



Christian Education and Formation in the Church

North Park Theological Seminary

J-term 2021, January 4-8 Mon-Fri 8 – 11am, 1-4 pm

3 credit hours

Syllabus is tentative and may be altered once class has begun to better meet educational strengths of students.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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appointments upon request due to the intensive nature of the class

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

CEDF 5100 Christian Education and Formation in the Church (3 sh). This course will introduce the tensions and dimensions of historical, theological, and pedagogical foundations of Christian Formation. Time will be given to discussing leadership concerns as pastors of Christian Formation. Students will be encouraged to engage the material realizing other courses will pursue the topics in more detail. This course will facilitate a broad awareness of Christian formation in the Church.

INSTRUCTOR'S COURSE DESCRIPTION

Dr. Olfelt has found reasons to teach others for the last 50 years or so. Early on she noticed that not everyone learns the same way. She also noticed that not everyone “faiths” the same way. Through teaching children, youth and adults, including pastors, and directing a childcare center she was inspired to finally pursue a PhD in Christian Education and explore her questions about how people grow in their faith. Every congregation must be concerned with how people continue to grow in their faith. This course asks questions about that growth and how we can nurture it.

By completing this course students will be able to:

- A. Summarize historical, theological, and pedagogical approaches and movements in Christian education and formation. (II)
- B. Describe concepts such as “instruction”, “education”, “transformation”, “curriculum”, “learner”, “formation”, “outcomes” and “evaluation” as used in Christian education and formation (IV)
- C. Apply terminology from objective B in presenting a learning experience on a church holiday to the class. (III)
- D. Apply terminology from objective B and knowledge of approaches and movements in designing a lesson which teaches from a selected book. (III)
- E. Apply collective wisdom of class, guests and of readings to an issue(s) in leadership in Christian education and formation in student’s ministry setting. (III)
- F. Synthesize approaches and theories of Christian education and formation into a plan for an all church retreat. (V)
- G. Support classmates by responding to discussion posts and participating in class conversations constructively. (III)



THIS COURSE CONTRIBUTES TOWARD THE FOLLOWING MACF LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Interpret Scripture with historical and theological integrity in relation to Christian formation.
- Convey the Christian tradition for appropriation in the life and mission of the Church.
- Articulate the significance for ministry of educational, organizational, and spiritual models and theories of Christian formation.
- Demonstrate a theologically grounded ministerial identity and growing capacity to integrate it with the ministry of Christian formation.
- Engage diversity and exhibit growth towards intercultural competence for ministry reflective of God's global redemptive work.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

Due to the nature of an intensive class you should do your reading and take these notes **before you arrive**. The dates when the actual discussion and collection of assignments will take place is listed on the tentative schedule so you can make final improvements to your projects before turning them in.

- 1) Maddix, Mark A and James Riley Estep Jr., *Practicing Christian Education: An Introduction for Ministry*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.
- 2) Harris, Maria. *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1989.
- 3) Seymour, Jack L, ed. *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning*, Nashville, TH: Abingdon, 1997.
- 4) Choose one book that presents an approach to Christian education and formation in the church. See Learning Activity #8 below for details.
- 5) More brief readings may be made available in class. In such a case, time will be given to read and reflect on them.

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale and policies outlined on page 21 of [Seminary Academic Catalog](#) will be followed (as generally outlined below):

- A: Superior work (A = 95–100; A- = 93–94)
- B: Above average (B+ = 91-92; B = 88-90; B- = 86-87)
- C: Average (C+ = 84-85; C = 80-83; C – = 78-79)
- D: Unsatisfactory (D+ = 76-77; D = 72-75; D – = 70-71.
- F: Failure (69 and below)

Specific grading rubrics for assignments will be provided in class.

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Especially since this is an intensive class, prompt, well prepared and thorough participation at all sessions is required. In case of an emergency the instructor may, at her discretion assign alternative work to address the learning experiences missed by tardiness or absence.

Assignments are expected to follow the inclusive language policy in the [Student Writing Handbook](#).



ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

For additional information, see the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 25–27.

