**IST 1000 7 - VOCATION & ORIENTATION (V&O)**

**2.0 credits (online)**

**FALL 2018**

#### ****INSTRUCTOR:****

Rev. Dr. Sara Rosenau

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#### ****COURSE DESCRIPTION****

The topic of our quarter together is the ongoing process of vocational discernment, with attention to how vocational journeys intersect with the experience of formal theological education. We will utilize dynamic, ongoing, interactive and self-reflective learning processes through weekly readings and content, the lives of the students and instructor, the lives of the mentors you choose as living conversation partners, and historical partners accessed through an autobiography or oral history.

#### ****COURSE OBJECTIVES****

1. Provide a sacred space where you can come to know one another, including your different faith understandings and traditions, at a deeper level than is usually experienced with other courses.
2. Introduce you to Iliff, and assist you with your understanding and adjusting to the framework and characteristics of theological education, which are somewhat different from those in other kinds of educational programs that you may have experienced in the past.
3. Invite you to reflect theologically on your personal and professional identity, and your ongoing vocational discernment.
4. Practice personal and professional skill development required to work effectively to build relationships and foster dialogues that honor multiple perspectives and experiences.
5. Utilize writing, journaling, audio/video, and creative expression to connect concepts and practice to one’s own vocational discernment and development.

#### ****TEXTBOOK & COURSE MATERIALS****

#### The texts for this course will be readings of book chapters, videos, lectures, and other content hat the instructors will upload to *Canvas*.  Students will also choose one autobiography to read throughout the quarter.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

*My role as the instructor in this course is to:*

1. Host an engaging learning community where you are invited to openly share your opinions, experiences, and participate in meaningful conversations with the topics and issues raised in the course.
2. Facilitate an environment in which students are co-creators of knowledge, encouraged to bring your lived experiences and wisdom to the course.
3. Provide constructive feedback in a variety of ways through written or audio feedback with individual grading and/or comments in class discussion forums.

*Your role as a student in this course is to:*

1. Invest in the course by establishing a regular and respectful online presence through discussions, assignments and interacting with other students and the instructor.
2. Turn in assignments on time; Communicate with the instructor when you anticipate being unable to participate in discussions or turn in assignments.
3. Respect others in the course through healthy dialogue and inquiry.
4. Maintain a level of confidentiality of other people’s disclosures, stories, and conversations occurring in the course.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

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| 1)Prepare to critically engage each week by completing assigned readings. |
| 2)Participate in weekly discussion forums by establishing a regular and respectful online presence, including integrating reading into your responses and responding to your peers in ways that contribute to dialogue. Help contribute to the spiritual space through sharing and getting to know others. Participate in week 3 zoom meeting. |
| 3)Engage in weekly spiritual depth exercises through reflection in discussion forums |
| 4)Complete Vocational Timeline putting ideas and experiences together to derive new meanings for your future vocation. |
| 5) Complete Iliff media artifact learning about and being in dialogue with Iliff’s values and ethos. |
| 6) Historical Partner- Reflect theologically on your personal and professional identity, and your ongoing vocational discernment. Cite or providing examples of critical analysis from readings. |
| 7)Mentor Interview - Reflected theologically on your personal and professional identity, and your ongoing vocational discernment. |

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Weekly Online Discussion Forums**

In an online course, discussion forums are where much of the collective learning occurs. It is an arena to share ideas, ask questions, and deepen your understanding of the concepts presented in the course.

**Weekly Rhythm**

**Starting on Monday:** Begin reading for the week, watch any videos or other material

**By Thursday:** Begin posting, if you have not already, in the weekly forums to be in dialogue with peers about the readings. Continue dialogue Thursday-Sunday.

**By Friday:** Weekly Assignments Due

*Discussion Guidelines: Expectations*

The expectation is that you will participate in all discussion threads by the due dates, responding to one another’s posts, and asking questions for clarification and deeper meaning. You are encouraged to share links, documents and images. Discussions are a place for critical exploration, but they can also be lively and fun.

