

**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
STMA 574 SPIRITUALITY SYNTHESIS**

Spring Quarter 2010 **Class Dates:** March 31 – June 2 (Wednesdays)
1:30 pm – 4:20 pm

Classroom: HUNT 100 **Office hours:** By appointment

Course Instructor: Terri Gaffney

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Please print out the syllabus and bring to class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 3 credit course assists students to synthesize, articulate and integrate their own spirituality. The approach is interdisciplinary and includes reflection on ministerial experience, spiritual practice and history, as well as theological background. Students assume leadership roles within the class through facilitating group process, leading prayers and ritual and presenting a synthesis of their spiritual journey and an initiative toward ministry.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this course is to enable students to synthesize their spiritual and theological history and learning in preparation for continued or new directions in ministerial service.

The objectives are:

1. To synthesize one's knowledge/wisdom from ministerial and life experiences, spiritual practice, theological understandings and course work.
2. To review one's spiritual journey in order to identify key patterns, influences and images in one's spiritual growth.
3. To create a working description of spirituality in light of contemporary holistic spiritualities and one's own experience.
4. To articulate one's sense of call or mission, the image of oneself as a spiritual leader and ways for ongoing nourishment of one's spirituality.
5. To demonstrate the ability to use advanced pastoral skills through small group interaction and facilitation.
6. To describe how one's relationship to Mystery shapes and is shaped by one's relationship with self, others, creation as well as the realities of embodiment, social justice and compassion.
7. To explore where one is in the transition process, naming and ritualizing this phase of endings and beginnings.

Required Texts

Bridges, William. *TRANSITIONS: Making Sense of Life's Changes* MA: Addison-Wesley. 2005

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. CLASS PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION

Your presence is integral to this unique learning process. In respect for the quality of group sharing please plan to be on time and to attend all sessions.

Any foreseeable absence must be negotiated in advance.

2. SPIRITUALITY SYNTHESIS

The Synthesis has two phases: class presentation and a follow up reflection paper.

Class presentation:

The key movements of your spiritual history. You will have 25-30 minutes for presentation and 15-20 minutes for feedback.

You will summarize key movements in your spiritual and ministerial history and present these in a creative and visual way.

Reflection paper (2-3 pages)

After the class presentation you will write up a final reflection paper (2-3 pages) which incorporates the reflections, feedback, and any new insights gathered from the experience. Please include your most significant learnings from this process and an articulation of how you describe your spirituality at this point. This will be turned into Terri.

3. GROUP FACILITATION AND PRAYER LEADERSHIP

Each person will have an opportunity for prayer leadership and facilitating small group process.

4. AN INITIATIVE FOR MOVING FORWARD IN MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

This phase consists of discernment of gifts and desires and presentation to the class of ways you will move forward in your ministry of spirituality. Some possible ideas for moving forward in ministry and spiritual leadership:

****Plan a retreat or workshop for a parish or its staff or for other groups.**

****For your spiritual direction practice or retreat work: Put together a brochure and or a marketing plan; make contacts for getting referrals of directees; find a supervision group.**

****Develop a plan for bringing spirituality into the workplace or to a homeless shelter.**

- **Create a process using art, music, or movement to help people go deeper in their prayer practice or spiritual journey.
- **Put together a sabbatical of spiritual nurture for yourself or others.
- **Develop a method of discernment for directees or groups.
- **Other creative ideas are welcome.

Your initiative is an original work at this time and leads you into a work that you would like to explore for possible future ministry. You will share your initiative with the class in a short presentation sharing. Please provide copies describing your initiative for each person in the group as well as any artifacts (such as a brochure).

5. TRANSITION CLASS PROCESS

The last class will include time for each student to express where they are in their own process of transition from STM into ministry/service using narrative and symbol. We will make this final course offering into a ritual and celebratory time together.

Grading Distribution:

- 25% Class attendance, participation, facilitation
- 40% Spirituality Theological Synthesis (Charts, Presentation, Paper)
- 25% Initiative for Moving Forward in Ministry
- 10% Transition Process

Spirituality Synthesis Presentation

Presenter:

Stay in touch with your feeling level. This is not just reporting. Get into the passion of the meaning of your story. Creatively engage the group. Create a visual using large paper or use power point, an overhead projector or other creative expression. Include color, pictures, poetry, artwork, photographs, journal entries, gestures, storytelling techniques, music, ritual whatever it takes to tell the story. Each presenter will have a facilitator.

Facilitator:

The facilitator will talk with the presenter before class to have a sense of the presentation, any set up needs, prayer requests, etc. The facilitator's primary roles will be watching the time, a short opening or centering prayer, leading the feedback session and guiding the group in the final image or blessing for the presenter. (Time check important from the timekeeper 10-15 minutes into the presentation.)

Listeners

Each person in the group is invited into contemplative listening, that is, deep and empathetic listening and the opportunity to give feedback to the presenter.

Time frame for the Synthesis Presentation:

Prayer	1 minute
Presentation	25 -30 minutes
Quiet reflection	2 minutes
Sharing and feedback	15-20 minutes
End with each person sharing a positive image, word or blessing for presenter.	10 minutes

Approximate time total = 60 minutes

Background Reflection Questions for your Spirituality Synthesis:

1. Choose three significant experiences, relationships, practices that have shaped your spirituality. Describe each:
Name of experience, event, relationship or . . .
 - *When?
 - *What?
 - *Impact on you or shaping influence?
 - *What deep truths, certitudes have emerged from this?
 - *What beliefs has this caused you to rethink or let go of?

2. From the results of these experiences as you look at yourself as a spiritual leader:
 - *What qualities, skills and talents have become evident with you?
 - *Following from these experiences what ministerially do you find life giving, attracting and compelling?
 - *What nourishes you spiritually?
 - *What de-energizes and is non-life giving for you spiritually and ministerially?
 - *What settings, groups, individuals draw you, i.e., ages, socio-economic, ethnic, or racial backgrounds?
 - *What unfinished business or issues still live in you that you are aware of through this reflection?

3. Following your reflection on your history, your gifts, your readings, your course work, and your ministerial experience describe your theological sense of the following:
 - *Your image of God?
 - *Who Christ is for you?
 - *What church or faith community is for you?
 - *What your spirituality is?
 - *What your sense of call or mission is?
 - *What new insights or certitudes rise up for you?
 - *What action impels you?

Throughout the process of reflecting, preparing and presenting be attentive to where in your story you experience emotions or physical sensations such as tightness in your throat, joy, sadness, excitement.