ACCOMMODATIONS

North Park is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this class related to a disability, contact the Center for Student Engagement by email ada@northpark.edu or phone at 773-244-5737 to schedule an appointment with the Learning Specialist. You can also stop by The Center for Student Engagement, located on the first floor of the Johnson Center.

TITLE IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773-244-6276 or TitleIX@northpark.edu) for information about reporting, campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University’s Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking.

Please refer to North Park’s [Safe Community](#) site for reporting, contact information and further details.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates she will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as “I” until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of “I” will automatically be changed to “F.” For the full policy, see page 15 of the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#).



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Come **Monday, January 4th** with **four slides which introduce** yourself to the class, following the directions on Canvas.

2. ***Practicing Christian Education* due preferably before class starts.**

There are questions listed on Canvas to answer for many of the chapters of *Practicing Christian Education*. Ideally you would have this book read in entirety and all the questions answered before you come to class, but the **dates for discussion** are listed on Canvas.

3. At the end of each day's lesson there will be a **small evaluative exercise**, worth 5 points each. These are outlined on Canvas.

4. ***Fashion Me a People* – on discussion board - due January 5th**

Fashion Me a People by Maria Harris was written in 1989, which could cause the post-modern reader to question some of her conclusions. She is writing from a Roman Catholic perspective with Protestant understandings, so some of her terminology may not be familiar to us. Despite these facts, the issues she is addressing are still valid and helpful for the church today. Read with an open mind.

a) **Before reading** Maria Harris, complete these thoughts based on your current understanding, experience, and practice:

Christian education is...
Christian formation is...
In Christian formation, curriculum is...
In Christian formation, teachers are...
In Christian formation, learners are...

b) **After reading** Harris, and after our class discussion make any additions, expansions, corrections, or confirmations of your original thoughts and explain those changes. **due January 6th**

5. ***Mapping Christian Education* due January 6th**

There is a self-quiz in chapter seven of *Mapping Christian Education* to be completed. **Please use the version that is on Canvas.**

6. Your mission is to present a lesson on a **major church holiday**. You have a very ample budget but only one-hour long lesson period: **YOU WILL BE GIVEN TIME DURING THE WEEK TO DO THIS.** You will present this to your classmates

Palm Sunday
Christ the King Sunday
Reformation Sunday

Transfiguration Sunday
Epiphany
Pentecost

Trinity Sunday
Baptism of Our Lord
All Saint's Day

It doesn't matter if your congregation observes these days or not, you can find out plenty about them through research.

- a) Describe the group you are teaching: ages, gender, educational level, special needs etc. What developmental considerations are you taking into consideration? How can you use their interests to engage them in the lesson?
- b) 2) Write 3-5 outcomes for your lesson, using action verbs as we practiced in class.
- c) 3) Describe how you will know if you have successfully taught each objective at the end of the lesson. (evaluation)
- d) 4) Identify any implicit or null curricula in your lesson. What are you teaching by leaving something out? What are you teaching that's under the surface?
- e) Which of the four approaches are you emphasizing? Religious instruction, Spiritual development, Community of Faith or Social transformation?
- f) Now...what activities will you use to teach?
- g) Which learning styles or which modalities will you incorporate?

6. Models of Religious Education - done in class

You will be given time and resources in class to answer these questions about two religious educators:

What was his/her understanding of the aim of Christian education?

What did he/she believe should be the content of CE?

What was his/her understanding of the role of the teacher in CE?

What was his/her understanding of the role of the learner in CE?

What constituted an ideal environment for CE?

How might he/she have evaluated the teaching/learning that took place in this model?

We will combine our research into a broader picture in class

7a. Leadership Discussion part a - due January 5th

Write a one-page description of a concern which you or a colleague have encountered/ are encountering as a leader in Christian education and formation in the church. Choose something that you are willing to share with your classmates.

7b. Leadership Discussion part b - due January 18th.

After we meet in January, look back at your initial paper. Write your thoughts on what was helpful in our reading and discussion pertaining to your concern, or the concerns of your colleagues.

Final Projects

You KNOW, as a minister you aren't going to have time to work on your project as you enter Lent/Easter. Therefore, you must either turn in a draft of your final paper or email the instructor with your plan for completion by February 25th. Worth 5 bonus points.

