COURSE SYLLABUS

SC – SOUL COMPANIONING:  
Introduction to Spiritual Direction

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The spiritual work of soul companioning within the Christian tradition has a rich and long history starting from the pre-biblical times down through the evolving history of the Church to our contemporary times. This course provides a sweeping overview of the Christian "care of souls" (cura animarum) and its resultant expressions in the modern pastoral theology, counseling, and care movement. Attention is given to spiritual friendship, guidance, and mentoring, with special focus on the distinct and time-honored ministry of spiritual direction.

COURSE FOCUS
Utilizing the vast enterprise of soul care as a backdrop, this course is designed as an introduction to the art and ministry of spiritual direction—both classic and contemporary, one-with-one as well as group. Emphases will be on its primary thrust, distinctive approach, and companioning dynamics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
After successfully completing this course, participants will be able to:
1. Communicate a general overview and basic grasp of the broad ministry of spiritual companioning (specifically spiritual friendship, guidance, mentoring, and spiritual direction);
2. Understand and situate the distinct practice of spiritual direction within the broad spectrum of companioning work;
3. Distinguish clearly what spiritual direction really is and what it is not in both conceptual and methodological terms;
4. Integrate and appropriate certain key dynamics of spiritual direction such as contemplative silence, presence, prayer, listening, and discernment in both private and small group experience;
5. Understand the characteristic traits and roles of a good spiritual director as well as a potential spiritual directee;
6. Assess and preliminarily discern one’s sense of calling, readiness, and suitability either as a spiritual director or directee or both.

COURSE FORMAT
SC is a four-week online course that takes place in Moodle (our SSD online platform or learning management system [LMS]). Participation in the course primarily takes place asynchronously (that is, not “live” at the same time); however, on occasion some or all of the class will meet “live” via web conference (dates and times TBD). Each week includes, at a minimum, a combination of readings and/or video viewing (usually on Mondays) and active participation in the threaded (Forum) discussion(s) usually from Tuesday to Friday. More importantly, the course factors in the experiential components of reflective exercises and spiritual practices designed to appropriate the course contents for practical and concrete application to one’s life and ministry.
RESOURCES

TEXTBOOKS

• REQUIRED
The following textbooks are required of all participants and are key to the course engagement:


• HIGHLY RECOMMENDED [HR]

• SUPPLEMENTARY
Edwards, Tilden. Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion: Guide to Tending the Soul.

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES
There will be various supplementary resources for the course in the form of excerpted essays, articles, audio/video clippings, etc. or via web links, which will all be posted and accessible on the Moodle course shell.

COURSE PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS
It cannot be stressed enough: the quality of your online learning experiences in this course will be dependent on timely completion of individual assignments, active participation in the threaded/group discussion, and regular interactions with the instructor. The instructor's primary role is that of facilitator, encouraging you to think about, question, apply, and integrate the course subject matter with the field of spiritual direction practice. You have much to offer others through your interactions with your classmates, particularly through the threaded discussions (Forums).

Participation
Below are guidelines to keep in mind as you consider your participation in the Forums:

• The weekly Forums are not chat rooms. Please use complete sentences and proper grammar in your posts. It's okay to write as you would talk in a face-to-face class setting on occasion, but keep in mind that online discussion is somewhere between oral and written communication in form, tone and style.
• Make regular, thoughtful contributions to class discussions. These contributions will be evaluated on the basis of both quantity and quality. Thus, reflections should demonstrate an understanding of concepts covered in the text as well as their application.
• Take time to read through your responses before posting to make sure that you have written clearly. Moodle has a built-in spell check. Take advantage of it.
• The use of symbols such as emoticons to express emotions is fine (e.g., :-)), but overuse is discouraged (see bullet point 1 above). Use emoticons that are generally recognized.
• Always show respect to everyone.
• The discussion forum is intended for the class audience only and is not to be distributed to people outside of the course, whole or in part.

Attendance Policy
The nature of this course and successful online learning requires that participants engage in all weekly discussion sessions. A student participant is counted as "present" for a particular week when he or she completes the required postings in the weekly Forums, as well as any other required entries (e.g., journal, essays, etc.).

