I. Course Themes. Domains of Exploration. Road Trip!

This course provides an introduction to the theological and pedagogical principles undergirding the ministry of catechesis by providing a blend of both theoretical and a practical skills for cradle to grave discipleship. This course will expose the student to a wide variety of readings in the Christian tradition and to a wide range of Christian spiritual practices. It will provide a forum in which to explore a variety of these practices and reflect on them with their sisters and brothers in faith, across jurisdictional and denominational boundaries. Although special attention will be paid to the Anglican patrimony, our studies will be in the spirit of “Nicene ecumenism” within the wider context of Christendom. The express goal of this course is to inform the doctrinal and spiritual formation of the participants such that they will be able to engage in effective catechetical ministry.

A wide variety of metaphors, models, and methods will be part and parcel of our work together. This course will consist of various formats: discussions, workshops, lectures, informal fieldwork, demonstrations, and presentations. We will examine several different catechisms, with particular focus and emphasis on To Be a Christian.

We will explore five themes: the who, what, why, where, and how of Christian formation with the express purpose of coming to a fuller understanding of living a Christian life, grounded in the Gospel and the historic teaching and practices of the church. Even the course title reflects how terminology can be quite varied in this arena. The term Christian formation may be used by one congregation, whereas another may use the phrase religious education or spiritual formation. Still others utilize the term catechesis, while others offer programs in discipleship. Throughout this course we will make reference to many of these terms and the paradigms they reflect by critically examining the nature of Christian formation and discipleship from a broad range of perspectives: biblical, theological, historical, developmental and educational. We will explore these five themes by reflecting on historical and theological texts as well as contemporary and practical works that embody the following five forms of catechetical praxis: koinonia (the curriculum of community), leiturgia (the curriculum of prayer and worship), didache (the curriculum of teaching), kerygma (the curriculum of
proclamation), and diakonia (the curriculum of service). The course will provide an integrated approach for examining the spiritual disciplines on a personal and corporate level.

We will examine the inward disciplines of prayer, fasting, meditation, and study. Then we will explore the implications of intentional living through the outward disciplines of solitude, simplicity, submission and service. We will then examine the corporate disciplines of confession, worship, guidance/spiritual direction, and celebration. We will explore each of these areas from the following Christian practices/paradigms: Contemplative: The Prayer-Filled Life; Holiness: The Virtuous Life; Charismatic: The Spirit-Empowered Life; Social Justice: The Compassionate Life; Evangelical: The Word-Centered Life; and Incarnational: The Sacramental Life.

II. Road Trip Essentials. It's All About the Bike.

Additional articles and primary sources will be provided in class and/or placed on reserve in the library. In *An Experiment on Criticism*, C.S. Lewis wrote about receiving a book instead of using it. His notion of receiving a book is, in effect, to explore what is being said and to “let the author take you on the bicycle ride of your life.” (pp. 88-89). Interact with your readings in such a way that you jot down notes as you go along. Perhaps these are notes in the actual book itself; or you may prefer to take notes in a separate notebook. These notes are not to be so much like the ones you took in school, but rather, they are “notes to yourself”. What are key ideas you want to remember? What are next steps or responses you want to make in light of what you’ve read? How is the Lord speaking to you through the particular book you are reading? The hoped for goal is that you will truly interact with you reading—and thereby with the Lord—and not just be reading a book for the sake of checking it off your to do list.

**Required Texts/Travel Guides**


You must pick one of the following books. Based on your selection, you will be placed in a study and discussion group with fellow travelers who are also reading the same text.


Similarly, you must select from one of the following three texts. Based on your selection, you will be placed in a study and discussion group with fellow travelers who are also reading this particular text.


**Recommended Texts/Travel Guides**

This is by no means a comprehensive list—but rather a selective one. Throughout the course, many additional books will be highlighted and recommended.


III. Roadside Rules and Regulations (Course Expectations and Policies)

Attendance and engaged participation are expected of all students. It is expected that our collaborative efforts will take place in an environment in which you will be invited to share openly with your peers from your own experience and your own developing theoretical perspectives. Insofar as possible, we will try to have our class discussions and small groups serve in much the same way that discipleship and formation groups function in a ministry context. Our formation does not happen in isolation. We will utilize peer and self-evaluation as a part of the formative practices we examine together.

This class is something of a combination between a partially planned road trip with unexpected discoveries, delays, and detours and a pilgrimage—not just into pedagogy or abstract principles but a genuine excursion that will hopefully allow you to reflect on your journey inward as well as your journey outward. Quality, not quantity, is the measuring stick for this journey that we will be taking together. I will be your guide on this trip. But, as with any true pilgrimage—this is a group experience—which means, I will also be learning right alongside you. The point of a pilgrimage is never efficiency—but rather the deepening of the pilgrim.

