

Course of Study School of Ohio
COS 123 Formation and Discipleship

Fall 2025 September 1 – October 31, 2025

At MTSO September 12 – 13, 2025

Friday hours 3:30 - 6 pm AND 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Saturday hours 8:00 am – 11:00 am AND 1:00 pm – 3:15 pm

On Zoom class October 10 – October 11, 2025

Friday hours 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Saturday hours 9:00 am -11:00 am

Course Instructor: Rev. Dr. Brenda K. Buckwell

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Description of Course

This course grounds the student in the theology and core practices of personal and congregational formation and discipleship.

Course Objectives

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 practice of small groups in the 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.

Textbooks

Required:

Buckwell, Brenda K. *Spiritual Direction and the Metamorphosis of Church*. Nashville, TN: Wesley Foundery Books. 2020. ISBN # 978-1-945935-80-0.

Mulholland, Robert Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2016. ISBN #978-0-8308-4617-7.

Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995, revised 2014. ISBN # 978-0-664-23924.

Supplementary:

Matthaei, Sondra. *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000. ISBN # 0-687-02475—7.

Wimberly, Anne E. Steady and Evelyn L. Parker, Editors. *In Search of Wisdom: Faith*

Formation in the Black Church. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002. ISBN # 0-678-06700-6.

Prechtel, Daniel L. 2012. *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Spiritual Direction for Small Groups*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing. ISBN # 978-0-8192-2772-0.

Course Format

This course involves 20 hours of instructional time (the time traditionally spent in a classroom) not counting time for required readings and completion of assignments. The instruction time is distributed as follows:

14 hours of class meeting via on site or zoom at these times:

At MTSO Friday September 12, 2025

3:30 pm-6:00 pm AND 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm ET

At MTSO Saturday September 13, 2025

8:00 – 11:00 AM ET

1:00 – 3:15 PM ET

On ZOOM Friday October 10, 2025

6:00 – 8:00 PM ET

On ZOOM Saturday October 11, 2025

9:00 – 11:00 AM ET

NOTE: All classes will be discussion and small group oriented. Please come prepared to class having read the material and watched assigned lectures.

6 asynchronous hours utilizing Populi.

20 hours total

ASSIGNMENTS in Preparation for September 12-13, 2025 MTSO campus class.
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- **Prepare all readings** for discussion. Take the online test for readings.
- **After class complete online review test for teaching videos.**

1. **Read Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation***
 - a. Special emphasis on Part One and Part Two. This will assist you in writing your **Personal Spiritual Formation Narrative**.
 - i. Please note how your personality and psychological make up influence your experience of God and teaching the spiritual disciplines.
 - b. Please make notations by highlighting key concepts for small group discussion during our weekend class.
 - c. Complete the Practice at the end of each chapter as your personal devotions.

- d. Please complete the online test for this reading material.
2. **Read Buckwell, *Spiritual Formation and the Metamorphosis of Church*.** This will assist you in writing your **Personal Spiritual Formation Narrative**.
 - a. Special emphasis on the Introduction, Part One and Part Two.
 - i. Consider when in your life you have experienced personal awakening.
 - ii. What spiritual practices anoint your life nourishing the hunger within?
 - iii. How have these experiences led you into a deep communion with God?
 - b. Complete the Leadership Assessment and Pause and Ponder sections as your personal devotions.
 - c. Please make notations by highlighting key concepts for small group discussion during our weekend class.
 - d. Please complete the online test for this reading material.
3. **Read Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life***
 - a. Please make notations by highlighting key concepts for small group discussion during our weekend class.
 - b. Please complete the online test for this reading material.
4. **Review and Study**, the section from Daniel Prechtel, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Spiritual Direction for Small Groups*.
 - a. Scanned and available on the COS 123 course site in Populi – prior to September 1st under “Syllabus” and after September 1st under “Lessons” then under “Lesson Plan.”
 - b. Please make notations by highlighting key concepts for small group discussion during our weekend class.
 - c. Please complete the online test for this reading material.
5. **Read selections** from Anne Steady Wimberly’s *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*.
 - a. Scanned and available on the COS 123 course site in Populi – prior to September 1st under “Syllabus” and after September 1st under “Lessons” then under “Soul Stories.”
 - b. Please make notations by highlighting key concepts for small group discussion during our weekend class.
 - c. Please complete the online test for this reading material.
6. **Write your Personal Spiritual Formation Narrative. (30%) Due Saturday September 13, 2025, by 8:00 am ET. This is a 10-page paper.**
 - a. This is a faith and learning narrative paper which will bring awareness to the student for how your spiritual formation journey and your experience of God influences vocational imagination and calling. The student will further note how your personal spiritual formation journey shapes your approach to teaching/discipling.

