-awareness and self-knowledge. The course draws on spirituality, psychology and the participants' experience.

### **Specific Goals:**

- -Greater self-knowledge and self awareness;
- -Deeper appreciation of what it means to be psychospiritually mature;
- -Greater understanding of the ability to recognize the action of God in one's own life
- -A growing facility in recognizing voices and movements that are from one's true self-in-God
- -Increased confidence in guiding others in both on-going discernment and decision-making

### **Required Texts:**

- Clement, Daphne. Group Spiritual Nurture: The Wisdom of Spiritual Listening. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 373 Pendle Hill publications, 2004.
- Cornell, Ann W. The Power of Focusing: A Practical Guide to Emotional Self-Healing. New Harbinger: Oakland, CA, 1996.
- Hanh, Thich Nhat, The Miracle of Mindfulness, Beacon Press
- Loring, Patricia. Spiritual Discernment: The Context and the Goal of Clearness Committees. Pendle Hill Publication, 1992.
- Shel Drake, Philip. Befriending our Desires. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998.
- Palmer, Parker. A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life, Jossey-Bass, 2004.

**ADDITIONAL XEROXED MATERIALS WILL ALSO BE USED.**

### **Recommended Readings:**

- Au, Wilkie, By Way of the Heart. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989.
- Barry, W. Paying Attention to God. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1990.
- Campbell, P and McMahon E. Bio-Spirituality Chicago: Loyola U Press, 1985
- Conroy, M. The Discerning Heart. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993.
- Dunne, T. Spiritual Mentoring. San Francisco: Harper, 1991.
- Dyckman, K. and Carroll, L.P. Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet, Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1981.
- Farnham, Suzanne et.al. Listening Hearts. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 1991.
- Finley, J. Merton's Place of Nowhere. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1978.
- Fischer, K. Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988.
- Gendlin, E. Focusing. New York: Bantam Books, 1978.
- Green, T. Weeds Among the Wheat. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1983.
- Hauser, R. Moving in the Spirit. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Levov, Gregg, Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life, New York: Harmony Books, 1997.
- Liebert, E. Changing Life Patterns. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992.
- May, G. Addiction and Grace. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Metz, J. Poverty of Spirit. New York: Paulist Press, 1968.
- Morris, D. and Chas, Olsen. Discerning God's Will Together. Nashville: Upper Room BKS., 1997.
- Mueller, Joan, Faithful Listening: Discernment in Everyday Life. Sheed and Ward; Kansas City, 1996.
- Sheeran, M. Beyond Majority Rule: Voiceless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends. Philadelphia: Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society Friends, 1987.
- Sinetar, M. Elegant Choices, Healing Choices. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1988.
- Smith, Gordon Listening to God in Times of Choice. Downers Grove, IL.:Intervarsity Press, 1997.
- Toner, J.A. A Commentary on St Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirit. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Discerning God's Will St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991.
- Valles, C. The Art of Choosing. New York: Image Books, 1989.
- Vanck, E. Image Guidance A Tool for Discernment Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1992.

### **Course Requirements:**

Written Assignments- 50% of the grade evaluation.

Class Participation indicating assimilation of assigned materials- 50% of grade.

This course is highly experiential and process oriented. In order to acquire the skills that are needed, significant practice is required. This will be discussed further on the first day of class.

## Written Assignments:

- a. **Pre-course questionnaire** , see below (Due: **JUNE 12, 2006**) Return to Valerie Lesniak, Hunthausen Hall 218 or e-mail the form to vlesniak@seattleu.edu.
- b. **First Reflection Paper- Due June 26, 2006** Take a specific decision in your life and indicate how you made it. What aspects of your process were helpful to you? Is there anything about the process you would change? (2-4 pages, double spaced)
- c. **Second Reflection Paper- Due- July 3, 2006** TOPIC: Describe a touchstone experience of consolation for you. How did you, in this situation experience “**consolation**”? Describe a touchstone experience of desolation. How did you experience **desolation**? **How do experiences of consolation/desolation feel, seem, affect you on all levels of your being?**

## Preparation for the course:

1. Hand in Questionnaire by **June 12, 2006**
2. Write first Reflection Paper.
3. READ: Parker Palmer, A Hidden Wholeness  
Philip Sheldrake, Befriending our Desires  
Thich Nhat Hanh, The Miracle of Mindfulness
4. NOTEKEEP/JOURNAL PERTINENT PASSAGES FROM THESE TEXTS so that you will be able to use the material during the class processes and discussions.
5. We will be reading the other books and pertinent articles in tandem with course dates.

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Questionnaire

Return by **June 12** to Valerie Lesniak  
c/o STM or email: vlesniak@seattleu.edu

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Ph# \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Work Ph# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Indicate whether or not you have taken the following courses:

YES	NO	Christian Anthropology	YES	NO	History of Christian Spirituality
YES	NO	Psycho-Spiritual Development	YES	NO	Introduction to Spiritual Direction
YES	NO	Group Effectiveness Skills	YES	NO	Hebrew Scriptures
YES	NO	Christian scriptures	YES	NO	Christology
YES	NO	Christian Prayer and Spirituality			

1. What are your hopes and expectations for this class on discernment?
2. Have you ever been involved in a structured discernment process? Briefly describe on the back of this sheet. YES NO  
Was it as an individual \_\_\_\_\_ OR as a member of a group \_\_\_\_\_?
3. What questions do you bring to the topic of discernment? Are you in the process of discerning something in your life now? If YES, please note what the discernment is about.
4. How do you imagine this class being beneficial to you and your particular ministry or work?