

STMA 571

Critical Issues in Spirituality

Winter Quarter, 2006

Weekend Format: January 14-15; February 10-12, 2006

Valerie Lesniak

Office: 206-296-6936

Hunthausen 218

vlesniak@seattleu.edu

Course description:

This course will explore typical human and cultural dynamics (issues) and patterns that emerge as supports and blockages in the development of one's relationship to God, self, others and the rest of creation. Student presentations and guest speakers will be an important part of the process of learning. Some of the topics we will consider are: distinction between spiritual direction and pastoral counseling; cosmological assumptions and beliefs; multicultural awarenesses; grief and trauma, sexuality, sexual abuse, depression, dark night, desolation, addiction and co-dependency; mid-life and aging, healing and other topics raised by student's concerns.

GOALS:

1. To provide knowledge and skills to engage with a variety of human and cultural factors that support and/or hinder psycho-spiritual growth.
2. To clarify the primary focus of the spiritual direction relationship in distinction to therapy/pastoral counseling.
3. To deepen awareness of the blocks and supports in one's own psycho-spiritual growth.
4. To provide spiritual directors with competencies that enable them to determine the need for professional referrals.

Basic Texts:

Gerald May, *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit: Psychiatric Dimensions of Spiritual Direction*, San Francisco: Harper, 1992.

Robert Grant, *The Way of the Wound: A Spirituality of Trauma and Transformation*, Self-published, 1996.

Gerald L. Sittser, *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1996.

Norvene Vest, ed., *Still Listening: New Horizons in Spiritual Direction*, Morehouse: 2000.

A booklet of pertinent articles will be distributed at the first weekend in January.

Course Expectations:

1. Faithful attendance and participation in all class discussions, processes and activities.
2. A reflective notebook on the readings done for class.
Some helpful questions:
 - A. What concrete implications for the practice of spiritual direction/pastoral practice do I find in the text? What implications do I agree with? Disagree with? Why?
 - B. How does the reading help me to work towards a personal definition of spiritual direction/pastoral practice? What is it? What qualities would describe the relationship and my style of doing ministry?
 - C. What are my personal stumbling blocks in regard to living out my desired truth/qualities/style of spiritual direction/ministry?
3. Two papers are required.
 - A. A Reflection paper (3-4 pages) DUE ON JANUARY 14, 2006. What is it in me that really prevents me from trusting/believing/experiencing that God loves me? What is MY NO point or critical issue? It may be helpful to reflect on your own spiritual direction experience/retreat experiences/love relationships where you might have encountered your shadow/resistance to your deeper wholeness. You may find it helpful to write this after reading Gerald May's book.

B. Participants will select a critical issue or dynamic that they have a particular interest in exploring further. such as: sexuality, grief, trauma, addiction, aging, prayer development and obstacles, multicultural awarenesses, healing, shame, body, etc.
Please create an annotated bibliography of FIVE important sources on your topic/critical issue. Make enough copies for each member of the class. You will hand these out on the weekend of February 10-12, when you make a short presentation on the issue you selected. Further details will be given during the first weekend together.

**Grading: 40 % Papers
60% Class Participation**

Preparation for the First Weekend Classes, January 14-15, 2006

- A. READ: Both the May and Sittser books, taking appropriate notes and making personal reflections. We will be working with both texts during the course of the first weekend.**
- B. PREPARE the First Reflection paper, which is due on January 14. The details are noted above in point number 3.**
- C. Fill out the form below and return by December 6 to Valerie Lesniak at STM Hunthausen 218 or e-mail it to vlesniak@seattleu.edu.**

Critical Issues Questionnaire

NAME _____ Phone # home _____

E-mail _____ # Work _____

Address _____

What spiritualities influence your own spiritualities?

Indicate whether or not you have taken the following courses:

Yes	No	Christian Anthropology	Yes	No	History of Christian Spirituality
Yes	No	Psycho-Spiritual Develop.	Yes	No	Intro. To Spiritual Direction
Yes	No	Fostering Com. of Faith	Yes	No	Hebrew Scriptures
Yes	No	Christian Scriptures	Yes	No	Christology
Yes	No	Pastoral Care Skills	Yes	No	Christian Spirituality & Prayer

1, What are your hopes and expectations for this class on critical issues in spirituality?

2. Are you in spiritual direction? YES NO
If YES, how long? _____

3. What questions/issues/dynamics do you bring to the topic from your experience?

4. How do you imagine this class being helpful to you and your particular ministry or work?