

Millsaps College ~~ Jackson, MS

**COS 123: Formation and Discipleship**

Syllabus: Course of Studies Class 123

Monday, April 8 – Monday, May 27, 2024

16 Hours synchronous Learning

4 Hours asynchronous learning via Course Connect

**Welcome:** Welcome to COS 123. This course is focused on congregational life. This course grounds the student in the theology and core practice of personal and congregational formation and discipleship.

**Course Instructor:**

Your instructor for this course is Rev. Johniel Henry. Rev. Henry presently serves as pastor of St. Paul and St. John UMC’s in the Hattiesburg District. Johniel has previously served as faculty for the MS COS program. In addition to pastoring and teaching, Johniel also engages in clergy coaching.

**CONTACT INORMATION:**

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**Announcements:**

This is a fully online class.

This class will encompass 20 hours of instruction, as required by GBHEM (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry), of which 16 hours synchronous learning (happening at the same time) and 4 Hours asynchronous learning via Course Connect (not happening at the same time; occurs via Course Connect.

Student responsibilities:

1. Twenty pages of assigned written work.
2. Independent work (reading & pre – work found in your syllabus)
3. Course Connect – independent assignments done online at your own pace, but which has deadlines.

You must do ALL sections of the course to receive credit. GBHEM requires that no student miss more than 20% of any COS Course. (20% = 4 hours)

**Course Description and Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course:

***Students will be able to:***

*1. Articulate a theological basis for the Wesleyan emphasis on spiritual disciplines and practice*

*them as a means of grace.*

*2. Explain and implement the General Rules and the practices of small groups in a congregation.*

*3. Educate and resource a congregation in the disciplines of Christian formation.*

*4. Organize congregations to help people discern their callings and gifts for ministry.*

**Required Textbooks:** **Read before April 8, 2024**

There are three required textbooks for this course and a number of online resources and videos will also

be used. Please feel free to order used copies or Kindle e-books to suit your needs. Also, please utilized the resources of the online digital theological library provided by the Center for Ministry.

1. Matthaei, Sondra H. Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 2008.

2. Marjorie J. Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life. Louisville, KY:

Westminster John Knox Press. 1995.

3. Wimberly, Anne E. S. Evelyn Parker. In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church.

Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 2002.

\*Several required online readings are listed for selected assignments.

\*\*Several curated resources are listed for your personal reference library. Curated resources should not

be considered required reading but may prove helpful for assignments or for your final exam.

**Guidelines for Written Assignments:**

a. **Format**: All papers are to be submitted via Course Connect and should be in .doc or .docx format. If you are not using Windows software, it is also acceptable to submit papers in PDF format. Always begin

filenames with your name, then the title of the assignment. Examples: [J. Henry – assignment title]

b**. Documentation**: Please always cite your sources whenever you are quoting or summarizing from a

text, even if it is obvious or mentioned in the assignment. Provide at least author; name, title, and

page number, even in discussion assignments. Please see the plagiarism section of this syllabus for

more information.

c. **Style**: Chicago Manual of Style documentation is expected for bibliographic references and any

quoted or paraphrased materials. Basic information about this style may be found at The Purdue

Online Writing Lab (OWL). For this course we will be using the Notes and Bibliography (NB) options.

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html>

**Plagiarism**:

Papers must reflect your own thoughts, words, sentence structure, and ideas. Any use made of another

author’s material must be acknowledged in the form of a citation (a footnote and/or bibliographic

reference, appropriately formatted using the Chicago Manual of Style), whether or not the material was

included in the form of a direct quotation. This applies equally to information from online sources and

other websites. Please note that this instructor does not regard Wikipedia articles as reliable scholarly

resources. Importing online material – or any other material, whether written and published, or from a

podcast, video, etc. –without formal written acknowledgement is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious

offense, and a violation of the Honor Code. Err on the side of caution and cite anything and everything

you use to complete your assignments.

d. **Due dates**: All assignments are due on the date specified by the syllabus. Written assignments

submitted more than 3 days after the due date may be accepted with a 10% penalty. Late discussion

posts will exact a 25% penalty. For all late assignments, please contact your instructor.

**Feedback:** I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades on all on-time submissions within

ten days of the due date.

**Guidelines for Online Discussions:**

Identification: Students - please adhere to the following naming convention for your initial discussion

posts: & quote; [name] - [assignment title] & quote; So, e.g., (“J Henry”– Means of Grace”)

This will help your instructor identify the posts you are responding to when your discussions are graded.