8. Presentation of an approach due May 7th

A part of being a leader in Christian education in the church is in forming your volunteers in the field. Some theorists divide the field of Christian Education into four approaches: religious instruction, community of faith, spiritual formation, and transformation. Choose one book that presents an approach to Christian education and formation in the church from the list below. You are hereby challenged to stretch yourself outside of your comfort zone for this project. Your job is to design a one-

hour lesson following the guidelines given in class that would help you teach the contents of the book to the volunteers in your (real or imaginary) ministry setting.

Some suggestions (and you may choose something else, including but not limited to journal articles with instructor approval):

religious instruction

- Bruce, Barbara. *7 Ways of Teaching the Bible to Adults: Using Our Multiple Intelligences to Build Faith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.
- Bracke, John and Karen Tye. *Teaching the Bible in the Church*. St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003.
- Groome, Thomas. *Will There Be Faith?: a New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*. Harper Collins, 2011.
- McClain, Rebecca L. *Graceful Nurture: Using Godly Play with Adults*. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
- Smith, Yolanda Y. *Reclaiming the Spirituals: New Possibilities for African American Christian Education*. Wipf & Stock, 2010.

spiritual formation

- Bass, Dorothy C., ed. *Practicing Our Faith, 2nd ed. Jossey-Bass, 2010.*
- Brown, Carolyn C. *Forbid them Not: Involving Children in Sunday Worship*. (RCL year A) Nashville: Abingdon, 1992.
- Broyles, Anne. *Soul Tending: Life-forming Practices for Older Youth and Young Adults*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2002
- Fairless, Caroline S. *Children at Worship, Congregations in Bloom*. New York: Church Publishing, 2000.
- Robinson, David. *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010.
- Yust, Karen-Marie., and E. Byron. Anderson. *Taught by God : Teaching and Spiritual Formation* . St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2006. Print.

community of faith

- Baker, Dori Grinenko, ed. *Greenhouses of Hope*. Herndon, VA: Alban Inst., 2010.
- Lee, Boyung. *Transforming Congregation Through Community: Faith Formation from the Seminary to the Church*. (Westminster John Knox, 2013)

teaching for transformation

- choose any of the Love Mercy Do Justice resources listed at covchurch.org/justice/resources/

9. Design a weekend all-church retreat. Due May 7th

Money is not an issue 😊. The point is for you to show that you understand how to create a learning experience that reflects the nature of various persons in your church...ages, learning styles, development etc. Also, you should show that you can incorporate aspects of all four approaches to Christian education in one weekend event.

Check the rubrics carefully to be sure your final projects meet expectations.

COURSE SCHEDULE Mon-Fri 8 – 11am, 1-4 pm



breaks will be called as needed – please wait to return texts, check email, send Instagram shots of your classmates etc. until breaks. (The Instructor will certainly bring her cup(s) of coffee into the classroom – feel free to do the same with an appropriate drink(s)– your whole breakfast? [crunch, crunch] Not so much.)

The daily format will include presentations by the professor, discussions by the class and times when you will watch a video clip on your own and then return to the group for discussion. This is because online discussion platforms don't do well with videos.

Monday:

Introduction to course and each other

Devotions

Why is this course named CE in the Church?

Go over syllabus, rubrics,

Readings

Do we differentiate between education, formation and discipleship?

Faith formation

What do we want to change through CF?

How do we make CE enticing?

What are the needs/ what questions are people asking? How do we know we've been successful?

Outcomes & evaluations

Tuesday

Devotions

Readings, including Maria Harris

Maria Harris

What is curriculum?

Teachers and Learners

Wednesday

Devotions

Readings, including Seymour and his quiz

Sample learning approaches

Work on lessons in the afternoon

Thursday

Devotions

Readings

How has Religious education been implemented throughout the ages?

In class – research 2 major figures in Religious education – resources will be given

Class presentations – a lesson on a major church holiday



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Friday

Devotions

Readings

Leadership papers

Guest visit

Discuss final projects

Due dates:

Leadership paper part B January 18th

Drafts of 2 final projects due February 25th for bonus points.

Presentation of an approach May 7th

Design an all-church retreat May 7th