

SF5105-1: CHURCH-RESIDENCY SPIRITUAL FORMATION SYLLABUS

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29 ESV)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The mission of the Spiritual Formation Program at DTS is *helping servant-leaders pursue Christlikeness*. This two-semester course is designed for students who are participating in a church-based residency program. They will meet in-person with a small group of other church-residency students. SF leaders will be provided by the church residency director.

This course has four primary goals achieved through the following four modules: Identity, Community, Integrity and Fidelity. In the first semester, this course challenges students through the *Life Inventory* exercises to grasp more fully the reality of their identity in Christ. Second, through the *Life Story* exercises this course challenges students to discover the triune God's authorship in their lives—the way in which God has formed them through various experiences and relationships. In the second semester, this course challenges students to examine the personal and corporate implications of sin and grace in their lives through the *Life Change* exercises. Through the *Life Vision* exercises this course challenges students to live a life of faithfulness by implementing their divine design in building up the Body of Christ and witnessing to a lost world. This last module helps focus the remainder of the students' academic experience by providing an opportunity to explore how they might serve the Lord Jesus Christ for a lifetime of effective ministry.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. **Cognitive:** By the end of this semester, the student will:

Identity

Gain greater insight into their corporate identity in Christ; gain greater insight into their unique identity in Christ; understand their identity in relation to God, the body of Christ, and the world; honestly appraise their beliefs, practices, and virtues,

Community

Reflect on the various experiences and relationships in their life; notice God's presence and activity in their life; discern particularly formative experiences and relationships in their life story; identify themes in their life story,

B. **Affective:** By the end of this semester, the student will:

Identity

Appreciate the corporate aspect of being in Christ; appreciate their unique makeup in Christ; appreciate the uniqueness of their Spiritual Formation group; value the practice of periodic self-examination; desire growth in their relationship with God and in their Spiritual life,

Community

Celebrate the unique and faithful way in which God has worked in their life; value the process of discerning God's unique formative work in their life; appreciate the importance of presence, trust, and authenticity in relationships; desire to increasingly respond to God's formative work in their life,

C. **Behavioral:** By the end of this semester, the student will:

Identity

Honestly engage with and discuss the various *Identity* topics; create a personal position paper (or creative project) on the theological foundations of identity; share their position paper (or project) with their Spiritual Formation group; share selected topics with their group,

Community

Honestly engage with and discuss the various *Life Story* topics; write a thoughtful and creative presentation of their *Life Story*; authentically share their *Life Story* with their Spiritual Formation group; share selected topics with their group,

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The selection of textbooks does not necessarily imply the professor's endorsement of the views of the authors. Textbooks are selected for their perceived value in helping meet the course goals and objectives. As graduate students you are expected to read and interact with texts critically and learn from both those with whom you agree and those with whom you do not.

A. Required

SF100 Spiritual Formation Curriculum: Identity, Community, Integrity, and Fidelity. This workbook will be provided for each residency student.

B. Suggested

General Spiritual Formation

Burns, J. Lanier. *Pride and Humility at War: A Biblical Perspective*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018.

Greenman, Jeffrey P. and George Kalantzis, eds. *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.

Jones, Barry. *Dwell: Life with God for the World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014.

Mulholland Jr., M. Robert. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1993.

Pettit, Paul, ed. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008.

Schaeffer, Francis A., and James W. Sire. *The Mark of the Christian*. 2nd edition. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006.

Smith, James K. A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Cultural liturgies, v. 1. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009.

Smith, James K. A. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2016.

Wilhoit, James C. *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

Identity

Bridges, Jerry. *Who Am I?: Identity in Christ*. Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2012.

Highfield, Ron. *God, Freedom, and Human Dignity: Embracing a God-Centered Identity in a Me-Centered Culture*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.

Community

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. New York: HarperCollins, 1954.

Jordan, Merle R. *Reclaiming Your Story: Family History and Spiritual Growth*. 1st ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

1. **Curriculum Weekly Sessions:** Students are expected to carefully read and thoughtfully reflect on the weekly sessions of the course curriculum.
2. **Foundations of Spiritual Formation Readings (Optional):** Students are encouraged to read the following from Pettit's book, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*:
 - Foreword
 - Introduction
 - Chapter 1: Introducing Spiritual Formation
 - Chapter 8: Leadership and Spiritual Formation
 - Chapter 10: Life Story and Spiritual Formation
3. **Memorization (Optional):** Students are encouraged to memorize Philippians 2:1-11. Once memorized, they can recite it to their group, spouse, or friend.

B. Written Assignments

1. **DISC Personality Assessment:** Students are expected to complete an online personality assessment per the Course Lectures and Assignment Schedule (below). Details and instructions will be provided via DTS Online.
2. **Identity Foundations Position Paper:** Students are expected to write a **3-4 page** paper on the theological and biblical foundations of identity, with an emphasis on the personal and corporate implications of what it means to be "in Christ." Students will present it to their Spiritual Formation group.

This paper is a biblical theology with a very personal slant. In addition to (1) what it means to be "in Christ" both corporately and individually, it needs to include elements such as (2) places other than Christ where the student is tempted to put his/her identity, (3) "false identities" the student tries to present to others, and (4) areas where he/she has had victory in identity issues.

Creative Option: For students whose learning style benefits from creative projects, a second option for this assignment is available. It consists of two parts, both of which must be completed to receive credit.

1. Complete a 2-page paper as described above.
2. Complete a creative project to elaborate on the meaning of being “in Christ” both corporately and individually. Some creative examples might include: write and perform a song, write a short story or poem, create an art project, photography, or other medium of choice. This project will need to be shared with and explained to the group.
3. **Life Story Overview:** According to the guidelines in the course curriculum, students are expected to write and present their personal *Life Story* to their Spiritual Formation group.

