STMA 570 Spiritual Discernment
Winter Quarter, 2010
Wednesdays 1:30-4:20
Hunthausen 100
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"***Discernment requires an authentic yearning for wisdom."***

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.

Course Objectives:

- To become familiar with the basic principles of discernment as found in Christian traditions
- To explore the relevance of spiritual discernment for reflection on and engagement with issues of social justice
- To practice several spiritual processes that foster spiritual attentiveness and sensitivity to the life of the Spirit
- To become familiar with the principles and process of spiritual discernment in the Quaker tradition
- To recognize the gifts of discernment as found in Native American approaches to decision making and living

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:

- Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon Au, *The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path,* Paulist Press, New York, 2006
  ISBN 13: 978-0-8091-4372-8

- Hanh, Thich Nhat, *The Miracle of Mindfulness,* Beacon Press 1987.
  ISBN:0-8070-1239-4

- Liebert, Elizabeth, *The Way of Discernment: Spiritual Practices for Decision Making,* WestminsterJohn Knox Press: Louisville, KY, 2008.
  ISBN 0664228704

- Palmer, Parker. *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life,* Jossey-Bass, 2004.
  ISBN 0-7879-7100-6

ADDITIONAL XEROXED MATERIALS WILL ALSO BE USED.

Recommended Readings:

- Au, Wilkie, **By Way of the Heart**. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989.
- Dean Brackley, *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times,* Crossroad: New York, 2004
- Barry, W**. Paying Attention to God.** Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1990.
- Daphne Clement, **Group Spiritual Nurture: The Wisdom of Spiritual Listening,** Pendle Hill Pamphlet 373, Pendle Hill: PA, 2004.
- 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.
- Farrington, Debra. **Hearing with the Heart: A Gentle Guide to Discerning God's Will for your Life.** Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- 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.
- Lambert, Will, **The Sevenfold Yes: Affirming the Goodness of our Deepest Desires,** Ave Maria Press, 2005.

- Levov, Gregg, **Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life,** New York: Harmony Books, 1997.
- Liebert, E. **Changing Life Patterns.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992.
- Linn, Dennis, Linn Sheila and Linn, Matthew, **Sleeping With Bread: Holding What Give You Life,** Paulist Press, 1995.
- Lonsdale, David, **Listening to the Music of the Spirit: The art of Discernment,** Ave Maria Press, 1992.
- Patricia Loring, **Spiritual Discernment** Pendle Hill Pamphlet 305, Pendle Hill Publications, 1992
- McIntosh, Mark. **Discernment and Truth: The Spirituality and Theology of Knowledge,** Crossroad, 2004.
- Morris, D. and Chas, Olsen. **Discerning God's Will Together.** Nashville:
- May, G. **Addiction and Grace.** San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Metz, J. **Poverty of Spirit.** New York: Paulist Press, 1968.Upper Room BKS., 1997.
- Mueller, Joan**, Faithful Listening: Discernment in Everyday Life.** Sheed and Ward; Kansas City, 1996.
- Reeves, Nancy, **Spiritual Discernment: I'd Say Yes, God If I Knew What You Wanted.** Northstone, 2001.
- Sheeran, M. **Beyond Majority Rule: Voiceless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends.** Philadelphia: Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society Friends, 1987.
- Sheldrake, Philip, **Befriending our Desires,** Novalis, 2001.
- Sinetar, M. **Elegant Choices, Healing Choices.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1988.
- Smith, Carol Ann and Merz, Eugene, **Moment By Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life,** Ave Maria Press, 2007.
- Smith, Carol Ann and Merz, Eugene**, Finding God In Each Moment: The Practice of Discernment in Everyday Life,** Ave Maria Press, 2006.
- 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.
- Wolff, Pierre, **Discernment: The Art of Choosing Well,** Ligouri Press, 1993.

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. **First mini-Reflection Paper on mindfulness practice- Due January 13, 2010**
b. **Second Reflection Paper- Due- February 3, 2010** 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? What did you learn fro this process? In what ways did you experience God's spirit with you in the process? (2-4 pages, double spaced)
c. **Third Reflection paper- Due- March 10, 2010**

Tentative Schedule (may change according to the needs of the class and at the teacher's discretion.)

January 6: Overview and Introduction

January 13: Discernment and Christian and Human Growth
Au and Au, pp. 1-45.
Hanh, pp. 1-76
You are invited to select one of the mindfulness exercises found on pp. 79-98 and practice it for a week. Journal about this experience. **Write a one page reflection on this experience for today's class**.
Liebert, 3-40: 80-94.

January 20: Refining the Acoustics of the Heart: Ignatian Discernment
Au and Au, pp. 46-72
Liebert, 41-.67

January 27: Spirit-Led in Many Ways
Au and Au, 73-103

Liebert, 109-132

February 3: Images of God and Desires in Discernment
Au and Au, 104-164
Liebert, 95-108
Reflection Paper Due

February 10: Tapping other sources of self-knowledge and wisdom
Au and Au, 165-194
Articles TBA

February 17: Discernment in the Native American traditions
Au and Au, 195-226
Liebert, 133-144
Articles TBA

February 24: Discernment in the Quaker Tradition: Dynamics and Description: Circles of Trust
Palmer, 3-112
Liebert, 68-79

March 3: Clearness Committee-Practice
Palmer, 113-186
Liebert, 145-158

March 10: Discernment: A way of Life
Reflection Paper Due