

Spirituality and Work

Topics: Work, Meaning and Purpose

Instructor: Diane Nettifee, MTS, MA

Winter 2011 Fridays 6-9 pm

Course Description:

This course is an exploration of the relationship between work, meaning and purpose. The students will use their own work experiences in conversation with readings, lectures, and discussions. Meaning, purpose and spirituality are closely linked and this class will provide the opportunity to learn about a variety of paths and practices.

We will explore the role of work in spiritual formation and its function in generating meaning in our lives. The questions of vocation, calling, and discernment of purposeful life work will also be engaged to help the students grow in their capacity to integrate their spiritual life and work. Students will identify their beliefs, values, and practices that support ongoing transformation within their personal and professional lives.

Learning Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the elements of how human beings find a sense of purpose and how spiritual expressions connected to a variety of traditions provide guidance in integrating work, meaning and purpose.
2. To understand the concepts and ideas of vocation, calling, and work as well as develop a personal understanding of “calling.”
3. To reflect, articulate, and discuss one’s inner beliefs about the meaning of work and its relationship to spiritual growth and maturity.
4. To understand and explore the role of suffering in our work and the role adversity plays in spiritual maturity and formation.
5. To increase one’s self-knowledge by writing a life-story related to work and spirituality.
6. To critically read and integrate concepts/theories and themes from current research-based resources on work, meaning and purpose.

Required Texts:

Palmer, P. (2004). *A hidden wholeness; The journey toward an undivided life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Levoy, G. (1997). *Callings; Finding and following an authentic life*. New York: Harmony Books.

Schlitz, Vieten, Amorok. (2007) *Living Deeply; the art and science of transformation in everyday life*. New Harbinger Publications and Noetic Books.

Optional:

Whyte, D. (2001). *Crossing the unknown sea; Work as a pilgrimage of identity*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Silf, M. (1999). *Inner compass; An invitation to Ignatian Spirituality*. Chicago: Loyola Press.

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A detail of all written assignments and their due dates are on page 14 of the syllabus.

Pre-work for Session 1:

Read chapters 1-2 in *Callings; Finding and following the Authentic Life*

Read introduction and chapter 1 in *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*. Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

Session 1: January 7th, 2011

Objectives:

To reflect, articulate, and discuss one’s inner beliefs about the meaning of work and its relationship to purpose.

Agenda:

1. Identify current beliefs, assumptions, and understandings of purpose and meaning.
2. Identify current beliefs, assumptions, and interpretations of work.
3. Identify current beliefs, assumptions, and understandings of purpose and spirituality.
4. Identify the connection and/or disconnection of work, meaning and purpose.
5. Set personal goals for the course.

Class Content

Discussion

Understanding the foundation of work, meaning and purpose:

1. Introduction to each other.
2. Introduction of class content.
3. Class discussion on the following themes:
 - What is purpose?
 - What generates a sense of meaning and purpose?
 - What is the nature of work?
 - What makes work meaningful?
 - What is “Success?”
 - What creates “Meaningful Success?”

Identify a book or three articles to use as a research-based resource for the duration of the course. Select research-based books on work, meaning and purpose (also spirituality) to use as an additional resource for your papers and class discussion. Select your book of choice or articles from the bibliography. If you would like to use a self-selected research-based book, it must be submitted to the instructor for approval by Session 3. This bibliography will be provided and discussed in the first class session.

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Pre-work for Session 2:

Read chapters 1-3 in *A Hidden Wholeness*

Read chapters 3-7 in *Callings; Finding and Following the Authentic Life*

Read chapter 2 in *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*.

Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

Assignment #1: Due on Session 2: “Historical Work Beliefs and Attitudes” (see page 14 for details of the assignment)

Using insights from the readings and prior class discussion, write a 3-4 page paper exploring the following:

1. Who has influenced my attitudes/beliefs toward work? For example parents, mentors, or key influencers.
2. What have they taught me?
3. What are my own values and attitudes with respect to work, and where do they differ from my key influencers?

Session 2: January 14th, 2011

Objectives:

1. To understand the concepts and ideas of vocation, calling, and work as well as develop a personal understanding of “calling.”
2. To increase one’s self-knowledge by writing a life story related to work and spirituality.

Class Content

Discussion: Move into triads and discuss your papers.

1. What did you learn in writing and reflecting for this paper?
2. Where were you “stretched” or challenged?
3. What assumptions are congruent?
4. What assumptions and beliefs are incongruent with how you see the role of spirituality in work at this time in your life?