- b. Things to consider within this personal narrative. Please do NOT make your paper questions and responses. This is a narrative paper. **These questions listed here are and above under reading assignments for Buckwell and Mulholland are to assist in focus for your description and reflection** on features of your journey of faith.
 - i. Who are key people that have influenced your spiritual formation? How and why did they bear deep influence?
 - ii. What are key places that hold special significance for your spiritual life? What makes it such a holy place for you?
 - iii. What have been the most noteworthy events in your life? How have these life events shaped your faith and vocational imagination?
 - iv. How have spiritual practices contributed to the development of your faith? How do you experience God through these practices?
 - v. Who have your teachers been in the faith? What about them drew you deeper into God's formative heart and vocational calling?
 - vi. What role does teaching and learning play in your calling?
- c. This paper is ten pages in length. Please use 1-inch margins, double space, and 12-point Times New Roman font.
- d. Spelling and grammar will influence the grade of this paper.
- e. If you cite resources in your paper, please have proper citation of sources.
 - i. In body citation format is (Author's last name followed by date of publication, page number) An example of this is (Buckwell 2020, 35).
 - ii. Please include a bibliography for your quoted material.
- f. Submit your final paper on the COS 123 course site in Populi under "Assignments" then under "Personal Narrative of Spiritual Formation."

NOTE: Whenever dealing with the events, people, and significant God-formative encounters of our lives, there is always the potential for stirring up difficult and painful memories. In completing this assignment, you need not disclose such experience – you do not include in your paper more than you feel comfortable sharing. Please maintain integrity of your boundaries. However, please do find ways to highlight significant theological and spiritual themes throughout your experiences.

ASSIGNMENTS in Preparation for October 10-11, 2025 Class Zoom Meetings

- **Prepare for class: view teaching videos and complete readings.** Take the online test for readings and videos. Have response ready for virtual class discussions.

1. **Read Buckwell** *Spiritual Formation and the Metamorphosis of Church*. This will assist with your lesson plan and your Congregational Learning and Formation Plan.
 - a. Special emphasis on Part Two, Part Three, Part Four, and Part Five.
 - i. Consider what stage of awakening the congregation you participate in or work with is living. What is the invitation from God for that stage of awakening?
 - ii. What is the distinction between information and formation? How are both necessary for discipleship and formation?
 - iii. As you read, please make notes of what and how you will plan a lesson plan and a congregation learning and formational plan.
 - b. Complete the Leadership Assessment, Congregational Examen, and Pause and Ponder sections as your personal devotions.
 - c. Please make notations by highlighting key concepts for small group discussion during our weekend class
 - d. Please complete the online test for this reading material and lectures.
2. **Read Thompson**, *Soul Feast*. This will assist you with both your lesson plan and the Congregational Learning and Formational Plan.
3. **Review and Study** the section from Daniel Prechtel, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Spiritual Direction for Small Groups*. This will assist with your lesson plan.
 - a. Scanned and available on the COS 123 course site in Populi – prior to September 1st under “Syllabus” and after September 1st under “Lessons” then under “Lesson Plan.”
 - b. Please make notations by highlighting key concepts for small group discussion during our weekend class.
 - c. Please complete the online test for this reading material and lectures.
4. **Lesson Plan and Teaching Experience (30%)**
 - a. **Final assessment of leadership and teaching experience Due Friday October 10th at 8:00 am ET.**
 - b. The student will create a teaching plan. The teaching plan will include both informational and formational aspects. A draft of the lesson plan must be approved after the first weekend class before the student teaches it to a small group. This draft is at least four pages long in outline format. This assignment is based on guidelines from weekend one teaching and the Prechtel material.
 - i. Informational aspects of the lesson plan include but are not limited to:
 - Exegetical research on Scripture for Bible study. The text is the biblical foundation for the spiritual discipline foundation you will teach.