As we travel together, it may take us a little longer to visit one sight over another. It may take us a while to establish the rhythm and travel pace that we can manage together. Please keep in mind that the best journeys are rarely the ones in which you check off the site as you go zipping by. It’s important to wander through some of the neighborhoods, and villages, and even spend some time off-roading. If we appear to wander from the itinerary—rest assured, we’ll eventually make it to the next destination. The idea is to become an experienced traveler for whom the journey is about honoring our fellow travelers as well as those we encounter along the way. In selecting the best routes to take, I’ve chosen textbooks that I hope will enrich, deepen and broaden your understanding so that when you are serving as a spiritual leader, you will be not just a well-informed guide, but a spiritually formed one as well. At the end of this semester, you will have a chance to do a self-evaluation of how you have been both informed and transformed as a result of this journey. This is because journeys change us. I hope that you understand that the end destination is not a time or a place (as in “the finish line” at the end of the semester), but rather, our destination is to more intimately know the person of Jesus Christ. It is our Lord, the Good Shepherd, who accompanies us on this journey.

“It is unthinkable that good shepherds could be lacking now. Far be it from us that they should be lacking—far be it from God’s mercy not to produce them and establish them! Of course, if there are good sheep, there are also good shepherds, because good shepherds are made out of good sheep.” (St. Augustine)
IV. Benefits of Going on the Road Trip (Course Objectives)

- Students will be able to understand the connection between biblical theology and catechesis and formation.
- Students will be able to articulate the fundamental significance and purposes of Christian formation and catechesis.
- Students will know how different metaphors, assumptions, and theological emphases affect claims and strategies of Christian formation and catechesis.
- Students will learn to discern various cultural and philosophical paradigms and assumptions that affect and influence spiritual formation.
- Students will gain an understanding of human psychological, moral, and social developmental learning theory/learning process.
- Students will have a basic familiarity with the history of Christian religious education, spiritual formation, discipleship and the range of approaches that have been utilized in the life of the church.
- Students will become comfortably familiar with the Anglican catechism, To Be a Christian as well as learn about other catechisms that are available.
- Students will have an increased appreciation for the role of imagination and wonder as a part of lifelong formation.

V. Travel Prep (Assigned Readings)
(gearing up to take off the training wheels)

It is expected that you will consistently come to class having done the readings and that you will be fully prepared to discuss them. Most weekly class sessions will include an opportunity to discuss the readings, either in your small groups or with the entire class.

Assigned Readings—For your readings, keep a reader response log. While somewhat akin to Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance—you’re basically keeping a log of things that are helpful to you, that will assist you in “road maintenance” (whether you’re on a bicycle, in a jeep, an ATV, or on foot for your metaphorical journey). Your log is for you—it’s not the same as doing a book review. What one or two ideas/themes from the reading stand out to you? What spoke to you the most/least? Why? Engage these issues with your own ministry context. How might you use this idea/them in your ministry? How might you do it differently? You might be the sort of person who writes in the margins of your books, uses post-its, tabs and highlighter to mark key passages. This is an acceptable form of “logging” your reading.
VI. On the Road (Assignments)
NB: Course Assignments are in boldprint and in a box. You are welcome to think outside the box in terms of how you approach your assignments.

**OFF-ROADING**

Some maps and travel apps provide you with information such as assessing road pavement and weather conditions. Most trips involve some sort of unexpected detours or delays or disruptions. Part of the purpose of spiritual disciplines is to equip us for those more challenging and difficult experiences that we inevitably encounter “on the road.”

Option 1: *Pick a spiritual discipline that you would like to commit to for the duration of the semester. Keep a journal of your experiences (ups and downs, challenges, observations).*

Option 2: read and write a reflective response to *Off-Road Disciplines: Spiritual Adventures of Missional Leaders* by Earl Creps. What do you notice about Creps’ notion of “disciplines” in comparison with the ones that the church has more traditionally observed?

There will be a sign-up sheet towards the end of the semester for a one-on-one conversation with me during which time we’ll discuss the option you chose.

**INSTRUCTION MANUALS**

"A wise rabbi once told me that it is not how many prayers we don’t say that matters to God, but rather how many we do. That is important to all of us, but especially for beginners. If this is your first attempt to return to this most ancient of Christian practices, it is wise to remember that you are entering into a discipline and, like all disciplines, this one sits hard and heavy upon one at times. There are hours you will miss and/or some that you can’t even begin to figure out how to observe. That is all right, for either the joy will carry you into greater joy and transmute the discipline into privilege, or you will find yourself simply the wiser and the richer for such experience as you have had. As the rabbi said, that is what matters ultimately." Phyllis Tickle

Pick one of the following books. You may read it jointly with another classmate.