Guest Lecturer: Beth Krehbiel, president, Fairview Ridges Hospitals and Clinics

Beth integrates her leadership with a sense of spiritual calling and purpose.

Exploring the complex relationship between spirituality and work, and “reimagining” how they are fundamental to our humanity and sense of purpose.

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Pre-work for Session 3:

Read chapters 4-8 in *A Hidden Wholeness* focusing on the theme “Creating Circles of Trust.”

Read chapters 8-11 in *Callings; Finding and Following the Authentic Life*

Read chapter 3 in *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*.

Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

Assignment #2: Due on Session 3: Write your creed “Words to Live By”

Session 3: January 28th, 2011

Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the elements of spirituality, explore a variety of spiritual expressions, and engage the process of formation as it relates to personal and professional lives.
2. To increase one’s self-knowledge by writing a life story related to work and spirituality.
3. To deepen an understanding of “authenticity of work” and identify practices that supports it.

Class Content

Discussion:

1. Where do you experience authenticity?
2. What does it mean to you personally?
3. What are “circles of trust?” Where do you experience circles of trust in your work and life?
4. How does spiritual formation support the ability to be authentic in your work?
5. Discussion of assignment: “Words to Live By.”

Guest Lecture: Terry Shaunessy, spiritual director and entrepreneur.

Activity: From the “Mundane to the Sacred” presentation.

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Pre-work for Session 4:

Assignment #3: Due on Session 4: “Calling and Purpose”

Read chapter 8-9 in *A Hidden Wholeness*

Read chapters 12-13 in *Callings; Finding and Following the Authentic Life*

Read chapter 4 *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*. Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

Session 4: February 11th, 2011

Objectives:

1. To reflect, articulate, and discuss one’s inner beliefs about the meaning of work and its relationship to spiritual growth and maturity.
2. Experience a clearness committee and gain insight into important questions you are living at this time.
3. Understanding the role of metaphor and story in work and spirituality.

Class Content

Discussion: In triad discuss your paper.

1. What key learning and insights did you experience as a result of the writing?
2. What specific areas for growth did you identify for yourself?

Lecture:

Discussion on assigned readings

- What were your key insights and how are they relevant to you at this time in your life?
- What did you disagree or struggle with in the readings?
- What questions did you identify as a result of insights from the reading?

Experiencing a Clearness Committee

Activity: From the “Mundane to the Sacred” presentation.

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Pre-work for Session 5

Read chapter 10 in *A Hidden Wholeness*

Read chapters 14-16 in *Callings; Finding and Following the Authentic Life*

Read chapter 5 *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*. Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

Session 5: February 25th, 2011

Objective:

1. To understand and explore the role of suffering and the shadow in our work and the role adversity plays in spiritual maturity and formation.
2. Discuss the notion and role of sacrifice and shadow in living our calling
3. To explore and examine the role of nonviolence in everyday life including work.
4. Assign Blackboard pairs for discussion forum.

Class Content

Discussion and Lecture

Discussion on assigned readings

- What were your key insights and how are they relevant to you at this time in your life?
- What did you disagree or struggle with in the readings?
- What questions did you identify as a result of insights from the reading?

Activity: From the “Mundane to the Sacred” presentation.

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Pre-work for session 6: On line session

Read chapters 6-7 in *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*.

Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

On line session

Discussion and format to be announced

Blackboard postings

For certain material during session 6, there will be a blackboard site set up for class discussion of a particular topic. Students should participate in a discussion of the material identified; after their original posting, students should continue participation in the discussion board, either agreeing, disagreeing, or expanding the points raised by fellow students or comparing and contrasting their past experiences. Discussion will be graded both on the quantity and quality of student responses (including original postings, and further discussion). No credit will be given for postings beyond the original due date (although continued student discussion is always encouraged). Black board discussion will be part of the class participation grade.

Reflection assignment #4 Due: **Spiritual Wisdom and Growth in Work (assignment on page 14 of the syllabus)**

1. Use additional material, concepts and ideas from your selected research based book or articles to further illuminate key points in your paper.
2. By March 2nd post your paper on Blackboard. You will be assigned a dialogue team to discuss a variety of concepts in your work. Additional details will be provided in class for this on line assignment.

