

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

## IN722 Disciple Formation 4: Immersed in the Story

Spring 2022 - Online and Residential - .5 credit; letter grade

Dr. Susan Forshey, [sforshey@dbq.edu](mailto:sforshey@dbq.edu) – 206-963-0472



### Course Description

In Disciple Formation 4, students will define and discuss strategies and challenges to the role of grace, in light of their formation as Christian disciples and ministers. Students will demonstrate their application of course content in their own lives and ministry through established methods of theological reflection, such as journaling; inquiry-based learning; and open and guided discussion in small groups facilitated by the instructor, either online or residentially. Students will formulate a rule of life incorporating practices of discipleship and self-care. Disciple Formation 4 is required for Master of Divinity students. Prerequisites include IN521 and IN522, the August Residential retreat (or suitable equivalent approved by the instructor), and IN721.

### Course Learning Objectives

Through active participation in the Disciple Formation series, students will develop the capacity to:

- List, describe, and explain examples of Christian practices used within the Christian traditions for the formation of disciples toward loving others and loving God. (Remember, Understand)
- Describe role of self-care in the life of a disciple and minister. (Understand)
- Demonstrate specific practices, such as journaling, theological reflection, scripture study, prayer, art and music reflection, self-reflection. (Apply)
- Experiment with practices and evaluate their formative impact on their love of God and love of others. (Analyze, Evaluate)
- Formulate a rule of life which incorporates specific discipling practices regularly into their lives. (Create)

In addition, through active participation in IN722, students will develop the capacity to:

- Define the role of grace within their specific Christian tradition and practice. (Remember)
- List, describe, and explain the work of grace in the life of a disciple and minister. (Remember, Understand).
- Evaluate their own activities, practices, and behaviors in light of God's work of grace. (Evaluate)
- Formulate a rule of life which incorporates practices to nurture the work of God's grace and self-care. (Create)

### M. Div. Curricular Goals (Program Learning Objectives)

- Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer, and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives.
- Be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the Church.
- Educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church.
- Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

### M.A.M.D. Curricular Goal

- Adopt spiritual practices that nurture their personal lives as faithful disciples and witnesses.

### Required Texts

Susan R. Pitchford. *The Sacred Gaze: Contemplation and the Healing of the Self*. ISBN: 978-0814635681

Eugene Peterson. *Under the Unpredictable Plant*. (PDF provided)

Patricia Jennings. *The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom*, chapters 1 and 9 (PDF provided)

## Course Requirements and Grading

The challenge in ministry and life is learning how to prioritize space for God and discipleship practices which are mostly invisible, unrewarded, and often, seemingly unnecessary. Regularly engaging the course materials and practices can build a habit of making space for God. This course uses a *covenant grading* approach in order to focus on the *consistent* practice of spiritual disciplines over time, rather than making a judgment about the *quality* of practice. It gives you the choice and visible responsibility for completing course discipleship practices. **All students will complete the common practices and commit to a path.** Different seasons require different amounts and sets of practices. God loves you no matter what! Please decide which path you will be pursuing by **January 24** and email me, [sforshey@dbq.edu](mailto:sforshey@dbq.edu).

## Common Requirements for All Students:

- Keep in regular contact with your small group.
- Complete all practices for week 2 including Journal #2 and Rule of Life Review (100 words), due January 31.
- Book Summary (500 words), *The Sacred Gaze* by Susan Pitchford, due March 14.
- Complete all practices for week 9 including Journal #7, due March 27.
- Book Summary (500 words), *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, due April 25.
- Write a *Spring Semester Review* (300 words) due April 30.
- Designate an intentional time and place for listening and responding to God. *It is encouraged to use the work of this course as the practices for that time with God.*
- Regular engagement on-line for distance students or attendance in class for residential students. Please see attendance policy.
- Regular participation in a worshiping community as a worshipper; campus students - regular participation in UDTs prayer and/or chapel opportunities.

## Additional requirements

### *Path 1 (90% of the material or A)*

- Complete all common requirements for the course.
- Complete at least 7 weeks of practices, as posted on Moodle--Readings, videos, music, forums, activities.
- Write 4 journals (300 words) which place your life into reflective dialogue with the readings.

### *Path 2 (80% of the material or B)*

- Complete all common requirements for the course.
- Complete 6 weeks of practices, as posted on Moodle--Readings, videos, music, forums, activities.
- Write 3 journals (300 words) which place your life into reflective dialogue with the readings for the week.

### *Path 3 (70% of the material or C)*

- Complete all common requirements for the course.
- Complete 5 weeks of practices, as posted on Moodle--Readings, videos, music, forums, activities.
- Write 2 journals (300 words) which place your life into reflective dialogue with the readings for the week.

### *Path 4 (60% of the material or D)*

- Complete all common requirements for the course.
- Complete at least 4 weeks of practices, as posted on Moodle--Readings, videos, music, forums, activities.

**Assignment Policy:** If an assignment needs to be turned in late, please let me know the situation prior to the due date. Unexcused late journals/assignments will not be accepted. My expectation: do the assignment “well enough” for the current circumstances you find yourself in.

**Online Materials Policy:** Lack of engagement online for three consecutive weeks will lead to review and possible administrative withdrawal. Please let me know if an unforeseen circumstance prevents you from participating on-line.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are building or deepening habits of completion and good communication while in seminary. Please gift your colleagues with your consistent presence, online and/or on-campus:

- **Up to two excused absences from class or online** (with completion of make-up assignments) will not affect your final grade. Please contact me immediately if you must be absent due to illness, emergency, and prior unchangeable commitment. More than three absences will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The **first unexcused absence**--absent for 2 full weeks online or from 1 campus class meeting without notifying me through email or via phone call--will receive a warning; the **second unexcused absence** will reduce the course grade by one full grade letter. The **third unexcused absence** will result in an automatic administrative withdrawal.