Discussion posts should feel like a conversation. Your posts do not have to be lengthy, profound, or “academic.” In fact, sometimes less is more. This is a spiritual formation course and is designed for you to reflect on your own personal and professional experiences, and therefore, you are encouraged to be yourself and share from your heart.

While discussion posts call for thoughtful engagement with the course content, please relieve yourself of the pressure of having to “do it right.” To be successful with discussion posts in this course simply show up when the discussions are due, contribute by reflecting about what you think and feel, and ask respond and questions of one another.

You do not need to write an original post before responding to others. Your first post can be responding to someone else. You are adult learners and I trust that you will engage at the level that you are able.

# *Discussion Guidelines: Self- Disclosure in Professional Contexts*

The value of reflecting on your own experience is that such narratives are more likely to become a resource rather than a roadblock in your professional life. This class does not call for absolute vulnerability in self-disclosure, but rather thoughtful engagement with your own experiences as a source of learning material.

Another value is that you may learn ways to talk about formative experiences as you might in ordination or certification processes, sermons, teaching sessions, care conversations, and other professional occurrences. Be aware that in writing about your own experiences you may need to be able to be extra tender with yourself, and seek out some processing time with others regarding the memories and feelings that come from writing and talking about your own experiences.

You will not receive a better grade just because you have disclosed more information or deeper feelings than your classmates. I invite you to be thoughtful about how your personal disclosure and disclosure of the experiences of your living mentors contributes to the learning of the class. Alternatives to this would be disclosures for the sake of self-healing, attention-seeking, entertainment, or gossip. Each person is responsible for his or her level of self-disclosure.

*Discussion Guidelines: Confidentiality*

Personal disclosures and conversations occurring in online discussions are not to be discussed outside of the community of learners in your section without agreement and permission of the involved parties. This is professional rather than absolute confidentiality: limits to this confidentiality include Colorado reporting laws and practices with regards to disclosure of abuse or potential harm to self or others.

Due to the personal nature of some of the topics of this course, there may be times when you need to seek consultation outside of class to address emotions and reactions that have been generated in you by the experience. You, of course, have the right to seek the support of your informal circles of relationship and trust in processing issues and ideas that arise in the class that have been challenging to you. However, in doing so you cannot report what has been said by other people in the class to persons outside of the class. These conversations should be limited to discussions of your reactions and emotions to the conversation, unless you are discussing the incident in a professional consultative conversation where the practices of confidentiality are legally held (i.e. therapist, physician).

In this class it is especially important to treat the stories of living mentors with great respect and to offer them as much confidentiality as possible. Good practice requires that you change the name and identifying details of your mentor when referring to them class discussions. Because professional and denominational circles can be quite small, holding these stories with confidentiality can be of special importance given that members of your group may one day be in professional relationship with the mentor you have selected.

*Discussion Guidelines: Feelings and Emotions*

Given the emotional content of reflecting on formative experiences, there may be moments when we react strongly to each other. Here is a helpful process to follow when this happens. First, do an internal check-in with ourselves to process our reactions before we post our responses. Next, judge whether a response would enhance group learning, or whether it is solely for processing our own feelings. If the former is the case, respond with an “I” statement that identifies our feelings, not a “you” statement, particularly one that implies a global assessment of the other person. This internal processing is especially important in blogging responses to each other in an online format because responses are more likely to come across as critical when we can’t communicate compassion through our body language or tone of voice.

*Discussion Guidelines: Language Framework*

Please use inclusive language in your writing for this class. Inclusive language attempts to respect all forms of sexual, gender, and sexual orientation diversity and to avoid terms that have been used to diminish the humanity of oppressed persons. Using inclusive language is a learning process for many students, and we will work together to move toward greater inclusivity and respect in our language.

**Weekly Engage Spiritual Depth**

Each week, Rev. Dr. Cathie Kelsey, the Dean of the Chapel, will post a short video exercise called "engage spiritual depth.” We’ll have a second forum each week where we can check in and discuss the exercise. This will include your own short written reflection each week about the activity.

