

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SPFM 5201: JOURNEY
SUE BRAUN
SUMMER SEMESTER 2010

The facilitator reserves the prerogative to make adjustments when unforeseen issues arise.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Life is a journey—both an external and an internal journey. We move externally from place to place and context to context. Each external journey or experience requires an internal journey as we cope with change and work at being receptive to new settings.

Life is also a journey from one life stage to another, i.e. from birth to death (from the Christian perspective the journey is from death to life), from infant to child to adolescent to adult, from unmarried to married, employed to unemployed, parent to grandparent, (what else?) spiritual dryness to one of generativity and perhaps into another “desert” time.

It is the purpose of this course to examine the Christian life under the metaphor of journey. This will enable us to discuss the movements and counter movements that enable or inhibit our faith journey.

Students will be introduced to some formation practices, among them:

- Lectio Divina
- Spiritual timeline
- Practice in hearing and keeping confidences
- Depth listening
- Working with metaphors as a means of exploring the Christian life
- Covenantal intentionality, i.e., the incalculable importance of personal presence

REQUIREMENTS:

- Class and group attendance is expected. Absences must be excused with the formation group leader. Written assignments must be completed and turned into the formation group leader on time.
- Access and read the following texts online:
 - John Weborg, “Living with God,” Ex Auditu, 18 (2002), pp57-76.
 - John Weborg, “Spiritual Formation: Preparation in Life for Life in the Interlude Called a Theological Education,” Covenant Quarterly, LVIX (November 2001), pp3-12.
 - The development of a critical appreciation for what it means to have a covenantal relation with other companions.
 - Write a one page reflection (not a summary or report) on Dr. Weborg’s article in Ex Auditu. Each student will read her/his paper in the group. Due for reading to Group on June 18.

- Read the Bible reading at least three times between classes. By the last class, give a signed statement to your group leader that the assignment was completed. Students who have not completed reading and returned a signed statement will **fail** this course. Please communicate any problems before the June 18 deadline.

GRADING:

Pass/Fail

- Faithful class and weekly group attendance and completion of all assignments are the key elements of and criteria for the grad of **Pass**.
- Due to the nature and grading of this course, you are expected to be present and prompt for all lectures and small group meetings. Absences are strongly discouraged, but if necessary should be excused in advance by the small group leader. If you have more than one absence, you must contact your formation group leader as soon as possible; in most cases compensating work will be assigned. Normally students with more than two absences will be asked to withdraw and retake the course. This is not license to take leave of class twice. There must be sufficient reason.

CALENDAR:

2-5pm, June 7-18: M, T, Th, Fr (class does not meet on Wednesdays)

- 2-4pm, plenary session; 4-5pm, small group setting

JUNE 7 – ORIENTATION TO THE COURSE: MOTIF OF JOURNEY

LIFE STORY LINKED WITH THE STORY

Read: Acts 9:1-31; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Procedural matters

Groups: Introduce yourself by a brief accounting of a memorable journey. What made it memorable? Name an aspect of Sue's story that made a connection with your story.

JUNE 8 – TOURIST OR PARTICIPANT ON THE JOURNEY?

Read Jeremiah 29:1-14

JOURNEY INTO LIVING WITH GOD

Read James 3

Groups: Are you a tourist as a seminarian? What hopes did you bring to your seminary education? What fears did you bring and/or have arisen while here?

Groups: Read the reflection paper you have written regarding Professor Weborg's article, "Living with God."

JUNE 9 – OFF

JUNE 10 – COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY: RELATIONSHIPS

Read: Luke 24:13-49

JOURNEY INTO CALL TO MINISTRY

Read: Isaiah 6:1-8, Jeremiah 1:4-9

Groups: Relate stories of relationship that are/have been gift and task. Are there needs for prayers for ongoing relationships?

JUNE 11 – LISTENING: A GIFT TO JOURNEY COMPANIONS

Read: Proverbs 18:13-21

LONELINESS ON THE JOURNEY

Read Psalm 68:1-6, 19-20; Matthew 28:16-20; John 14:15-31

Groups: Recount an experience either of not being heard or of not genuinely listening. What caused the interference? Too painful? Offensive? Distracted? Not enough discipline?

Of the various types of loneliness presented in the lecture, which one could you identify with the most? Would you like to add any type of loneliness to the list?

JUNE 14 – SINGING THE JOURNEY: THE HYMNAL FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Read: Revelation 4; 5:6-14; Ephesians 5:15-20; 1 Chronicles 16:1-36; Luke 1:46-55

TWO JOURNEYS: FAITH TRADITION AND FORMATION TRADITION

Read: Philippians 3:4b-9; Matthew 13:44-52

Groups: Tell the story of your favorite hymn. Why is it your favorite? What do you know about the composer of the music or the writer of lyrics? St. Augustine says that the one who sings prays twice. What do you think he meant?

What discovery about your formation tradition was most surprising and/or enlightening?

JUNE 15 – WATER FOR THE JOURNEY: A BAPTISM

Read: Romans 6:-11; Mark 10:32-45

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY: EUCHARIST

Read: 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Mark 14:17-31 (thought: do this alone on the 15th with a community meal together)

Groups: Tell some stories about your experiences with water. How might you connect them with baptism? Illumination? Insight? Relation to Bible stories? Of the New Testament images of baptism on the handout, are any immediately striking to you? Why?

This service has a variety of names: The Last Supper; The Lord's Supper; Holy Communion; The Eucharist; The Mass; The Passover. What does each suggest to you as a particular kind of nourishment for your spiritual journey? Which of these words best describe your experience of the sacrament?

JUNE 16 – OFF

JUNE 17 – THE TRANSFIGURATION: A MODEL FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Read: Luke 9:28-36

Groups: What has been your understanding of the Transfiguration? What did you find in the content of the lecture that was inviting? Intimidating? Is your ready up to date? (Deadline: Jun 18 for reading reports)

JUNE 18 – SENDING AND CLOSING

2-3pm: Groups meet first with open time for concluding reflections and questions

3-4pm: Meet in Chapel for service of renewal of baptism, healing, and Eucharist.

Reading report due