**Content**: Discussion assignments are similar to group or all-class discussions in the classroom context.

While these are notes & quotes; you should still be careful with grammar, spelling,

documentation, and formatting them in your discussion posts and comments. Posts need to have substance in order to count. Short comments like, “I agree,” or “Good work,” will not count toward your week’s assignments. Your posts will advance the discussion of the class.

**Climate**: You are encouraged to remember that the discussion room may be full of many opposing views

on any given topic. Therefore, you are encouraged to view differences of opinion and belief as opportunities to learn from one another. It is at the instructor’s discretion to remove any posts or comments he thinks cross the line.

**General instructions**:

If you are responding to another post, click “reply.”

In your responses, compare, contrast, and/or question another’s postings.

Late discussion posts -- Discussions are part of your interactive learning experience. You receive points

for sharing as well as for interacting with others in the discussion forums. Late initial posts do not

contribute to this process of interactive learning.

**Late Policy:**

Written assignments submitted more than 3 days after the due date may be accepted with a 10% penalty. Late discussion posts will attract a 25% penalty. Therefore, a 25% deduction will be recorded for initial posts that are offered after the closing date of each discussion.

For all late assignments, please contact your instructor.

**Grading:**

Letter-Grade Scale

90—100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60—69% D

0—59% F

**Class Calendar, Topic 1**

**I. On Course Connect Watch Intro Video by Instructor by April 10, 2024.**

**Pre-Class Work:** Forum Discussion-Introductions (**20 minutes Contact Time**)

Use the Course Connect discussion forum to **Introduce yourself to the group by April 12, 2024**. Be sure to include the following: 1. Who are you? 2. Where do you serve? 3. What are your strongest gifts? 4. Read classmates’ intros and respond by **April 14, 2024**. Response to three of your classmates’ introductory posts.

**Week 1: Due Date: April 13, 2024**

*1. Articulate a theological basis for the Wesleyan emphasis on spiritual disciplines and practice*

*them as a* ***means of grace****.*

**Topic: Means of Grace and Habits of the Heart**

Modality: Online, Course Connect – (**1 hour**)

**Instructions:**

Reading assignment: “Opening Ourselves to Grace,” https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/gbod-

assets/generic/Opening\_Ourselves\_to\_Grace.pdf

**Video assignment**: (**51 minutes contact time**) Smith, James K. A. [Wheaton College]. (2016, August 31). “You Are What You Love: Genesis 1:1-2:4.” [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/-xVV4lrOBXI>

**Discussion Forum:**

In the discussion forum labeled **Means of Grace and Habits of the Heart** (inside Course Connect):

1. First, write a short one-sentence definition of the means of grace.

2. List as many of the means of grace as you are able to remember from the readings.

3. Finally, reflecting on the video with Dr. Smith, write a short (**250 word**) reflection on how

your day-to-day habits (and the time you spend in these habits) reflect or fail to reflect your

lived commitment to observe the means of grace as a way of life.

4. End your reflection with ways you would like to adapt or change your spiritual habits and plans

to increase your participation in the Wesleyan means of grace.

**5**. Interact with members of the class. For this first discussion, you will only be graded for your responses.

**Discussion dates: April 12 – April 14, 2024 (.30 minutes)**

**Modality: Date: Synchronous Zoom Class April 15 - 19, 2024** **6:00 -8:00 p.m.**

**Topic 2:** **Spiritual Practices**

**Reading Assignment**: *Soul Feast: review the entire book before class.*

**Video Assignment**: (**52 Minutes**) Foster, R. J. (2011, November 3). “The Sanctuary of the Soul “[Video File]. Retrieved from: https://youtu.be/4R87Hl52fgY

**Instructions**: Come to class prepared to discuss the readings, the video, and the topic, spiritual practices.

**Topic 3:** **Developing a Rhythm of Life and Self-Care**

**Modality: Synchronous Zoom Class April 22, 2024 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Reading Assignment**(s):

 “The Importance of Self- Care for Ministry.” https://www.pulpit.org/the-importance-of-self-

care-for-ministry-leaders/ (**10 minutes)**

(**5 minutes**) Clergy Self-care Strategies for Good Times and Bad.” https://alban.org/archive/clergy-self-care-strategies-for-good-times-and-bad/

(**20 Minutes** **Connect Time**) “UM Rule of Life.” http://gbod-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/kintera-files/covenant-discipleship/2015\_UMRuleOfLife\_Pamphlet.pdf

Video Assignment(s):

(**16 minutes Connect Time**) “The Starving Baker. “[Video File]. Vimeo. https://vimeo.com/31849683.