**Learning Contract:** See Grading section below, Due: Week 3, Sept. 28

**Assignment #1 Iliff media artifact**Iliff was founded 126 years ago. Learning about an institution's past (the good and the bad), discovering yourself in the institution’s present, and understanding the vision for the future, invites a sense of communal purpose. For this activity, you will discover/research a "media artifact" (online article, news posting, website, photo, video, etc.) about the Iliff School of Theology. It can be from any time - from many decades ago or something more recent. See *Canvas* for instructions.

Due: Week 3 (See Canvas)

**Assignment #2 Vocational Timeline**

You will create timeline that highlights important events in your vocational journey up to this point. You may use photos, videos, song lyrics, PowerPoint, or any other media applications for this project. Sharing your journey in the beginning of your seminary career gives you an opportunity to express yourself and reflect on what has brought you to this moment in your life. This exercise invites you to express the most transformational moments that are part of your story. Sharing your stories with one another invites a sense of community that allows us to get to know one another and begins a foundation of encouragement. See *Canvas* for instructions.

Due: Week 4, Oct 5th

**Assignment #3 Autobiography (Historical Partner)**

You will be reading an autobiography throughout the quarter, so be sure to choose someone whom you feel you have something to learn. This could be someone that you want to learn more about because you think they are more like you, or conversely it may be more meaningful for you to learn about someone that is quite different from you.

There is a list of suggested books on Canvas (and on the last page of this syllabus). If you do not recognize the names on the list, research them and be open to learning about someone new. Try to choose from the list. If there is another book that you would like to read, it must be approved by the instructor. Please contact me to talk about it. Acquire the book from a library or an online retailer as soon as possible.

*Important Dates:*

September 17 - Choose your historical partner

October 22- Historical partners forum

October 26 - Historical partner essay due

**Assignment #4 Mentor Interview**

Learning from a mentor is important not only because of the knowledge and wisdom you can learn from other people in the field, but also because mentors provide professional advice and support to help you facilitate success in graduate school and beyond.

Contact and interview someone who you view as a mentor that has aided you in your current vocational journey. This might be a current or former religious leader, a teacher, or someone else who helped you decide to follow your vocation in theological school. Ideally your mentor should have at least 5 years experience in their vocational calling. Review the assignment in Canvas for more details about this assignment.

*Important Dates:*

October 1 - Choose your mentor

October 26 - Interview mentor completed

October 29- Mentor class forum

November 2– Mentor Essay Due

**Final Reflection**

In a 5-page reflection paper, summarize your understanding of your vocation and the insights that you learned about yourself from this course.  Utilize the resources such as readings, videos, your mentor interview, and your historical partner. Instructions on *Canvas*.

Due: November 16.

Final Self Evaluation: See Grading section below.

Due Nov 16

**GRADING**

This course is about your experiences, your goals and values, and your spiritual formation. Thus, I find it helpful for you to be in charge of what you want to learn in this class, and how you want to apply yourself to the course assignments as laid out in the syllabus. Success is achieved when you do your best, participate, and meet the learning goals for this course as well as your own individual goals for learning.

I will provide each student written feedback on assignments, but all students will evaluate their own work in the course and assign themselves a grade. This will be achieved by turning in a Learning Goal Contract by week 3 and a Final Self Evaluation by week 10.

**Learning Goal Contract: DUE Week 3**

By the end of the second week you should have a clearer picture of the expectations of this course. Use the Learning Agreement Tool (provided as addendum) to construction your learning contract. This is a narrative description of your intentions for fulfilling all of the course requirements as they are delineated in the syllabus.

The learning agreement will serve as a learning contract between you and me, and with yourself.**This learning agreement can be as long or as short as you wish in order to communicate your intentions.** You may not be completely sure of how you will approach each project, but you can indicate what you want to be leaning. At the end of the tool, please tell me what grade you intend to achieve. Your agreement is not complete unless you indicate the grade you intend to achieve.

**Final Self Evaluation:**

Making reference to your learning agreement, evaluate in how you think did in achieving your stated intentions and goals throughout the semester, and whether or not you achieved the grade you anticipated.

There is no page requirement for this reflection. Although I intend to honor the grade you give yourself, ultimately I am responsible for assigning your grades and may negotiate with you in cases of wild over-or-under-estimation of your achievements.