- Research on the spiritual discipline you will teach. The spiritual discipline is the student's choice from the Thompson or Buckwell book.
 - The small group experience is planned for one hour. Please provide date, time, and location of your teaching experience.
 - Please indicate who the participants are by demographic and how many you plan for in the group.
 - ii. Formational aspects of the lesson plan include:
 - The process of how you will facilitate the spiritual discipline.
 - Assessment of why this discipline is helpful for this small group.
 - c. Once the plan is approved, the student will teach this lesson to a small group within the congregation. (The definition of "congregation" maybe a group of friends, family, a church, or small group)
 - i. The informational portion of the **final** plan will be a comparison and contrast of what actually occurred to what was planned.
 - Did all participants attend? If not, why not?
 - Were there pieces of the information plan that was left out?
 - Anything added to the plan?
 - What worked well.
 - What did not work.
 - What do you name as success of this experience?
 - What would you improve upon next time?
 - ii. Formational aspects of the **final** assessment include but are not limited to:
 - Assessment of the student's leadership.
 - Articulation of how leader and participants experienced God's presence.
 - What was the experience like for the small group as a whole and for individuals?
 - When you evaluated the teaching process with the participants once the lesson was complete, what did you discover?
 - d. Submit your lesson plan draft and final paper on the COS 123 course site in Populi under "Assignments" then under "Lesson Plan." Please use the same portal for both due dates.
 - e. Please proofread your paper. Spelling and Grammar will impact grading.
5. **Congregational Learning and Formation Plan (30%) Due Saturday October 18th at 8:00 am ET.**
- a. Create a learning and formation plan for your congregation. The development of this plan will draw upon the Buckwell, Thompson textbooks and the Steady

Wimberly and the Prechtel material. You may use other research material from the attached bibliography. All materials you use for this paper are to be properly cited with in body citation or footnotes. A bibliography is also required. Please use the Mulholland definition for spiritual formation as the foundation for this Congregational Learning and Formation Plan. This assignment integrates class learnings and provides a usable plan for you to implement in the congregation.

- b. Submit your congregational plan on the COS 123 course site in Populi under "Assignments" then under "Congregational Learning and Formation Plan.
- c. Please proofread your paper. Spelling and Grammar will impact grading.
- d. **This is a 10-page paper.**

Class Participation (10%)

Zoom Etiquette

1. Please have a camera-enabled computer.
2. Arrive to class 5 minutes before the start time for a technological sound check.
3. Attendance is expected at all classes.
4. Please wear proper attire as if in a face-to-face class.
5. Please come prepared for each class with written assignments and notes from your readings.
6. Please complete the reading and for the zoom weekend lecture summary tests on Populi.

Evaluation and Percentages

Personal spiritual formation narrative	30%
Lesson plan and Teaching Experience	30%
Congregational Learning and Formation Plan	30%
Class participation, online tests for readings and lectures, and small group discussions	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Academic Honor

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student. Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving, or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving, or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work with the work of another whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following sanctions: (1) warning; (2) failing grade for the assignment and/or course; (3) probation; (4) suspension; (5) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio. In severe or repeat cases (regardless of the sanctions) a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.

COSSO Attendance Policy

National policy from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) states that a student is expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing 20% or more of the class sessions shall not receive credit for the class. In the event of extenuating circumstances which require the student to miss up to 20% of the synchronous course time (whether in-person or on Zoom), the student should contact both the instructor and the Director prior to the start of the class to get approval and discuss make-up work. (Extenuating circumstances include emergency situations, illness, and dire circumstances, for example. Students are to provide back-up coverage at the local church while attending COS classes.)

Students attending online are required to show their faces the entire class time in order to be considered present, unless internet bandwidth issues or emergency circumstances (e.g., a power outage) necessitate turning off one's camera or calling in to class by phone. You are expected to attend class as you would in a face-to-face classroom (e.g., not driving). During asynchronous class time, faculty may monitor time used in posting and responding to colleagues to track your participation.

- **CANCELLATION AND WITHDRAWAL:** Student must notify the COSSO office if they will be unable to attend class for which they are registered. Although there is no penalty when withdrawing more than two weeks in advance of the beginning of a term, registration fees are nontransferable and nonrefundable and unpaid registration fees are still due if withdrawing past the registration deadline. A \$50.00 late withdrawal fee is charged for all withdrawals within two weeks of the start of a class. All tuition and housing payments are applied to a future term.

Students withdrawing after the start of a term will be assigned a grade of AW (Administrative Withdrawal) and will be responsible for the full \$300.00 tuition amount. Any annual conference scholarship applied to the student billing record becomes the student's responsibility and is due by the end of the term. Housing payment is non-refundable.