**About the Readings:** The content of this course may bring up personal struggles best worked through with a recovery group, pastoral counselor, therapist, or spiritual director. Please contact me if you need a referral or help discerning the most faithful next step.

## IN722 – Disciple Formation 4: Immersed in the Story

Week	Week Dates	Scripture	Reading	Due
1	Jan 18-24	Genesis 1:1-2:4a		<b>Grade Path Due;</b> Journal #1, due Jan 24
2	Jan 25-Jan 31	Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13	Resiliency readings (pdf)	<b>Rule of Life Review and Journal #2 due January 31 (required)</b>
3	Feb 1-Feb 7	Genesis 22:1-18	Pitchford, chapters 1-2	Journal #3
4	Feb 8-Feb 14	Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21	Pitchford, chapters 3-4	Journal #4
5	Feb 15-Feb 21	Isaiah 55:1-11	Pitchford, chapters 5-6	Journal #5
6	Feb 22-Feb 28	<b>Reading Days</b>		
7	Mar 1-Mar 7	Ezekiel 36:24-28	Pitchford, chapters 7-8	Journal #6
8	Mar 8-Mar 14	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Pitchford, chapters 9-10	<b>Book Summary - (required)</b> <b>The Sacred Gaze</b> <b>Due March 14</b>
9	Mar 15-Mar 21	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Trauma-Informed Spiritual Disciplines: Patricia Jennings, The Trauma Sensitive, Classroom, chapters 1 and 9.	<b>Required: Journal #7</b>
10	Mar 22-Mar 28	Book of Jonah	Peterson, Intro & Section 1 (pdf)	
11	Mar 29-Apr 4		Peterson, Section 2 (pdf)	Small Group: What is your vocational Nineveh? What are some Tarshish temptations?
12	Apr 5-Apr 11		Peterson, Section 3, selections (PDF)	<b>Journal #8:</b> Who has modelled vocation holiness for you? Describe the person and reflect on how they embodied holiness in their life of following Christ. <b>Due April 11.</b>
13	Apr 12-Apr 18	<b>Holy Week and Easter Break</b>		
14	Apr 19-Apr 25	Psalms 139	Peterson, Section 4 (pdf); Peterson, Section 5 (pdf)	<b>Book Summary (required):</b> <b>Under the Unpredictable Plant</b> <b>Due April 25</b>
15	Final - April 30			<b>Semester Review (required):</b> Reflect on your semester Rule, and evaluate your participation in the course (reading the texts, engaging the material), and small group participation. How has God called you deeper into relationship? What have been obstacles? Where is God calling you to focus next in your personal discipleship? (300 words). <b>Due April 30.</b>

**ADA Compliance Statement**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify Dr. Forshey during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable. Confidentiality of all requests will be maintained. All requested accommodations must be approved through the Academic Success Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Myers Library (563-589-3262 or [ASC@dbq.edu](mailto:ASC@dbq.edu)).

**Title IX and Jeanne Clery Act Policy Information:**

Title IX: The University of Dubuque is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex; which includes all forms of sexual misconduct. More information may be found at <https://www.dbq.edu/AboutUD/TitleIX/>

Jeanne Clery Act: The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act requires the distribution of an Annual Security Report and Annual Fire Safety Report to all current faculty, staff, and students and notice of its availability to prospective students, faculty, and staff no later than October 1st of each year. More information may be found at <https://www.dbq.edu/SafetySecurity/JeanneCleryAct/>

## Week Nine - "Compassion" - Second Week in Lent

**This is required week for all grade paths.**

1. **PLEASE: Take the Science for Seminaries survey** before doing any of the practices this week: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Science4SeminariesPreCourse>

**Note:** The content for this week may bring up past trauma. Be gentle with yourself as you move through the readings and videos. I am available for processing and conversation.

2. **Watch** the 4 videos on the science of epigenetics, trauma's effect on children, effects of stress on the brain, and how to practice empathy.

- The first video by Dr. Emma Meaburn (UK Trauma Council) will give you an overview of Epigenetics and the possibilities of intergenerational and transgenerational effects:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7E7RHieSE8I>
- The second video (UK Trauma Council) talks about the effects of trauma on children as they reach adulthood, and ways to build resilience:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7E7RHieSE8I>
- The third video (TedED-Madhumita Murgia) talks about the effects of stress and some potential epigenetic effects: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuyPuH9ojCE&t>
- The fourth video (Brene Brown) offers a practice of empathy and vulnerability in order to empathize with a person under stress:  
<https://youtu.be/1Ewgu369Jw>

3. **Read** chapters 1 and 9 of Patricia Jennings, *The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom*, posted below. We read chapters 6, 7, and 8 last semester from this book. They are also posted below, if you want to refer back to them.

4. **Listen** to "You Say" by Lauren Daigle. We've heard this song before, but it is a good reminder this week:

5. **Reflect:** *How might you practice compassion and empathy towards yourself, those in your close circle, and in your ministry context? How might you create spaces for compassionate practice that keeps in mind the trauma that people have experienced and varying levels of stress we are all experiencing in daily life and with global events?*

6. **Share in your small group** one concrete way you can practice compassion and empathy **toward one person** in your life, and one way you can practice compassion and empathy **toward yourself** this week.