

CEDF 6205 Models of Christian Formation

North Park Theological Seminary

Fall, 2012

Instructor: Dr. Jim Dekker

jdekker@northpark.edu phone:773-244-5206

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Course Description

A framework for ministry in Christian formation will be developed through the examination of current theory and practice in the field of Christian education/formation. Designing and experiencing a sample of models will be included in the course. Attention will be given to practical implications to ministry contexts students anticipate.

Objectives

By the end of the course participants will have:

- Examined the theoretical foundations and implications for ministry of four major approaches to Christian education/formation (CF)
- Mapped out their own philosophy of Christian formation based on an evaluation of CF foundations and current models
- Explored and experienced a variety of methods of teaching and learning appropriate to each of the models
- Applied insights from current approaches to Christian formation to a specific church or ministry context

Required Texts

1. Thomas Groome. *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*. Jossey-Bass, 1999. ISBN-13: 978-0787947859
2. Sondra Matthaëi. *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples*. Abingdon, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0687649730
3. Marjorie Thompson. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Westminster John Knox, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0664229474
OR
Richard J. Foster. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd edition. HarperSanFrancisco, 1998. ISBN-13: 978-0060628390
4. Suzanne C. Toton. *Justice Education: From Service to Solidarity*. Marquette University Press, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0874627275
OR (Tentative)
5. Robert Priest and Alvaro Nieves, eds. *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith*. Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0195310573

Recommended Reading

Jack Seymour, ed. *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning*.
Abingdon, 1997. ISBN-13: 978-0687008124

OR

Jack Seymour and Donald Miller. *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education*.
Abingdon, 1982. ISBN-13: 978-0687094936

Class format

This class will be highly participatory, drawing on lecture, discussion, small group activities, in-class writing and a variety of reflective and we will be doing various experiential learning tasks. Participants are expected to be present for the entire duration of the class and to fully engage in all learning tasks.

Assignments

1. Read the texts by Groome, and Matthaiei. Write a 2-3 page paper on each book engaging the author's approach to Christian education/formation. These papers may be written either as reflective essays or critical analysis.
2. Read the texts by Thompson or Foster and write a 2-3 page analysis of how Christian Formation is caste and how that process is fostered.
3. Read Toton or Priest et.al. and prepare for classroom discussion on their main theses and pathways.
4. You will be designing learning experiences according to practical models and methods. These designs will be presented / experienced in class and shared among us.
5. Final project will be the development of a Christian Formation process that is framed by your theological and educational philosophical commitment; contextual awareness; a discussion of a usable model for the context; and a detailed description of its implementation. Further instructions will be given in class and class experiences will contribute to this final project.

All assignments are to be submitted by email as an attachment in WORD or similar Microsoft friendly format by midnight of the due date.

Institutional Support

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Seminary office at 773-244-6209. Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. It would be helpful in planning this course if you would contact the instructor as well. For further information please review the following website: <http://www.northpark.edu/ada>.