At the end of this evaluation, you must give yourself a final grade.

See *Canvas* for more information

**Summary of assignments**

Online discussions

Weekly Forums

Weekly Engage Spiritual Depth

Learning Contract

Vocational Timeline

Iliff media artifact

Mentor Interview

Autobiography (Historical Partner)

Final Reflection

Final Self Evaluation

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

This is a *guideline* of the course. Please see *Canvas* for the details, due dates, and up-to-date information, lectures, and course contents. \*\*Canvas is the final and most updated version of the syllabus**.**

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| **WEEK / DATE** | **FOCUS** | **READINGS/CONTENT** | **ASSIGNMENTS** |
| Week 1  9/10 | Course Syllabus, student introductions, agreements | Palmer, Parker (March 31, 2001). Now I Become Myself: The search for vocation. *Yes Magazine*. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/working-for-life/now-i-become-myself> | * By Thursday: Class Introductions/Palmer Discussion * By Friday: Choose your autobiography (historical partner) * Engage Spiritual Depth |
| Week 2  9/17 | Exploring vocation | Neafsey, John (2006). Introduction. In *A Sacred Voice Is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience.* Maryknoll: Orbis Booksp.1-18.  Mahan Reading | * By Thursday: Discussion – Neafsey & Mahan * Engage Spiritual Depth |
| Week 3  9/24 | Iliff School of Theology | Iliff Archives: <http://archives.iliff.edu/digital-collections/>  TBA | * By Monday: Iliff values Discussion * By Thursday: Iliff Media Artifact * Engage Spiritual Depth * By Friday Choose your living mentor * By Friday Learning Contract Due |
| Week 4  10/1 | Vocational Timeline | No Reading this week | * By Friday: Post Your Vocational Timeline |
| Week 5 | Gathering Days! | No readings this week! | No assignments this week! |
| Week 6  10/15 | Sharing our stories | Yang, Kao Kalia. (2015). The Power in Sharing our Stories. *Ted Talk*. *TEDxUWRiverFalls.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0KdPwMNbOA&t=911s> | * Class meeting (via zoom) * Thursday Discussion: Vocation timeline * Engage Spiritual Depth |
| Week 7  10/22 | Historical Partners | Autobiography (historical partner) | * By Thursday: Discussion – Historical partner * Engage Spiritual Depth * By Friday: Historical partner Essay Due |
| Week 8  10/29 | Living Mentors | Living Mentor Interview | * By Thursday: Discussion –Living Mentor * Engage Spiritual Depth * Self-Refection Essay – Living Mentor |
| Week 9:  11/5 | Discernment | Neafsey, John (2006). Chapter 3. Discernment - The Inner Compass of the Heart in *A Sacred Voice Is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience.* Maryknoll: Orbis Booksp.36-48. Liebert, Elizabeth. (2008). Chapter 5. Intuition’s Knowing. In *The Way of Discernment Spiritual Practices for Decision Making.* Westminster John Knox Press. P. 67-78 | * By Thursday: Discussion –Discernment * Engage Spiritual Depth |
| Week 10  *11/12* | Wrap up & final reflections |  | * By Thursday: Reflection Discussion * Engage Spiritual Depth * By Friday: Final Reflection Essay * By Friday: Final Self Evaluation Due |

**POLCIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Degree learning goals**: Please look over the Professional Degree Learning Goals in the Master Student Handbook [Degree Learning Goals (all program) Master Student Handbook](https://iliff.bloomfire.com/posts/3241295-degree-learning-goals-all-programs).

**Inclusivity:** In this class, we will work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful. Our diversity may be reflected by differences in race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and myriad other social identities and life experiences. A fundamental part of our class work is committing ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive environment where each person takes responsibility for her/his/their/hir language, actions and interactions. The goal of inclusiveness, in a diverse community, encourages and appreciates expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs. Respecting one another’s individual differences is critical in transforming a collection of diverse individuals into an inclusive, collaborative and excellent learning community.