(**22 Minutes Connect Time**) “The Missing Ingredient in Self-Care, “[Video File]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Eupk56SG76M

Instructions: Come to class prepared to discuss the readings, the videos, and how spiritual practices

contribute to a rhythm or rule of life.

**Weekend Assignment – Friday, April 26 – Sunday, April 28, 2024. *Practice a weekend of unhurried Self-Care.***

**Topic 4 Written Assignment: Conceptualize Sermon Series**

**Modality: Synchronous Zoom Class April 29, 2024 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

Now that you have been immersed in Wesley’s theology of the means of grace and explored a number

of ways that the Christian family observes the spiritual disciplines, it is time to demonstrate how to use

what you know in ministry.

Develop a detailed **outline** for a three-part sermon series on three different means of grace that

introduces the congregation to each action and provides practical ways for members of the

congregation to practice each of the means of grace that you select (including Holy Communion).

Your sermon outlines should show evidence of biblical and theological reflection and should also

evidence Course of Study readings, your personal readings and personal research. Remember to include

appropriate documentation for any materials that are not original.

Submit through Course Connect

Length: **5 pages**

**Due Date: May 4, 2024**

**Modality: Course Connect: Dates April 22 – 26, 2024**

Discussion Topic #1: Discerning the Call to Ministry

Video Assignment: (**21 Minutes Connect Time**} Unlocking Spiritual Discernment - What If You Could See In The Spirit Realm https://youtu.be/KcKnoJwIxZg

**Instructions:**

Begin with a discussion post of **250-400 words** where you will: (**30 minute**  **Connect Time**)

Identify 5 different biblical call narratives from the Old and/or New Testaments; provide

scripture references and a brief synopsis of each.

Describe what these 5 passages suggest about the many ways that God calls us to ministry.

List 2-3 ways that these passages may be used in ministry to support members of your

congregation in their discernment of a call to specialized ministry or pastoral ministry as

vocation.

Read the responses of at least 3 class members.

Engage at least two class members in helpful dialogue about his/her responses.

**Discussion dates: April 22 – 26, 2024 (.30 minutes)**

**Topic 5: The General Rules of the UMC and Small Groups**

**Modality: Synchronous Zoom Class April 29, 2024 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Instructions: Prior to Class Reading Assignment** Read the General Rules of the UMC.

The General Rules of the UMC <https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-general-rules-of-the-methodist-church>

**Modality: Video Assignments**: Watson, Kevin (2016, January 26), & quote; The Wesleyan Band Meeting:  Seven Minute Seminary & quote; [Video File]. Retrieved from: https://youtu.be/9k-xPXH6B2E.

Watson, Kevin (2014, 28 October), & quote; Early Methodist Small Groups:  Seven Minute Seminary & quote; [Video File].

Retrieved from:  https://youtu.be/xBGSa9UnS8E.

**Modality: Course Connect Written Assignment:**

1. Describe: Your initial reaction to John Wesley’s General Rules,

2. Discuss: The challenges that using strict rules like those John Wesley imposed would present to your

existing groups and the potential benefits of using this set of rules or a contemporary adaptation for the 21st century congregation.

3. Share ways that aspects of the General Rules might be incorporated into your small group

ministries.

4. Read the responses of at least 3 of your class members.

5. Engage 2 of your class members in conversation about ways to introduce or reintroduce the General Rules to regular members of your small groups.

**Discussion dates: April 29 – May 3, 2024 (1 hour)**

**Topic 6 Synchronous Zoom Class May 6, 2024 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Focus:** **Stages of Spiritual Formation**

**Reading Assignment**: *Formation in Faith*, review chapters 1—3.

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of authentic relationships? (Being heard, being known and being accepted}

2. Why does Erick Erikson, a developmental theorist, believe caring relationships are important to infants?

(Infants need caring relationships from birth in order to nurture basic trust.)

**Modality Course Connect: Activity May 6 - 10:**

Interview a friend or relative:

1. to learn how they would define “authentic relationship” and…

2. ask where they have found this kind of relationship.

3. How does sharing our life story with another person help create a meaningful relationship?

4. How does the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman reassures us of God’s faithfulness?

5. Explain what the author is implying when she states, “Establishing an authentic relationship involves an invitation and a response.”

