**COS 123**  **FORMATION AND DISCIPLESHIP SYLLABUS**

**August 12 -13 September 16 - 17**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**:

Faith Formation and Discipleship are the building blocks of the church. In the broadest sense, these ministries are an integral part of every aspect of church life. This course grounds students in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship. This course will focus on direct instruction related to the formal and formational teaching of Faith Formation in various times and circumstances to transform lives.

**INSTRUCTOR**:

Barbara Bruce

**INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY**:

I am reachable via e-mail at bbcreative@aol.com and by phone (585)533-9253.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**:

At the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

* **Identify and articulate** a theological basis for the Wesleyan emphasis on spiritual disciplines and practice them as a means of grace. {The Instituted Means of Grace are so named because we can see them firmly established in the life and ministry of Christ: prayer, searching the Scriptures, the Lord’s Supper, fasting, and conferencing.}
* **Explain and implement** the General Rules and the practices of small groups in a congregation.

A small group:

* consists of 3 to 15 people;
* meets regularly with the purpose and intentionality to grow as faithful disciples
* is led by a faith – filled teacher/learner
* is a place where safe relationships are built;
* is a place where teaching/learning exists in a “safe environment” where Ground Rules are established and adhered to
* meets on a regular basis for the support and encouragement of each other
* **Educate and resource** a congregation in the disciplines of Christian Formation
* **Organize congregations** to help people discern their callings and gifts for ministry.
* **Reflect and Report** on the required texts in class
* **Develop a strategic teaching plan** for a formational ministry integrating the questions, issues and concerns from the preceding course objectives. Each student will create **ONE** strategic plan which will include a teaching/learning session(s) utilizing the aspects of small groups**, OR** Christian Formation **OR** Discerning callings and gifts for ministry.

Each student will select **ONE** topic to study in depth and create a lesson. An outline and preliminary work of this lesson will be presented during the second session in September.

**STRATEGIES:**

This course will be taught in an interactive and participatory manner. Integrated learning techniques will be used to enhance student involvement and understanding. Latest theory and practice of learning brain research and Multiple Intelligences will be included. This course will be built on students’ knowledge, experience and observations. Specific strategies will include, but are not limited to:

class discussion and dialogue

shared information

large/small group interactions

class presentations

observation/feedback

oral defense of homework assignments

**METHODS**:

In the process of this course students will:

Read in required texts and other related materials

Discuss/dialogue with peers to enhance learning – (Christian Conferencing)

Prepare and present a teaching session to the class.

(specific instructions are attached to this syllabus)

**GRADING:** Grades will coincide with the standards of Wesley Theological Seminary.

**STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES**:

Attendance and Homework: Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. A high percentage of teaching/learning will occur in class, and course work cannot be completed without full participation. Homework is foundational and prepares students for the class time. Failure to complete the homework assignments will leave students at a loss in participation and demonstration during class.

Missed Work: In case of an emergency, if students are unable to attend class, they alone must assume responsibility for any information and materials missed.

Late Work: will not receive full credit.

The Law of Nearly Infinite Flexibility: This law pertains to course structure, assignments and deadlines. It holds that any aspect of the course can be negotiated if student can demonstrate, in a timely fashion, and to the instructor’s satisfaction, that doing so will facilitate learning and success in meeting the course goals and objectives, and minimize additional burden on the instructor. This law also refers to the fact that due to time constraints or teachable moments the course schedule will remain flexible.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Sessions will include:

**WHAT?**: Introductions, overview of course, the big picture based on students understanding of the concepts of spiritual disciplines and practices – Christian formation, - essentials of small group ministry, and discernment of gifts and calling for ministry.

Information gleaned from reading the required and supplementary texts

Review/respond to pre-work

**SO WHAT?**: Motivation to learn; examine resources; plan to teach; the teaching/learning connection and implementation of goals.

Reports from book selections.

Meeting specific student’s needs.

**NOW WHAT?**: Putting it all together, teaching sessions, review, key learnings, taking it home, Living Spiritual Disciplines and Christian Formation

**COURSE TEXTS**:

Required Texts:

Matthaei, Sondra Higgins, ***Formation in Faith*** Abingdon Press, 2008

Thompson, Marjorie J., ***Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*** Westminister John Knox Press 2014

Supplementary:

BarbaraBruce, ***Start Here: Teaching and Learning With Adults*** Upper Room – Discipleship Resources 2003

**REFERENCES**:

These books will be used as references for the class. They are foundational in the area of Christian education. I have chosen books that are an integral part of your educational library. \* Some of them are “classics”, some you can download. You do NOT need to purchase these.

