

Forming the Ministering Person

Course descriptions and scheduling are subject to change by administrative decision. See course offerings booklet for current offerings. Some courses will be offered on a two- or three-year rotation.

Formation Studies (FS)

FS 501 Formation in God's Story I (3 SH)

Formation in God's Story I is the first in a series of formation classes, each of which offers a different focus as students attend to their personal, spiritual, and ministry formation while in seminary. This basic course provides time and space for students to pay prayerful attention to their formational journey through listening to their life narrative from birth until the present. Along with this picture of story-listening they will also locate their personal story in the larger picture of God's story as recorded in scripture. Through reading, meditation, and biblical story-telling, they will internalize the flow of God's salvation story and attend to how God's story speaks to their own. Interwoven with these practices, they will also discern and reflect on God's presence and action in their life, meeting in guided small group sessions for listening and soul care.

FS 502 Formation in God's Story II (3 SH)

Formation in God's Story II continues the exploration of and engagement with the biblical story. Students will engage in the practice of spiritual disciplines, develop a rhythm and rule of life that can bring a sense of wholeness and balance to the various parts of their life. They will continue to participate in the same small groups as they attend to their spiritual formation in the context of God's story. Guidance will be offered as they develop a life purpose statement and discern vocational goals that give shape to the learning process and selection of a ministry track for the remainder of their seminary studies.

FS 521 Introduction to Spiritual Guidance (2 SH)

Grounded in the understanding that God in Jesus Christ is inviting us to be reconciled—to God, to ourselves, to each other, and to God's creation—this course is designed to offer learning in three areas: first, a biblical foundation and a historical overview of spiritual guidance; second, developing an understanding of spiritual discernment—the intentional process of paying attention to God's presence and activity in our own lives and the lives of others; and third, learning the practice of spiritual direction through experience of group and one-on-one soul care.

FS 532 Spiritual Formation for Congregational Discernment (2 SH)

The kingdom of God—as seen within the biblical text and especially within the life and practice of Jesus—will offer us a graced place to stand as we discern what we bring to the spiritual discipline and art of discernment within congregational life and practice. Lectures, discussions, and prayerful reflection will assist us in discerning our root systems, our understandings of God, how we recognize God's voice, how we discern gifts and callings, the climate for decision-making, how we reflect on our discerning, and how we live in faithful response to the gospel in all of life—within and beyond the congregation in this post-modern age.

FS 601 Formation in Ministry I (Field Education) (3 SH)

FS 602 Formation in Ministry II (Field Education) (3 SH)

These courses require involvement in ministry under supervision and processing emerging issues in a weekly seminar. The action/reflection method of learning is used to relate the ministry activity and the classroom seminars. Case studies are used to help integrate theology and practice. Students are evaluated in the various acts of ministry. Attention is given to their vocational direction. Advanced arrangements for a ministry practicum should be made prior to the beginning of the class in consultation with the Director of Field Education. For more information see the Mentored Ministry section of the catalog.

FS 622/4 Spiritual Direction Seminar and Practicum (2 SH)

This course offers guidance and experiential learning for the ministry of spiritual direction. Specific attention is paid to the spiritual journey, and to the task of spiritual discernment in companioning persons as they reflect on their own experience in light of who they are called to become and what they are called to in lifelong obedience to the gospel. The Practicum offers supervised training in the ministry and art of spiritual guidance through practicing spiritual direction and peer group reflection.

FS 701 Formation in Missional Leadership I (2 SH)

FS 702 Formation in Missional Leadership II (2 SH)

This course serves as a two-semester long capstone experience for all Master of Divinity students. In the course students will: 1) continue and deepen the formational work begun in the earlier formation courses (Formation in God's Story and Formation in Ministry); 2) participate in direct assessment experiences related to the four guiding principles of the curriculum (wise interpretation, mature practice, discerning communication, and transformational leadership); 3) identify and embrace a missional understanding of leadership, and 4) focus on the transitional dynamics associated with finishing a seminary course of study and engaging a new context for life and ministry.

FS 722 Advanced Spiritual Direction (1 SH)

A directed study giving opportunity for students to develop their gifts and skills in the ministry of giving spiritual direction—in one-on-one or group /congregational settings. Readings and reflection, practice of giving spiritual direction, writing and reflection of verbatim, and meeting for supervision are required components of the course. Prerequisites: Introduction to Spiritual Guidance, Spiritual Formation for Congregational Discernment, Spiritual Direction Seminar and Practicum I and II.

Summer Institute for Spiritual Formation

The following courses are run every summer during SISF

FS 543 Spiritual Guidance in Life & Practice (1 SH)

This course is designed to offer learning in three areas: a Biblical Foundation and Historical overview of spiritual formation; an understanding of spiritual discernment; and learning the practice of spiritual guidance.

FS 613 Home Based Practicum (1 SH)

Students engage in 50 hours of supervised practice in providing spiritual direction or formation in their home area between August and May. Students will receive individual guidance from faculty based on their project.

FS 663 Spiritual Direction Peer Group (1 SH)

This class offers guidance for in-depth listening, reflection, spiritual discernment, and discovery in our journey as emerging spiritual directors.

The following two groups of courses have one running each year on a rotating basis:

FS 621 Journey of the Soul

This course offers practical guidance as we trace stages of spiritual growth and awareness (journey of the soul), while attending to spiritual practice and discernment of God's movement within us. We will also be attentive to discerning God's presence and activity in the lives of persons we companion, as well as caring for the congregation across the formational journey.

FS 622 Seasons of Impasse

In this course we will pay attention to the formational journey and stages of spiritual development, with an intentional focus on the experience of wilderness, with an awareness of the "dark night" or seasons of impasse". The questions we will explore are: How do we companion others as they encounter and embrace the profound and transformative work of God in impasse or wilderness experiences? What are the implications for the ministry of spiritual guidance during such periods of life - for the individual and the congregation? Lectures, guided readings, reflections on life experiences, and issues arising out of the practice of spiritual guidance provide the setting for mutual learning.

FS 563 Worship I - Spiritually Formative Worship (2 SH)

The course helps students learn how to reflect on and create worship that is intentionally spiritually formative in congregations. We will think together about worship theology, liturgy, communal spiritual formation, the narrative nature of life, reading a congregational context, and tools for evaluating and reflecting on worship. We will also learn practical skills for designing and leading worship and practically using them.

FS 683 Worship II: Inter-generational Worship (2 SH)

FS 693 Worship III: Prayer Practices in Worship (2 SH)

This course will help students (re)engage corporate and individual innovative prayer practices rooted in tradition. Participants will develop their own theology of prayer and worship as they explore expression of prayer in the context of the 21st century North American church.

The following courses are arranged with the instructor of record for SISF:

FS 623 Spiritual Direction I: Topics (2 SH)

FS 624 Spiritual Direction Practicum (1 SH)