Session 6: March 4th, 2011: On line session

Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the elements of spirituality, explore a variety of spiritual expressions, and engage the process of formation as it relates to personal and professional lives.
2. To understand the concepts and ideas of vocation, calling, and work as well as develop a personal understanding of “calling.”
3. To gain insights into one another’s work and increase awareness of your personal bias and practice for your spiritual path

Class Content

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Black board Discussion:

Prior to this class you Reflection assignment #4 will be posted on Blackboard. You will be assigned a dialogue team to discuss a variety of concepts in your work. Additional details will be provided in class for this on line assignment.

Pre-work for Session 7

Read chapters 8-9 in *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*. Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

Create a *Callings* Collage.

Using paper, art, magazines, cloth, music, photos newspapers or other materials, create a collage that integrates your desires and hopes for living to your fullest potential. Write a one page paper of spiritual/transformational practices reflected in the collage. Outline the key points and integrate 2-3 key concepts from the academic material. The collage provides an opportunity to connect academic materials with your experiential response. What is the response in your life as a result of this academic experience?

Session 7: March 18th, 2011

Objectives:

1. To understand and integrate the spiritual concepts of awareness, listening, discernment, shadow and formation.
2. To understand and explore the role of suffering in our work and the role adversity plays in spiritual maturity and formation.

Class Content

Discussion:

Chapters 8-9 in *Living Deeply; the Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*. Prepare to discuss the “Experience Transformation” reflection at the end of the chapter.

Presentation and discussion on *Callings* Collages.

Lecture Speaker: Hal Dragseth, Owner, Seraphim Productions “Callings in all walks of life work.”

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Pre-work for Session 8

Final Integrative paper due: Work, Meaning and Purpose

This paper will be an integrative summary and exploration of your emerging understanding of how work provides a path for meaning and purpose as well as a progressive paper outlining your growth in this class. I expect you to incorporate and cite concepts and readings from research-based class materials to create this final paper. When you quote an author and identify with something they've written it is not enough to merely quote them. I am looking for personal application of the cited materials impact on your life and experience. I want to see concrete examples of where you can point to growth and development for your spiritual/work life. This is a list of points to consider. **It is not meant to be exhaustive.**

1. Detail your growth and understanding on spirituality and work during this course.
2. What have you learned and integrated from your academic reading and class discussions?
3. What are experiences that contributed to new insights during this course?
4. What is the role of difficult experiences in your work, and how do they relate to your spiritual formation?
5. What are the sources of meaning and purpose in your work? Have you grown in clarifying your purpose during this class experience?
6. Your personal creed of beliefs and values.
7. What are the important elements core to integrating spirituality and work?
8. Name the practices that support your ongoing growth and spiritual formation.
9. What are your commitments to future growth?

Final Session 8 March 23rd, 2011

Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the elements of spirituality, explore a variety of spiritual expressions, and engage the process of formation as it relates to personal and professional lives.
2. To reflect, articulate, and discuss one's inner beliefs about the meaning of work and its relationship to spiritual growth and maturity.
3. To increase one's self-knowledge by writing a life-story related to work and spirituality.

Class Content

Discussion: Discuss final papers in triads

1. Key insights and areas of growth during this class.
2. On-going spiritual formation opportunities

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Closing Ritual – Celebration!

Final Grading:

Your final grade will be calculated using the following percentages:

Class participation in discussion	10%
4 Reflective Papers	total: 40%
“Historical work beliefs and attitudes”	10%
“Words to live by”	10%
“Spiritual Wisdom and Growth in Work”	10%
“Calling and Purpose”	10%
Callings Collage	5%
Class Presentation “From Mundane to the Sacred”	10%
Final Integrative Paper	35%

Please double-space all written assignments, check for spelling and grammar and cite sources using APA format. *Please include a header or footer on each page with the page number, your name, the course number and the name of the assignment*

No “Incomplete” will be given for this course except in case of a dire emergency. Campus protocol requires the instructor’s written consent on the college’s incomplete form submitted online *on or before the date of the last class meeting*

Written Assignments

I expect your written work to be at a graduate school level. That means complete sentences and paragraphs that hang together; also a logical flow from one paragraph to the next. In addition, if you state that something is the case, it is not enough to say that you “feel” this is so. I expect you to build an argument for why you avow something when you are writing persuasively. For reflection papers, I am looking for evidence that you have indeed thought about the topic and used it as a way to reframe some aspect of your experience. Please use APA style for citing references used in papers. Please proof your work before you turn it in. I may suggest that you connect with the O’Neill Writing Center for help with your writing style if it does not generally meet the criteria discussed above. Please don’t take this as evidence of a failure; many of us who return to graduate school after spending time in the work force need to brush up on scholarly skills, and clear writing is one of them.