- **NO SHOWS:** Except in cases of immediate and dire emergencies, if a student misses any class without notifying the COSSO office, tuition and housing fees are due immediately, a \$50.00 no show fee is charged, and the student will receive an "F" in the class.

Course Calendar

Instruction Lectures:

1. Wesley Theology and the practice of Spiritual Disciplines
 2. Laying the Foundation of Formation
 3. Stages of Awakening
 4. "Integration Spiritual Disciplines and Prayer in Contextual Ministry"
- Weekend 1, Sept 2025**

Online Instruction Lectures: Please take notes on your viewing and come to class prepared for discussion of the lectures. Please submit the online review of each lecture and readings.

5. "Companions for the Journey"
 6. The Heartbeat of Leadership
- View for Weekend 2 Oct 2025**

Weekend classes

September 12-13, 2025

- **Prepare all readings** for discussion. Take the online test for readings.
- **Personal Spiritual Formation Narrative Due Saturday the 13th at 8:00 am.**
- **After class complete online review test for teaching videos.**

Friday Afternoon September 13th

- Prayer Experience *Lectio Divina*
- Wesley's theology and the practice of spiritual disciplines.
 - General Rules
- Practice of Covenant groups.
 - Creating covenant
 - Committing to the covenant
 - Sharing stories through active listening

Friday Evening September 13th

- Prayer Experience *Contemplative Listening – Silence – Centering Prayer – Mantra*

- “Laying the Foundation” The Process of Spiritual Formation
 - Information and Formation
 - Book discussion – Mulholland
- “Four Stages of Awakening”
- Spiritual Formation Narratives – Practice of Covenant Groups.
 - Please bring a copy of your Personal Spiritual Formation Narrative to assist in your sharing of how the process of spiritual formation interfaces with the student’s journey.
 - Stages of Faith

Saturday Morning September 13th

- Prayer Experience *Contemplative Listening – Silence – Centering Prayer – Mantra*
- Discussion and practice of spiritual disciplines
 - Book Discussion – Thompson
 - Lecture - Wesley Formation and Discipleship Making
 - Vocational Calling and the spiritual disciplines
- Lesson planning for spiritual formation small group
 - Review of Daniel Prechtel and Steady Wimberly material
- Covenant Group practice
 - Personal spiritual disciplines
 - Vocational calling

Saturday Afternoon September 13th

- Prayer Experience – *Breath Prayer, Contemplative Walking*
- “Integration Spiritual Disciplines and Prayer in Contextual Ministry”
- Context for formation – individual and congregational (cultural, values, and historical influence)
 - Review readings from Mulholland personality and psychology
 - Multiculturalism
- Collective Formation – congregations and the spiritual disciplines
 - *Lectio Divina*
 - Discerning Congregational Call - Vision casting, mission, and implementation from Scripture
- Covenant Group

Weekend Two October 10-11, 2025

- **Prepare for class: view teaching videos and complete readings.** Take the online test for readings and videos. Have response ready for virtual class discussions.

Friday Evening October 10

- “Companions for the Journey”
- Tools for Training the Heart –Congregational implementation of corporate spiritual formation.
 - Worship
 - Hospitality - “Hospitality Beyond the Box”
 - Buckwell, Part Three
- The Heartbeat of Leadership
 - Prayer experience
 - Daily Examen
 - The Lord’s Prayer Examen
- Covenant Groups

Saturday Morning October 11, 2025

- Congregation Learning and Formational Plan
- Covenant Groups
- Contemporary Spiritual Disciplines
 - *Visio Divina*
 - *Audio Divina*
 - *Meditative Movement*
 - *Creative Arts Prayer*
- Where to go from here?
 - Rule of Life
 - Resources

Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

1. Consider a silent prayer retreat.
2. Participate in a small group for prayer.
3. Continue to read resources on prayer and spiritual traditions of prayer.
4. Meet regularly with a Spiritual Director. To find a spiritual director go to Spiritual Directors International at www.sdiworld.org or www.livingstreamsflowingwater.com
5. Take one hour a day for prayer, one Sabbath Day a month for prayer, and one Sabbath Week a year for retreat with a praying community.

Selected Bibliography or References

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Blythe, Teresa A. 2006, *50 Ways to Pray: Practices from Many Traditions and Times*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

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