Murray, Dick, ***Teaching the Bible to Youth and Adults*** Abingdon Press 1993

Bruce, Barbara ***Tringular Teaching – a new way of teaching the Bible to Adults***  Abingdon Press 2007

Developmental Chart: <http://www.gbod.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=nhLRJ2PMKsG&b=5044981&ct=7303981>

What Every Teacher Needs to Know: <http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5723159/k.3789/What_Every_Teacher_Needs_to_Know.htm>

**INSTRUCTOR’S PHILOSOPHY**: In this course I am looking for student’s ability to apply theological knowledge in ways that change lives. What I expect to see/hear/experience is the praxis. I am interested in the application of what has been learned in meaningful ways to the end that people are transformed and congregations learn and grow in faith.

**PROVIDING WORSHIP:**  Our class will be responsible for worship for the **September** class.

Please give some thought to what/how we might present a meaningful and faith – full worship service.

To prepare for this class and optimize on site time, I ask that you complete some work prior to our first session.

Together we will be taking steps on this journey and we will learn from each other.

The “pre-work” for our August class: consists of:

Read both required texts.

For the ***Formation in Faith,*** text please read the book and answer at least one of the “Thinking, Reflecting, Acting” questions in each chapter. I do not require pages of text. Answer the questions briefly and succinctly. I have read the book, I know what the book says**. I WANT TO KNOW YOUR FAITH RESPONSE** to the questions. It is in the act of Thinking, Reflecting and Acting that the book will speak to you. We will share answers in class.

For the ***Soul Feast*** text, I invite you to read the text and respond in the following way:

4 things you learned as the book touched your faith

3 things you will USE in your ministry

2 questions the text raised for you.

I encourage you to work through the book. Wrestle with the questions. Search for your faith answers. It is an interesting book and I trust you will find many things to ponder. Again, please keep your answers succinct and reflective of your learning.

* Please complete this sentence **7 times** (with a variety of answers) - We will share our answers in class

**Christian Formation is**……………………………

* Please share YOUR definition/understanding of the word “PRAXIS”. I do not want the Google definition – I want you to write out what this word means to you as it is formational to the way this class is constructed.

**In the August Weekend we will:**

* Begin with prayer
* Practice Community Building and other aspects as integral parts of Small Group Ministry throughout our time together.
* Establish Ground Rules
* State NEEDS and EXPECTATIONS from this class
* Go over the syllabus- inviting questions and comments
* Each of you will share your definitions of Christian Formation (see additional page)
* Share YOUR definition/understanding of PRAXIS
* Report on and share information on your reading homework (see Syllabus for details)
* Employ Means of Grace by Praying, Examining scripture, participating in Christian conferencing, participating in the Lord’s Supper, and Fasting
* Explore the theory of Multiple Intelligences as it applies to PREACHING and TEACHING.
* Select **ONE** topic to build a teaching plan on. We will discuss how to include Learning Brain and Multiple Intelligences into a plan the you will USE in your ministry.
* Each student will present a 10 minute segment of that lesson to the class at the September Weekend and explain how this segment fits into the larger lesson. Students will describe the audience, Scripture used, focus and length of the entire class.
* After each presentation, presenters will receive feedback from the rest of the class.
* Create a team approach to the Worship service for the **September** session. We are responsible for the worship service in September.
* Review homework for our next session:
  + Reading the supplemental text ***“Start Here – Teaching and Learning With Adults”*** . Answer the questions in the appended sheet
  + Prepare (and present a portion) of a lesson to facilitate ONE of the topics above.
* A format for your lesson will be available at this time.
* Close August Weekend with review, prayer and sending forth.

**In the September Weekend we will:**

* Begin with prayer
* Sign in for order of class presentations
* Review insights from our last session
* Report from reading the supplemental text by stating how you will employ information from the text in your lesson.
* A good part of our time will be spent in listening and responding to student’s lessons.
* We will fill in any gaps from your needs that have not been addressed.
* I reserve the right to remain flexible to allow time to fill in gaps, address student’s needs not yet covered, and do whatever is necessary to make this a meaningful teaching/learning experience.
* Establish a time line for completion of lesson plans.
* We will close with review, prayer, blessings and sending forth

Appendix:

**Start Here: Teaching and Learning With Adults**

I found this book to be:

Something I discovered that I wish I had known before:

My favorite idea from this book is:

Two questions this book posed:

1.

2.

**Please use the back of this paper if you need more room**

7 concepts gleaned from this book and how I will use them in my ministry:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_