**Post your interview findings in summary form in Course Connect Forum. Complete Forum posts by Sunday, May 12, 2024**

Small Group Activity: Be prepared to share your responses with the class.

Form groups of 3 and assess your congregational life by brainstorming answers to the following questions:

1. How do you find Authentic Relationship, Faithful Community, and Deep Meaning in your congregation?

2. Where do you see the need for Authentic Relationship, Faithful Community, and Deep Meaning in your congregation?

3. How can you create Authentic Relationship, Faithful Community, and Deep Meaning in your congregation?

Whole Class discussion on Chapters Two and Three of the Text: *“Formation In Faith, The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples”* Sondra Higgins Matthaei

The instructor will assign each person in the class a topic to present to the class.

Class participants will do number 5 on page 37 and be prepared to share their results with other members of the class.

Curated Reference:

 “What Every Child Should Experience” https://gbod-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/kintera-files/childrens-ministries/Children\_WhatEveryChildShouldExperience\_2015.pdf

**Topic 7 Synchronous Zoom Class May 13, 2024 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

Focus: Small Groups and Discipleship

**Reading Assignment**: *In Search of Wisdom*: review chapters 1-4

Instructions: Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and the role of small groups in discipleship.

**SMALL GROUP PROJECT CONCEPT - Dates: May 13 - 17, 2024**

Topic: **Gifts for Ministry**

Modality: **Course Connect (.20 min.)**

Reading Assignment(s): “Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts.” https://gbod-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/kintera-

images/laity/DiscoveringYourSpiritualGiftsEdited.pptx

 “Spiritual Gifts Inventory.” http://gbod-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/kintera-files/lay-servant-ministries/SPIRITUAL\_GIFTS\_INVENTORY.pdf B.

Complete an online spiritual gifts assessment. (20 minutes Contact Time) (https://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/spiritual-gifts-online-assessment)

Write **a one-page reflection paper** explaining why you agree or disagree with your spiritual assessment. Upload to Course Connect by **May 17, 2024** **(1 Page**)

 MBTI Free Online test <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>

**Curated Reference:**

 “Unwrapping Our Gifts.” https://equippedforeverygoodwork.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/unwrapping-our-gifts.pdf

**Instructions:**

 Take the spiritual gifts inventory provided and score your results.

 Take the online version of the MBTI and score your results. Read the descriptions of your four-

letter type at the end of the test and explore other topics about your personality type.

 Compare results with members of your small group before the small group discussion described

below.

**Small Group Project:**

Prepare a concept design for a Gifts and Temperament Discovery Day for the congregation. Include:

1. A short meditation on the biblical importance of spiritual gifts,

2. Activities to help your members discover their spiritual gifts.

3. Time for discernment of spiritual gifts and temperament.

4. Prayers.

5. Suggestions for helping people discern ways of serving that fit their spiritual gifts and/or basic

temperament.

Write and submit an outline of your plans – one page (bullet-points presentation is acceptable) for each of the previously enumerated foci)

**Submit your concept design through Course Connect. Due Date: May 19, 2024**

**Topic 8: Assessing Existing Congregational Formation Ministries**

**Synchronous Zoom Class May 27, 2024 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Course Connect Discussion Dates:** Discussion Dates: May 27 - May 31, 2024

Topic: Congregational Formation Ministries I

**Reading Assignment**: *Formation in Faith*, review chapters 4-5, appendices

**Review the “**Comprehensive Plan for Teacher Development”

https://gbod-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/Christian\_Education/Comprehensive-Plan-for-

Teacher-Development-for-United-Methodist-Congregations.pdf

*Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and the topic of congregational formation ministries.*

**Modality: Course Connect Written Assignment and Response to Posts**

You will prepare an analysis of the groups that meet regularly as part of your congregation’s ministry.

1. Write a brief description of each group under your congregation’s ministry that includes:

a. the size of the group.

b. how often the group meets.

c. how the group contributes to the discipleship of the members who participate.

2. Compare your notes with those of at least three of your class members.

3. Engage at least two class members in discussion.

Topic: **Congregational Formation Ministries II**

Reading Assignment: *In Search of Wisdom*: review chapters 5-6

**Class Discussion**: Intentional Faith Development

http://gbod.org.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/kintera/entry\_4026/19/Standards10-12-11.pdf

**Final Project: Develop a MAP: Ministry Action Plan to implement a “Congregational Plan for Spiritual Formation and Discipleship Through Small Groups”**

**Due Date: May 31, 2024**

Throughout this course we have looked at personal and corporate spiritual disciplines, the means of grace, the role of small groups in Christian formation, the General Rules of the United Methodist Church, gifts for ministry -- both laity and clergy, and discernment of calling. We have so many of these tools for ministry, yet so many congregations rely upon weekly worship and sparsely attended prayer meetings or Bible studies to carry the load of congregational formation.