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of passing off someone else's work as your own. It includes such dishonest practices as buying, borrowing or stealing a paper to turn in as your own or simply copying someone else's words without putting them in quotation marks and identifying the author and source. Most students are not so dishonest as to buy or steal a paper. Many students, however, inadvertently plagiarize because they do not realize that what they are doing is, in fact,

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plagiarism and thus dishonest. Avoiding plagiarism is much more complicated than simply not copying other people's work.

In an attempt to avoid plagiarizing, students often paraphrase the passages they want to use. Basically, paraphrasing is stating something in different words. As such, it is a useful device. The problem is that it can lead you to unintentional plagiarism if it is not done properly. Changing a few words in a passage and then using it in your paper without documentation is plagiarism. Changing a few words and then using it in your paper even with proper documentation is also plagiarism. When you paraphrase other people's ideas, you have two choices: 1) you may quote the passage exactly, put it in quotation marks, and cite it; or 2) you may change the wording of the passage so that the ideas are explained substantially in your own words and cite it. Anything in between is plagiarism.

One reason some students inadvertently plagiarize is the pressure they feel to come up with new ideas, to be original, even with topics that they know little about. In academic settings such as college courses, it is difficult if not impossible to come up with totally original ideas, especially on topics with which you are unfamiliar. When an instructor asks for original thinking, she/he often means thinking through ideas to find your own perspective on them and then expressing those ideas in your own way. In doing so, you may and often should use other people and their ideas to add to or support your own. When you do so, however, you must give them credit.

--The O'Neill Center for Academic Excellence, College of St. Catherine
(<http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/academic/oneill.nsf/pages/Plagiarism/?OpenDocument&Expand=3.5>)

Blackboard postings

For certain material during session 5, there will be a blackboard site set up for class discussion of a particular topic. Students should participate in a discussion of the material identified; after their original posting, students should continue participation in the discussion board, either agreeing, disagreeing, or expanding the points raised by fellow students or comparing and contrasting their past experiences. Discussion will be graded both on the quantity and quality of student responses (including original postings, and further discussion). No credit will be given for postings beyond the original due date (although continued student discussion is always encouraged). Black board discussion will be part of the class participation grade.

Presentation Assignments

In grading presentation assignments, I am looking at your ability to present material in a clear concise manner so your colleagues can learn from it. I am looking for methods that will help these ideas become real to your colleagues. I expect you to have simple, clear handouts and/or, for the final presentation, storyboards that illustrate your main points. For the skills presentations, you may choose to ask members of the class to participate in trying out a limited version of the skill through question and answer or role modeling

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Participation and Skill Building

In class discussion by all students, comments, examples and questions are invited, welcome, and required. If you attend class and do not speak, you will receive a low grade for participation. If you are comfortable with the material, comment and provide examples; if you are just learning this material and unsure, then ask questions. In terms of skill building, grading will be based on willingness to participate in the role playing and willingness to take risks and try on new behaviors.

ATTENDANCE

Because of the intense nature of the weekend format, students are expected to be in attendance for each session in its entirety. If the student knows before registration that he/she will need to miss one session, consult the instructor of the course about what impact this will have on the student and the classmates. Students should not register for a class if they know that they will miss two or more sessions. If two class sessions are missed, students will not pass the course as this represents 25% of instructional time.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The College of St. Catherine seeks to provide learning experiences for all students and recognizes that those students with disabilities may need special accommodation. Both the student and the faculty member share responsibility in the process. First, the student must provide some evidence of disability and the need for accommodation in his/her learning needs. Second, the faculty member must provide reasonable accommodation to the student's learning needs. Students seeking such accommodation should contact the O'Neill Center for Academic Development at 651-690-6563.

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Class Presentations:

Presentation Assignment: From the “Mundane to the Sacred”.

Each class, two to three participants present an experience that would have been mundane, yet in their growing spiritual awareness, they experience it as sacred. I expect the presentation to be creative. Use creative communication to draw the class into your experience and reflect a thoughtful process. Taking a risk to stretch yourself will increase your grade. This exercise will consider the extraordinary in the “ordinary” of every day work experience. Explore an experience that on the surface is ordinary, yet as you dig deeper, experience meaning and purpose in the events.

Grading of the presentations:

A:

- Use of creative measures to share the experience with the class.
- Class “experiences” the movement from mundane to sacred with you.
- You stretch and use something that reflects a thoughtful process and take a risk.