**Inclusive Language:**It is expected that all course participants will use inclusive language in speaking and writing, and will use terms that do not create barriers to classroom community.

**Incompletes:  Incompletes are not permitted in this course. If you feel that you need to drop the course, please contact your instructor.** [Please see the Master's Student Handbook for Policies and Procedures about incompletes.](https://iliff.bloomfire.com/posts/2824414-incomplete-policies-and-procedures)

**Pass/Fail:**This course may be taken pass/fail. You do not need to provide a justification for your request. Masters students wishing to take the class pass/fail should discuss this with the instructor by the second week.

**Academic Integrity:**Students are expected to abide by Iliff’s statement on [Academic Integrity, as published in the Masters Student Handbook](https://iliff.bloomfire.com/posts/2818648-academic-integrity).  These policies include deception on an examination or class assignment, acts of forgery or unauthorized alteration of any official academic record or document, gaining credit for work that one has plagiarized from the work of another person. Students are responsible to understand plagiarism and how to avoid it. Iliff uses *Turnitin* software as one tool among others to identify possible instances of plagiarism.

**Core Values**: Students should be familiar with Iliff’s [Core Values](http://www.iliff.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Core_Values.pdf). (Academic Engagement, Intersectional Accountability, Relational Respect, and Dynamic Spirituality). The core values guides decisions and community life.

**Accommodations:**Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to accommodate student needs.  Students are encouraged to contact their assigned advisor to initiate the process of requesting accommodations.  The advising center can be contacted at [advising@iliff.edu](mailto:advising@iliff.edu) or by phone at 303-765-1146. For more information, see [Disability Services in Master Student Handbook on Bloomfire.](https://iliff.bloomfire.com/posts/2823995-disability-accommodations-ada)

**Writing Lab:**  The Iliff Writing Lab is available for students of any level for help beginning an assignment, organizing thoughts, or completing a final revision. Information can be found at in the [writing lab website](http://www.iliff.edu/writinglab/) or by emailing [writing@iliff.edu](mailto:writing@iliff.edu).

**Autobiographies and Memoirs (“Historical Partner”)**

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| Alice Walker, Anything We Love Can Be Saved: A Writer’s Activism |
| Barbara Brown Taylor, Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith |
| Cornel West, Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud |
| Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together |
| Dorothee Sollee, Against the Wind: Memoir of a Radical Christian |
| Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of the Legendary Catholic Social Activist |
| Howard Thurman, With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman |
| J. Philip Wogaman, An Unexpected Journey |
| Jerry Herships, Last Call: From Serving Drinks to Serving Jesus |
| Joan Chittister, Called to Question: A Spiritual Memoir |
| John Lewis, Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement |
| Kate Braestrup, Here If You Need Me – A True Story |
| Lillian Daniel and Martin Copenhaver, This Odd and Wondrous Calling: The Public and Private Lives of Two Ministers |
| Louise Zwick, Mercy Without Borders: The Catholic Worker and Immigration |
| Mab Segrest, Memoir of a Race Traitor |
| Madeleine L’Engle, The Crosswicks Journals, especially A Circle of Quiet |
| Malcolm X and Alex Haley, The Autobiography of Malcolm X |
| Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love |
| Nadia Bolz-Weber, Pastrix |
| Nora Gallagher, Things Seen and Unseen: A Year Lived in Faith |
| Paulo Freire and Myles Horton, We Make the Road by Walking |
| Reinhold Niebuhr, Leaves from the Notebooks of a Tamed Cynic |
| Renita J. Weems, Listening for God: A Minister’s Journey through Silence and Doubt |
| Sara Miles, Take this Bread: A Radical Conversion |
| Simone Weil, Waiting for God |
| Thomas Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander |
| [Veterans of Hope Oral Histories](http://www.veteransofhope.org/) Choose 5. http://www.veteransofhope.org (Bernice Johnson Reagon, James Lawson, Ruby Sales, G. Zoharah Simmons, Andrew Young, Dolores Huerta, Anne Braden, Charles H. Long, John Biggers, Vine Deloria, Tom Feelings, Sonia Sanchez). |