

## **AQUINAS INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY – FALL 2013**

### **PST-D504 – INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL DIRECTION (3 credits)**

Dave Ebenhoh, MA – debenhoh@slu.edu

#### **DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

This course will explore the broad and rich experience of spiritual direction, within the context of the Church's long and continuous tradition of holy women and men supporting and walking with those who want to deepen their ability to listen and respond to the movements of God.

We will consider an array of topics, including the following:

- what spiritual direction actually is
- the fundamental aspects of conversation, presence, and trust
- the significance of integrating our spiritual lives with our everyday living
- the contributions of contemporary psychology, sociology, neuroscience, and the arts
- the role of human experience in personal spiritual development.
- fundamental issues related to adult spiritual growth today.

This class is heavily dependent upon class discussion – from the perspectives of both intellectual understanding and personal experience/reflection. While there will be discussion of the practical aspects of the art and skill of spiritual guidance, this is not a "how-to" course, per se – it is, rather, an invitation to study, explore, and wrestle with the mystery that is God's working in our lives and the lives of others who might seek our help along the way – and the mystery of how the Spirit might work through us to offer that help.

Students will also be encouraged to discern their own call and gifts relative to this ministry of spiritual direction.

#### **PROCEDURES**

Class: Presentations, activities, experience, reflection and discussion.

Online: Discussions and personal reflections.

#### **EVALUATION**

The student's grade will be determined by the quality of participation in class sessions and online work, as well as knowledge of assigned reading materials.

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Barry, William A. & William J. Connolly. *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (revised and updated edition). HarperCollins/HarperOne, 1982/2009.

May, Gerald. *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit*. Harper Collins, 1982/92.

Palmer, Parker. *A Hidden Wholeness*. Jossey-Bass. 2004/09.

Russell, Mary Doria. *The Sparrow*. Ballantine Books. 1997.