B:

- Use of creative measures to share the experience with the class.
- Class understands your experience from mundane to sacred.
- Your presentation reflects a thoughtful process.

C:

- Your presentation lacks creativity; talking is your only form of communication.
- Class has difficulty understanding your experience.
- Your presentation lacks reflection, and you are late.

D:

- Your presentation is off the cuff and unorganized.
- Your communication lacks cohesiveness.
- Your presentation lacks reflection.

F:

- You fail to present.

Each presentation should be 15 minutes in length. Presentations will be timed.

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Writing Assignments

Assignment #1: Due on Session 2: “Historical Work Beliefs and Attitudes”

Using insights from the readings and prior class discussion, write a 3-4 page paper exploring the following:

- Who has influenced my attitudes/beliefs toward work? (parents/mentors/key influencers)
- What have they taught me?
- What are my values and attitudes with respect to work and where do they differ from my key influencers?

Assignment #2: Due on Session 3: Write your creed “Words to Live By” Beth Krehbiel gave us her “words to live by”; a set of personal values, beliefs and practices she strives to live by. In a one page paper, outline your personal creed of “words to live by.” The goal of this paper is to articulate the beliefs and values that provide a compass for your life. This includes your leadership as well as expanding broader and deeper in the core of your personal identity.

Assignment #3: Due on Session 4: “Calling and Purpose”

Using insights from readings, class discussions, and speakers write a 5 page academic paper exploring your life’s work and calling. The paper should use ideas/insights from the various sources as well as your personal experiences. The paper should address the following areas, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- My life work: What is it? Am I living it now?
- What does vocation mean to me? Where have I experienced a sense of calling?
- How has my understanding of “vocation” evolved in this class?
- What is my desire for integrating work, meaning and purpose?
- If you are in the neutral zone—in between what was and what is next—explore what is emerging as potential areas for maximizing your talents and strengths with the world’s needs.

Assignment #4: Due on Session 6: “Spiritual Wisdom and Growth in Work”

Using insights from the reading and prior class discussion, write a 4-5 page paper exploring the relationship between your history of work and spiritual development and formation.

- Compile a history of your work experiences.
- Identify the life lessons from your work that shape you and support your spiritual growth and development. What elements of work do you find meaningful? What gives you a sense of purpose?
- What experiences were most formative and transformative?
- How has suffering been a formative experience for integrating meaning and purpose in work?
- What wisdom have you gleaned from your work?
- What has your work taught you about gifts, strengths, and talents?
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A LEVEL WORK

1. Clear, compelling introduction/framing of the paper's purpose
2. Clear description of how you will build your line of reasoning or reflection throughout the paper thru analysis, integration and synthesis of research-based concepts and personal experience.
3. Comprehensive inclusion of the assignment's main points
4. Effective use of cited references (APA citation required)
5. Original unusual insight
6. For reflection papers, evidence that attempts were made along several dimensions of the topic to spur personal reflection and insight
7. Evidence that research-based concepts were integrated and analyzed into personal experience
8. Well thought through conclusions that address all key issues in the paper
9. Clean, stimulating writing style

B LEVEL WORK

1. Introduction/framing of the paper's purpose is included
2. Description of how you will build your line of reasoning or reflection throughout the paper is included though analysis
3. Research-based materials
4. Inclusion of most important assignment topics
5. Competent use of cited references
6. Generally good, solid reasoning
7. For reflection papers, evidence that attempts were made along more than one dimension of the topic to spur personal reflection and insight
8. Evidence that research-based concepts were analyzed
9. Conclusion section is present, tied to paper's purpose and includes some thought out conclusions
10. Clear and interesting writing style; no significant errors

C LEVEL WORK

1. Sketchy introduction/framing of the paper's purpose
2. Sketchy description of how you will build your line of reasoning or reflection throughout the paper with limited analysis
3. Cited references are minimal
4. Paper overlooks some key assignment points or discusses only obvious ones
5. For reflection papers, evidence that attempts were made along one dimension of the topic to spur personal reflection and insight
6. Conclusions include only some of the paper's topics
7. Writing style is clear but contains some errors

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D LEVEL WORK

1. Vague or missing introduction/framing of the paper's purpose
2. Vague or missing description of how you will build your line of reasoning or reflection
3. Discussion lacks understanding of the issues
4. For reflection papers, little or no evidence that attempts were made to tie personal insight to the paper's topic
5. Cited references are missing
6. Vague or missing conclusions
7. Writing style is difficult to follow

F: Missing assignment