The question you will seek to answer in this ministry action plan:

1. How do you plan to lead your congregation in **formation and discipleship** through these (and other) tools for ministry.

During our time together we have looked at existing ministries and small groups meeting in your congregational

setting and evaluated their current roles in spiritual formation.

**To start the process** of developing a MAP we need to ask the questions:

1. “Is what we are presently doing enough to nurture the congregation in the habitual practice of the means of grace

and spiritual disciplines?

2. What is needed to provide opportunities for individuals, families, and groups within the congregation to be spiritually formed as disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?”

3. **Next, what is needed?**

 Begin by taking a sustained look at your congregation. Later, you will use this information to

write an ethnography – (a descriptive study of a particular human society or the process of making such a study.)

o Who are the people? (socio-economic analyses)

o Where are they? (Rural, urban, suburban, center-city)

o What challenges do they face? (Race, gender, one-parent homes, unemployment,

education, etc.)

o How old are they? (Generational breakdown of your membership and your active

membership)

o How would you describe their spiritual development? (Stages of spiritual development)

4. After you have taken a sustained look at your congregation, what do you believe would help people in your ministry context develop a deeper engagement with God, engagement faithfully with their neighbors, and help develop disciples of Jesus Christ for transformation of the world.

**List the needed ministries or opportunities and describe them.**

**Next, develop a church calendar** that will involve ministries in activities that promote formation and discipleship.

In order to do this, you will first need to take a critical look at the existing church calendar.

1. What is already on the church calendar and how do these activities promote formation and discipleship?

2. Are there any activities that should gradually “disappear”?

3. How many activities are reasonable for a given week, month, or year in your ministry context.

Remember that not every formational offering has to be weekly.

*A compelling case can be made for a yearly ministry discernment retreat or a quarterly gathering of*

*men’s or women’s ministries*.

**The next step**:

1. Think about leadership and staffing issues. Resist the urge to lead everything yourself. Even in the smallest of congregations there are gifts for ministry. Describe ways that you will identify and equip leaders (Even in the tiniest of congregations) for the needed ministries of the church or circuit. It bears

mention here that 2-3-4 (or more) church circuits are stronger when they share these offerings

as a group.

2. Look for ministry partnerships that could be formed with nearby congregations. Most of us are

familiar with multi-congregation Lenten studies and services. Expand this thinking to include

large events like ministry discernment retreats, Vacation Bible schools, or opportunities to

discover spiritual gifts – as you have already done in the spiritual gifts group project.

3. Finally, use the United Methodist General Rules to help you develop a church calendar to promote actives and practices to engage the congregation in Christian formation and discipleship.

**Writing Assignment**:

1. Begin your paper with an ethnography, which describes your congregation. (2-3 pages) This

ethnography should include your research into the congregation’s:

a. Geographical location

b. Socio -economic conditions (occupations and salaries)

c. Numerical distribution of age groups

d. Stages of spiritual development

e. Unique challenges

2. Continue with your personal assessment (as leader) of the needed congregational ministries and

activities that will provide opportunities for deepened spiritual formation and deepened

discipleship for this particular group of people. **(3-4 pages)**

3. Conclude with a plan for establishing needed congregational ministries and activities. **(3-4 pages**)

This plan should include:

1. A plan for identifying and developing ministry leaders within your congregation.

2. An assessment of the possibility of local church partnerships.

3. Timelines that are practical for your local church context.

Remember to use the Chicago Manual of Style format and to document appropriately.

Submit your final paper through Course Connect.

**Length: 10 pages Due Date: May 31, 2024**

**Grading:**

Means of Grace Pre—assignment -100 = 10 %

Sermon Series – 100 = 10 %

Discerning the Call to Ministry – 100 = 10 %

The General Rules of the UMC – 100 = 10 %

Small Group Project – 100 = 20 %

Final Paper (Ministry Action Plan – MAP) – 20%

Synchronous Class Participation – 100 = 20 %

Total

Letter-Grade Scale

90—100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60—69% D

0—59% F