C. Attendance and Participation

1. **Videos:** Students are expected to watch all required videos included in course content (available at DTS Online [i.e., Canvas]).
2. **Attendance at all scheduled events and group agreed-upon retreats and outings is required.** All Spiritual Formation groups will determine a group agreed-upon method of communicating absences with their leader. Please see Class Participation and Absences under Course Policies for additional information (below).

Please Note: Due to the nature of building community, **please miss no more than two group times per semester.** More than two absences in any particular semester will result in failure to receive credit on your transcript for this course and failure to progress with your SF group.

3. **Spiritual Formation Staff Guide:** Each church-residency SF group and its leader will be assigned an SF Staff Guide for the duration of this course. The staff guide will serve as their contact for the course, a grader, and help with any student-group issues that may arise.

V. COURSE POLICIES

- A. **Grading:** Credit for this course is a non-academic credit (CR) required on student transcripts. Credit or No-Credit designation will be determined by the SF Leader based on satisfactory completion of all course requirements.
- B. **DTS Online Education (<http://online.dts.edu>):** Dallas Theological Seminary’s Online Education website (a.k.a. Canvas) provides content through video, slides, and transcripts. It is a custom learning environment where students and faculty engage in theological content, biblical assignments, and community interaction. To login to the DTS Online Education website go to: online.dts.edu. Courses are structured in units (usually 1 to 2 weeks in length) with activities that include readings, reflections, and submissions.

- C. **Language and Style:** All written assignments should strive for gender-inclusive language, as well as display an awareness of potential unconscious bias toward fellow image-bearers. As a gospel-shaped, gospel-centered learning community, we have compelling reasons to think, write and speak in a way that is inclusive. Consider using “humans,” “persons,” “humanity,” or “humankind,” instead of “man” or “men” when referring to human beings in general. Consider alternating between the use of “he” and “she” as generic pronouns or substituting the use of the plural (“they,” “them,” or “their”) when appropriate.

VI. COURSE LECTURES & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

UNIT/DATE	SESSION TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<i>Beginning of Fall Semester</i>		
August 2024	Before Semester Begins	Communicate with your Residency Director to discuss course, semester plans, and opening retreat. Canvas (DTS Online) course opens early August
Identity: “Who am I?”		
Week 1: 8/26/24—8/30/24	Introduction to SF at DTS	Download and read the syllabus from Canvas. Receive SF curriculum workbook from DTS. Watch “Welcome to SF” video. Read Foreword, Preface in Identity curriculum.
	Introduction to Identity	Watch “Introduction to Identity” video and complete Canvas assignments. Read Session1 and complete Reflection Questions. Discuss your hopes and expectations for your time in SF with your group. Together, create your SF Group Covenant.
Week 2: 9/3/24—9/6/24 Labor Day: September 2, 2024	Image of God	Read Session 2 and complete Reflection Questions. (Optional) Read Chapter 1 of <i>Foundations of Spiritual Formation</i>.
	Design	Read Session 3, complete Reflection Questions and Life Inventory Exercise 1. (Optional) Read Chapter 8 of <i>Foundations of Spiritual Formation</i>.
Week 3: 9/9/24—9/13/24	Heritage	Read Session 4, complete Reflection Questions and Life Inventory Exercise 2.
Week 4: 9/16/24—9/20/24	Our Identity in Christ	Read Session 5 and complete Reflection Questions.

	Belief	Read Session 6, complete Reflection Questions and Life Inventory Exercise 3.
Week 5: 9/23/24—9/27/23	Practice	Read Session 7, complete Reflection Questions and Life Inventory Exercise 4.
	Virtue	Read Session 8, complete Reflection Questions and Life Inventory Exercise 5.
Week 6: 9/30/24—10/4/24	Identity Foundations Project	Read Sessions 9 and 10, complete Reflection Questions and Life Inventory Exercise 6. Share Identity Foundations Paper/Project with your group.
Community: “Who are we?”		
Week 7: 10/7/24—10/11/24	Introduction to Community	Watch “Introduction to Community”. Read Session 1 and complete Reflection Questions.
	God’s Authorship	Read Session 2, complete Reflection Questions and Life Story Exercise 1.
Week 8: 10/14/24—10/18/24	Experiences and Relationships	Read Session 3, complete Reflection Questions and Life Story Exercise 2.
Week 9: 10/21/24—10/25/24	Formative Elements and Themes	Read Session 4, complete Reflection Questions and Life Story Exercises 3 and 4. (Optional) Read Chapter 10 of <i>Foundations of Spiritual Formation</i>.
Week 10: 10/28/24—11/1/24	Telling Our Stories, Hearing Our Stories	Read Session 5, complete Reflection Questions and Life Story Exercises 5 and 6.
Weeks 11-14: 11/4/24—12/13/24 (4 weeks)	Life Story Presentations	Read Session 6, complete Reflection Questions and Life Story Exercise 7. Arrive on time to the group session. Be prepared to listen attentively, encourage, and pray for the presenters. Share <i>Life Story</i> with your group.
<i>The Dallas campus takes two weeks off from classes in November for Reading Week and Thanksgiving. Church-based residencies can decide to follow this schedule or continue on with the course.</i>		
11/18/24—11/22/24	<i>Reading Week</i>	No assignments. (Catch up on reading.)
11/25/24—11/29/24	<i>Thanksgiving</i>	No assignments. (Enjoy some rest.)
Week 15: 12/16/24—12/19/24 (1 week)	Knowing and Being Known	Read Session 11 and complete Reflection Questions.
	Turning Toward Integrity	Read Session 12 and complete Reflection Questions. Plan and enjoy a time of celebration to bring a close to this semester’s SF group experience. Submit Semester Recap via Canvas.