Important Additional Notes Related to the Instructor’s Expectations/Participants' Responsibilities
As you can see and as you might expect, there is quite a lot to be accomplished over a relatively short period of time. It's important to plan in advance and keep pace. However, it should be recognized that most participants taking this course lead hectic lives involving many responsibilities. As such, it's important to prayerfully support one another throughout this undertaking. With that said:

• Submission of late assignments is strongly discouraged. Please regularly check the Course Schedule each day and each week to make sure you are tracking with the scheduled deadlines of readings, audio/video listening/viewing, Forum posts, reflection assignments, and other required activities, both online and offline.
• What if technology prevents meeting a deadline? If you have an assignment due and are having problems making your submission, contact our Moodle Support (help@cqcenterquest.org). They will do their best to troubleshoot the issue at hand and will document your problem.

Communication Methods & Guidelines
There are several ways to communicate within and outside of Moodle. The following are the preferred methods for different purposes:

• Course Announcements – When the instructor needs to communicate something to the entire class, she/he may use the Course Announcements forum. Participants are able to read these announcements in three places: within the Course Announcements forum, in the Latest News block, or in an email message that will be sent to participants each time the instructor posts a new announcement.
• Course Questions Forum: If you have any course-related questions (e.g., you need clarification about an assignment), the best place to ask these is in this forum. All course participants can read and answer questions posted in this forum. Additionally, everyone will receive an email message when a question is asked and when it’s answered.

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS
While the Spiritual Direction courses we offer are not designed for an academic credit, we are utilizing the points system to give an indication as well as some objective evaluation of how each participant is doing and progressing throughout the duration of the course.
NOTE: For this particular introductory course, we will not employ the points system at all. The designated points for each content segment only serve as criteria guidelines to give participants an idea of the weight assigned for each segment.

OVERVIEW OF THE WEEKLY COURSE FORMAT

1. **Reading/Simplebooklet Slides and/or Video Viewing/Threaded [Forum] Discussion and Interaction and Web Calls (40 points)**
   Involving response posts to 1-2 discussion prompt(s) each week as well as 2-3 interactive posts either with assigned small groups or with the entire cohort (per discussion prompt) and synchronous sessions through web calls (via Zoom).

2. **Praxis (40 points)**
   Involving certain prescribed practical/applicational exercises to be done either offline or online as specified (either privately or within assigned small group or both).

3. **Brief Integrated Papers (20 points)**
   Involving synthesized summary reflections based upon the topic and praxis for each week

AMPLIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

1. **Reading/Simplebooklet Slides and/or Video Viewing/Threaded [Forum] Discussion and Interaction (10 points per week; 40 points total)**
   Every week there will be readings of various assigned texts, slides and/or video viewing out of which the forum discussion prompt(s) will be based. Initial response(s) to the discussion prompt(s) are expected to be posted starting every Tues. and no later than 11:59 pm PST on Wed. *(unless otherwise specified)* in order to allow adequate time for interaction with the class (refer to the suggested guidelines below). This means you will have to have some measure of discipline in your reading schedule. Pay close and regular attention to the reading schedule outlined in the **Course Schedule**. To stay on top of all the daily requirements, be sure to check time and again the **Course Schedule** (I can’t overemphasize this habit!) and particularly the Suggested Order for the Week.

   You are expected to respond to at least 2-3 of your classmates’ or instructor’s posts (unless otherwise specifically noted) no later than Fri. 11:59 pm PST (approx. 200-250 words).

   For the posts that you will make in response to the assigned forum discussion prompt (posted on Moodle), try your best to follow these suggested guidelines:

   a. Make sure you have done your homework involving all the pre-assigned readings (including the audio/video listening/viewing) before tackling the assigned discussion prompt(s).
   b. Read the discussion prompt(s) over and over again until you are clear on how to go about responding to it.
   c. Write an entry that is more or less in accordance to the suggested word limit specified per discussion question (usually around 200 words).
   d. Your response to the discussion prompt(s) should reflect your familiarity with the readings and thoughtful engagement with the texts.

   NOTE: The **Forum Discussion Prompts** are posted under the **Activities** section of Moodle.

   There will be three scheduled synchronous (“real time” and “live”) online gatherings via Zoom Web Conference:
   - Week # 1: One-hour informal “Meet & Greet” (Open House) session with everyone.
- Week # 3: One hour (to 1 ½ hour) experience (with designated small group) of silence, presence, listening, prayer, and discernment as well as informal sharing/interaction based upon the participants’ chosen praxis for the week. Detailed instructions and guidelines for this exercise will be posted in Moodle.

- Week # 4: Two-hour “Wrap-Up” session with the entire class facilitated by the instructor(s). Details on the schedule and mechanics will be posted in Moodle.