*Fasting* by Scot McKnight, Thomas Nelson, 2010.
*Easter Tide: Prayers for Lent through Easter from The Divine Hours.* Phyllis Tickle. Doubleday Press, 2004

After you read the book, you may then 1) write a book review reflecting on what you liked/disliked about the book; 2) write about how you might use this book in an formational setting (whether with a not-yet-believer or someone young in the faith or someone who has been a believer for a good while, but hasn’t yet begun to “deepen” his/her discipleship roots; or 3) create some sort of interactive lesson, learning center, adult education forum, or prayer station utilizing the contents of the book. Due Mar. 14th

**MAPPING THE JOURNEY:**
**Writing a Rule of Life**

Read *The Rule of St. Benedict.* Write a rule of life using the templates provided in class. This will serve as your MID-TERM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Checklist</th>
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<tr>
<td>○ Journal (continual throughout; final submission due)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Off-Roading (separate journal on a selected spiritual discipline or reading/reflecting on Creps’ book. This is due @the end of the semester, and will be reviewed by way of a one-on-one session with the instructor. Time/Date TBD)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Instruction Manual (Due Feb. 28th)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Mapping the Journey—generating a rule of life (This serves as your mid-term, Due Mar. 14th)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>○ Class attendance and participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Small group peer and self-evaluations</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Fieldwork/Final Project (Due April 25th) (to be shared in class)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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FIELDWORK

Read a book from one of the following topical areas. You then have several options for how you choose to respond to the book. If you opt to write a paper, please understand that this paper is not so much an academic piece as it is to be a discussion of some aspect or aspects of Christian spirituality which you would write/present/offer for a lay audience. For example, you could produce a serial piece for a future parish newsletter or bulletin, or generate a powerpoint, or even a sermon based on what you've read. You will be sharing your paper/presentation/project in class so that others can benefit from your experience and insights. Due April 25th.

Prayer

“Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night”. George Herbert


Life in Christ

“The loftier the building, the deeper must the foundation be laid”. Thomas a Kempis

“The Christian shoemaker does his duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship.”

Martin Luther

Monasticism/Rule of Life

“To eat in a monastery refectory is an exercise in humility; daily, one is reminded to put communal necessity before individual preference. While consumer culture speaks only to preferences, treating even whims as needs to be granted (and the sooner the better), monastics sense that this pandering to delusions of self-importance weakens the true self, and diminishes our ability to distinguish desires from needs. It's a price they're not willing to pay.” Kathleen Norris


**Sabbath, Silence, Solitude, and Sunday Worship**

“What would I do for a twenty-four hour period of time if the only criteria was to pursue my deepest joy?” Dan Allender

“Silent solitude makes true speech possible and personal. If I am not in touch with my own belovedness, then I cannot touch the sacredness of others. If I am estranged from myself, I am likewise a stranger to others.” Brennan Manning


**Disciplines as observed in the one holy catholic and apostolic church**

“The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them. It is God's love for us that He not only gives us His Word but also lends us His ear. So it is His work that we do for our brother and sister when we learn to listen to them.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer


**Spirituality of the Ordinary/Domestic Church**

“The greatest proof of Christianity for others is not how far a man can logically analyze his reasons for believing, but how far in practice he will stake his life on his belief.”

T.S. Eliot

“But it is daily tasks, daily acts of love and worship that serve to remind us that the religion is not strictly an intellectual pursuit, and these days it is easy to lose sight of that as, like our society itself, churches are becoming more politicized and polarized. Christian faith is a way of life, not an impregnable fortress made up of ideas; not a philosophy; not a grocery list of beliefs.” Kathleen Norris

Spiritual Direction

“The church itself is a spiritual director. It tries to connect your story with God's story. Just to be a true part of this community means you are being directed, you are being guided, you are being asked to make connection. The Bible is a spiritual director. People must read Scripture as a word for themselves personally, and ask where God speaks to them. Finally, individual Christians are also spiritual directors. A spiritual director is a Christian man or woman who practices the disciplines of the church and of the Bible and to whom you are willing to be accountable for your life in God.”  Henri Nouwen

“A leader is a person who must take special responsibility for what’s going on inside him/herself, inside his or her consciousness, lest the act of leadership do more harm than good.”  Parker Palmer
