

Doctor of Ministry
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
DMIN 740 Foundations of Spiritual Direction
August 11-15, 2025

Course Instructor

Dr. Amy Oden

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Course Description

This course is designed for those who are interested in becoming spiritual directors. It seeks to introduce participants to the art of spiritual direction and to assist them in developing practical skills for this ministry. Participants will consider various approaches to spiritual direction, the nature and purpose of spiritual direction, its historical roots, and some dynamics of the process of direction. Participants will also have the opportunity to discern their own call to the ministry of spiritual direction.

Course Objectives:

- To become familiar with roots, traditions, and various models of spiritual direction
- To explore the nature and purpose of spiritual direction
- To reflect on the cultural and social contexts of spiritual direction
- To consider theological and anthropological assumptions underlying the practice of spiritual direction
- To reflect upon the roles of prayer and desire in the spiritual direction conversation
- To become responsive listeners and engage in the practice of spiritual direction
- To consider obstacles to life in the Spirit and various forms of desolation

Required Textbooks

1. Bryant-Johnson, Sherry, Rosalie Norman-McNaney and Therese Taylor-Stinson, *Embodied Spirits: Stories of Spiritual Directors of Color*. Morehouse Publishing, 2014. (see reading instructions on p. 3)
2. Pickering, Sue. *Spiritual Direction: A Practical Introduction*. Canterbury Press, 2008.
3. Select and read 1 of the 4 below:
Barry, William A. and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, revised and updated. HarperOne, 2009.
or
Guenther, Margaret. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*. Cowley Publications, 1992.
or
Mabry, John R. *Noticing the Divine: An Introduction to Interfaith Spiritual Guidance*. Morehouse Publishing, 2006.
or
Peacock, Barbara L. *Soul Care in African American Practice*. IVP, 2020.

Required Chapters and Articles

Burghardt, Walter. "Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real." In *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader*. Ed. George W. Traub, Loyola Press, 2008.

Nolasco, Rolf. "Queering Identity," chapter 1 in *God's Beloved Queer: Identity, Spirituality and Practice*. Wipf & Stock, 2019.

_____. "Imitatio Christi," chapter 4 in *God's Beloved Queer: Identity, Spirituality and Practice*. Wipf & Stock, 2019.

Ruffing, Janet K. "Typological History of Spiritual Direction." In *To Tell the Sacred Tale: Spiritual Direction and Narrative*. Paulist Press, 2011.

Course Requirements

Read by August 11

- Read at least the first three (3) chapters of Pickering, *Spiritual Direction* (if possible, no penalty if you add the course late and have not read this).

Read by September 5, 2025:

- Pickering, *Spiritual Direction*: read chapters 4-6 and Conclusion.
- Bryant-Johnson, *Embodied Spirits*: select 3 chapters (feel free to read all).
- Your selected book (either Barry and Connelly, Guenther, Mabry or Peacock): read all.
- Required articles/chapters: read Burghardt, Nolasco, Ruffing

3 Papers due September 5, 2025 (we will discuss these papers during our August class session):

Paper 1 What is spiritual direction?

After reading Pickering, chapter 1, write a paper responding to these questions:

- a. Reflect on this quotation and then write in 1-2 pages your response to it: "The real 'director' is God the Holy Spirit, who initiates and inspires the directee's deepening relationship with the Trinity, with his or her own self, with other people, and with the realities of life in the global village of the twenty-first century." (Pickering, p. 4)
- b. Reflecting on your experience of spiritual direction (whether formal or informal), how has this experience affected your understanding of God, of prayer and of your ministry. (1-2 pages)

Paper 2 Images of God in Spiritual Direction.

In conversation with Pickering, chapter 2, "Listening to God," address these four tasks (A, B, C, D). 5-6 pages.

- A. Identify your current, core metaphors for God.

- B. Reflect on your image of God and salvation.
- C. Reflect on your image of God and suffering.
- D. What are some of the ways you most naturally listen for God?

Paper 3 Identify take-aways from your reading of either Barry and Connelly, Guenther, Mabry or Peacock. After selecting and reading one book from list of four, write a one-page paper using this format:

- a. 1 key take-away in your own words in 1 sentence
- b. Quotation from the book to illustrate this take-away
- c. Page citation for the quotation
- d. Repeat steps a, b and c three more times for a total of four (4) take-aways.

Course Requirements During August Class

1. Class attendance each day. Class will meet 9am-12pm CST and 1-4pm Monday through Friday, August 11-15. Your presence is essential to our learning in this class. You bring experiences and gifts that contribute to course content and enhance the learning of all. Absences for any number of hours will reduce your grade in the course. Significant absence (more than 3 hours) will jeopardize your passing this course.
2. Participate in small group exercises, dyads and triads in class.

Specifications for All Papers. Papers should be in Word format (.doc or .docx), double-spaced, 12 point font, with proper grammar and spelling. All quotations must be cited (Turabian or MLA) to avoid plagiarism. Use inclusive and expansive language. Strong papers will pay attention to the assigned questions and format for each paper, demonstrate careful reading, stay focused, and be organized and clear. Late papers will be dropped one letter grade for each day late.

Final Grades are calculated as follows:

75% Papers 1-3 (25% each)

25% Class Listening, Speaking and Participation

100% Total

Recommended Texts and Articles

Adesanya, Idena Pearl, ed. *Kaleidoscope: Broadening the Palette in the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Church Publishing, 2019.

Barry, William A. "God's Love Is Not Utilitarian." *Review for Religious* November-December, 1987.

Edwards, Tilden. "Immediate Givenness to God in the Spiritual Direction Relationship," *Presence* Vol. 1, no. 2, 1995, pp. 5-12.

Guenther, Margaret. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*. Cowley Publications, 1992.

Hart, Thomas, "Toward a Healthy Spirituality: Ten Guiding Principles." In *Hidden Spring: The Spiritual Dimension of Therapy*. Fortress Press, 2002.

Lee, Cindy. *Our Unforming: De-Westernizing Spiritual Formation*. Fortress Press, 2022.

Miller, Wendy. *Jesus our Spiritual Director*. Upper Room Books, 2004.

Oden, Amy. *Right Here, Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness*. Abingdon, 2017.

O'Hare, Brieger. "Opening to Love: A Paradigm for Growth in Relationship with God," *Presence* Vol. 10, no. 2, June 2004, pp. 27-36.

Peacock, Barbara L. *Soul Care in African American Practice*. IVP, 2020.

Scofield, Mary Ann. "Waiting on God: Staying with Movements of God," chapter 5 in *Sacred Is the Call: Formation and Transformation in Spiritual Direction Programs*. Suzanne Buckley, ed., Crossroad Publishing, 2005.

Smith, Luther E. "The Soul is 'We'," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*, 2017.

Vest, Norvene, editor. *Tending the Holy: Spiritual Direction Across Traditions*. Morehouse Publishing, 2003.