2. Praxis (40 points total)

Week # 1 – Companioning Inventory: Lectio (8 points)
Based upon the four focal approaches to spiritual companioning covered in class (via readings and simplebooklet slide viewing), reflect upon your own experience of being companioned by someone on your journey over the years. As a preliminary, choose the one from the four focal approaches to companioning (friendship, guidance, mentoring, spiritual direction) that seems to you to have had the most impact either at that time or ever since and reflect on the timing as well as the mode of companionship as you consider its significance. You may journal about this and prepare to share some of your own experience with your small group (during Forum 1).

Week # 2 – Spiritual Direction Experience: Examen (8 points)
Focusing upon your most recent experience of directing someone or being directed by someone, take about a half an hour or so reviewing and reflecting upon such experience of spiritual companionship according to the SD definitions, descriptions, distinctions learned during the week in class (via readings, interactions, etc.). Pay attention to what resonated or connected with you most deeply. Engage your senses and take special note of any feelings/emotions that arise within you. Focus on one particular sensation tied to a particular definition, description, or distinction of SD and try to make sense as to why this has become uppermost or important to you. Use the provided Examen worksheet as your guide in attending to this exercise.

Week # 3 – Spiritual Direction Dynamics: Highlights (12 points)
Based on one or two (or combination) of your chosen SD dynamic, you will deliberately engage in the private practice of it at least twice during the week. Corresponding resources, guidelines and mechanics for this exercise are provided in Moodle (under Resources). Be prepared to share about your experience with your group during your scheduled synchronous videoconference where you also get the chance to engage in some of the dynamics as a group.

Week # 4 – Spiritual Direction: Preliminary Personal Assessment (12 points)
Based upon the assigned readings (including recommended texts) focused on the topic of the week (Characteristics/qualities/roles of spiritual directors/directees including the Philosophy of Companioning vimeo), take about half an hour to reflectively assess and discern either as a spiritual director or directee 1-2 strength areas and 1-2 areas of growth and development and stating your specific course of action to address them.

3. Brief Integration Papers (20 points total)
In general, the essays correspond to the assigned Praxis for each week and are designed to synthesize in your mind via reflective journaling the key themes of the week both conceptually and methodologically (philosophy and practice). Essays for Weeks # 1 & 2 are to be uploaded as a Word doc attachment whereas for Weeks # 3 & 4 they are to be posted directly on the Assignment box. They are due every Friday by midnight (PST - Pacific Standard Time).

Week # 1 – Companioning Inventory: Lectio (3 points)
Using the prescribed Lectio format, you are to submit a one-page (more or less) Companioning Inventory (approximately 400 words) and post it accordingly.

**Week # 2 – Spiritual Direction Experience: Examen (5 points)**
Using the prescribed Examen format, you are to document your reflective review of your own experience of spiritual direction by filling out your worksheet with your integrated insights gathered during the course of engaging in the examen exercise (approximately 400 words).

**Week # 3 – Spiritual Direction Dynamics: Highlights (5 points)**
Based on one or two (or combination) of your chosen SD dynamic (silence, presence, listening, prayer, discernment - utilizing the “Stop/Look/Listen” exercises) practiced during the week (both in private and in small group), write a 500-word integrated summary highlighting your experience (both “success” and struggle) and including a simple plan of action to further cultivate and deepen the chosen practice.

**Week # 4 – Spiritual Direction: Preliminary Personal Assessment (7 points)**
Based upon the personal evaluation and assessment you worked on as your specific praxis for the week, write a final integrated essay (approximately 600-700 words) and post it accordingly.

**NOTE:** For weeks # 1 & 2, there are two PDF files posted under Resources on Moodle that detail the guidelines and instructions for filling out the prescribed worksheets (Lectio and Examen) respectively. Correspondingly, there are also two separate worksheets provided for your use. Just follow the format and structure and post the essays directly to the designated forum. For weeks # 3 & 4, write a draft first on Word doc, save it and then copy and paste the final essay to the Assignment box. Please try and stick to the suggested word limit as much as possible.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (Refer to Weekly Charted Course Schedule)**
Please study the charted Course Schedule carefully. Review, review, review it each day! You need to learn to always plan ahead since the reading may be formidable. Be attentive to when assignments and larger reading assignments are due. You may need to work ahead in some cases.

**COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY**
Dubay, S.M., Thomas. *Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to Grow the Divine Life Within*. Ann Arbor, MI:


