



## Educational Leadership & Policy Studies 429 SPIRITUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Spring, 2011

Saturdays, 9:00 – 2:00 p.m.

1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19, 4/9, 4/30

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### The Back Story

In his book, *Religious Pluralism in the Academy*, University of Vermont philosopher and self-professed agnostic Robert J. Nash writes:

*The simple fact for hundreds of thousands of students across America is that they do not think of their religious faith as an intellectual irrelevancy. And neither should we. I contend many of us [in the Academy] need to learn how to get over our gut-level religio-phobia. (p. 146)*

Two recent national studies of the religious and spiritual lives of youth suggest that Nash is, indeed, on to something. Christian Smith's longitudinal study of nearly 2,500 youth aged 13 – 23, for example, offers perhaps the most compelling empirical study of the salience of religion and spirituality in the lives of today's "emerging adults." According to Smith (2009), a "majority of American emerging adults – more than 60 percent – identify as religious" (p. 141), with about 15 percent "embracing a strong religious faith," another 30 percent "somewhat seriously" viewing and acting on some – but not all – of their religio-spiritual commitments, and yet another 15 percent demonstrating a receptive "openness" and "mild interest" in "spiritual and religious matters" (pp. 166-67).

Likewise, recent data from a UCLA-HERI national study of "Spirituality in Higher Education" underscore that matters of the soul and spirit are important to members of the millennial generation. Based on survey responses from more than 112,000 college students at 236 campuses nationally, Jennifer Lindholm (2007) and her colleagues found that:

*Today's college students place significant personal emphasis on matters related*

*to the interior dimensions of their lives. Moreover, they generally have high expectations for the role that their college or university should play in their emotional and spiritual development. For example, roughly two-thirds believe that it is “essential” or “very important” that their undergraduate experience enhances their self-understanding, prepare them for responsible citizenship, and support their emotional development. In essence, they are searching for deeper meaning in their life, looking for ways to cultivate their inner self, seeking to be compassionate and charitable, and striving to determine what they think and feel about the many issues confronting them and their communities. ( p. 10)*

This desire for “deeper meaning” is at the heart of the young adult spiritual quest (and, indeed, this holds true for all spiritual seekers regardless of age). As Sharon Daloz Parks, a theologian who specializes in young adult faith and spiritual development explains in *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams* (2000), the “central work of the young adult era . . . lie in the experience of the birth of critical awareness and the dissolution and recomposition of the meaning of self, other, world, and God” (p. 5). During these years, Parks argues many young adults begin to make the shift from “being a life” to understanding that they do, in fact, “have a life.” This shift in consciousness fuels their desire for a more robust understanding of the “meaning of their lives” and the ultimate questions that reside at its core: Who am I? Whose am I? What is the purpose of my life? What is the unique contribution I can make in this world? What is my religion or spirituality, and do I really need it to make meaning out of my life? What is God asking me to do with my life? And is there really anything more to life than what I know now?

For Parks, the young adult quest for meaning making can be understood broadly as an “expression of faith.” She understands faith as:

*The activity of seeking and discovering meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience . . . To be human is to dwell in faith, to dwell in the sense one makes out of life – what seems ultimately true and dependable about self, other, world, and cosmos (whether that meaning be strong or fragile, expressed in religious or secular terms). (p. 7)*

In this course, we will delve into this “meaning-making” process, not only by discussing religion, spirituality and faith in the Academy from an intellectual, critical “informational” perspective, but also by exploring how we personally have made – and continue to make – meaning out of our own spiritual lives and how these meanings are “forming” our vocational desires and professional commitments. Our meaning-making efforts will be guided largely through the devices of storytelling, reflective dialogue (alone and with others), ritual and contemplative practice, and action (various forms of active learning, once again doing alone and with others).

In *Religious Pluralism in the Academy*, Nash (2001) argues that people “construct religious stories to explain the nature of life, and to provide a sense of cosmic purpose, personal identity, and morality. A good religious narrative, therefore, helps believers to make sense of their lives” (p. 155). Following Nash’s example, I invite all of you to join me in exploring religion and spirituality in higher education this semester through the lenses of storytelling and reflective dialogue. Why take this route? Because I am persuaded that Nash has learned something important from his own experience teaching religion and spirituality in the Academy that can benefit us all:

*We ought to listen to each other's declarations of meaning as stories, because I believe it is often more fruitful (and far less argumentative and hurtful) to concentrate on whether our texts and our presentations are imaginative, provocative, powerful, and compelling at the level of narrative, than on whether they are true or false at the level of propositions or, in the case of religion, divine revelation. I prefer to ask: Does the story touch our lives in some way? Does it hold together? Does it accomplish what its author might have set out to do? Does the story transport, or entertain, or excite, or edify us? Does it help us to see the "real world" in a more imaginative way? Is the lesson in the story clearly rendered? Defensible? Realistic? Useful? What do you think of the author's use of language? (pp. 155-56)*

Finally, I recognize that the subject matter at the core of this course is mysterious. I also know that when human beings become uncomfortable with ambiguity they have a tendency to dig in their heels and declare, "No! That can't be correct! I KNOW that this is the TRUTH! I know I'm right!" Although we will discuss at length our desires for the nature and conduct of conversation in this course, once again I believe Nash's wisdom can provide us with valuable guidance on our journey:

*Where issues of personal meaning and purpose are concerned, all of us. . . are rank amateurs, learning as we go along. Everyone's journey is different and is to be honored. When it comes to the most complex existential questions . . . there are no certified experts. Consequently, the best traits for engaging in the type of experiment I am describing here are a profound sense of humility and a natural taste for adventure. It also helps to be intensely interested in people's religio-spiritual stories, particularly those I call students' quest narratives. (p. 201)*

Nash understands the wisdom embedded in one of the world's sacred texts: the New Testament. There, in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we are reminded that although we may desire to unravel the mysteries of God – and, indeed, God invites us to understand the mystery – our human efforts will always be limited to "see[ing] in a mirror, dimly" (I Cor 13:12).

Yes, religion, spirituality, and faith are relevant to today's "emerging adults" – and they are relevant to me as an academic and as a person of faith. I invite you to join me as a companion on an exciting journey of discovery this semester – one that, I hope, will not only enhance your critical knowledge of various religio-spiritual traditions and stories of faith and spirit in the Academy, but one that will also enrich your efforts to live as an educator who authentically "combines soul with role."

## Course Storyline

- ◆ Journeying Here, Journeying Together, Journeying Alone
- ◆ Setting A Context: Meaning Making in Emerging Adulthood
- ◆ The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults
- ◆ Stories We Live By: Young Adult Religio-Spiritual Narratives
- ◆ The Courage to Teach: Spirituality and Teaching in the Academy
- ◆ Called to Become Whole: Exploring Vocation and Purpose
- ◆ Combining Soul with Role: Living, Learning, and Leading as Educators

## Anticipated Learning Outcomes

A year (or more) after this course is over, I want and hope that you will:

### Foundational Knowledge Goals

- ▶ Remember that religion and spirituality are neither historically or contemporaneously “intellectually irrelevant” to students, faculty, and staff.
- ▶ Identify basic distinctions among religion, spirituality, faith, and vocation.
- ▶ Remember that there is a universal human hunger for connectedness, purpose and meaning.
- ▶ Identify the general features of faith development in early and middle adulthood.
- ▶ Identify major influences on the religious and spiritual lives of students, as well as the religio-spiritual factors that most affect emerging adult life outcomes.
- ▶ Understand that self-knowledge and assessment are fundamental to authentic leadership – whether as a teacher, learner, or administrator.

### Application Goals

- ▶ Use storytelling and reflective dialogue to explore, make sense of, and hear your own and others’ diverse religio-spiritual narratives.
- ▶ Evaluate critically and compassionately your biases and/or assumptions toward organized religion and personal spirituality and how they may influence your work as an educator.
- ▶ Assess critically six religio-spiritual narratives students present on campus and how they can be used to inform meaningful conversations with students.
- ▶ Use faith development theories and vocational discernment tools to make sense of your own spiritual and vocational story.
- ▶ Imagine yourself as a whole person committed to your own and others’ holistic development.

### Integration Goals

- ▶ Connect what you are learning about religion, spirituality, faith development, and vocational discernment to your own life and work as an educator.

### Human Dimension Goals

- ▶ Come to see yourself as an educator who authentically combines “soul with role.”
- ▶ Become more aware of your own religio-spiritual and vocational story, and the gifts and limitations that accompanies it.
- ▶ Interact sensitively and compassionately with your classmates, practicing an ethic that stresses “listening as an act of love.”
- ▶ Decide to become educators who model for others the courage to “live divided no more.”

### Caring Goals

- ▶ Get excited about exploring and learning from your own religio-spiritual and vocational journey.
- ▶ Become more interested in how religio-spiritual practices can inform your own ongoing holistic development.
- ▶ Become more curious about and genuinely interested in listening to the religio-spiritual stories that shape the lives of those with whom you teach, lead, and learn.

- ▶ Be ready to relate to students holistically and authentically.
- ▶ Value critical reflection and creative expression as vital to your work as an educator.

### Learning How to Learn Goals

- ▶ Be able to identify important resources for your own continued learning.

## This Course & the SOE Conceptual Framework

“Professionalism in Service of Social Justice” is the conceptual framework that informs our work in the School of Education. This course examines a number of issues, two of which are pertinent to the school’s social justice framework. First, despite an increasingly pluralistic college student population, questions of religion and spirituality often continue to be left “off the table” in campus wide diversity conversations. In this course, we’ll explore what might be contributing to the reluctance to discuss religion on campus while simultaneously engaging ourselves in an effort to broaden and enhance our own religio-spiritual literacy. Second, while all of the world’s great religions stress the importance of contemplative practice – and, indeed, our very own Ignatius Loyola argued that an Ignatian education should prepare people to live their lives as “contemplatives in action” – very few colleges and universities take contemplative knowing and pedagogy seriously. This is unfortunate, since research suggests that contemplative practices benefit people in many ways, reducing stress, preventing burnout, promoting deeper listening, and cultivating greater compassion for humanity and all creation. In this course, we will engage in a variety of contemplative practices to help us become more attentive, open, and compassionate educators. We will also discuss how these practices can sustain our own commitments to justice as well as infuse our teaching and leading in ways that promote greater awareness of and compassionate dialogue with others.

## Required Books & Readings

We will read three books this semester. All books are available for purchase at bookstore in the Terry Student Center on Loyola’s Water Tower Campus.

1. Nash, R.J. (2001). *Religious pluralism in the academy*. New York: Peter Lang.
2. Palmer, P.J., & Zajonc, A. (2010). *The heart of higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
3. Smith, C. (2009). *Souls in transition: The religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

There are also several assigned readings on the course Blackboard (Bb) site. Please check the site weekly for assigned readings. Bb is accessible at <http://blackboard.luc.edu/>

Additionally, each salon group (discussed later in the syllabus) will select and read one of the following books:

1. Miller, D. (2009). *A million miles in a thousand years*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Incorporated.

2. Coelho, P. (2006). *The alchemist*. San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers.
3. Pausch, R. (2008). *The last lecture*. New York: Hyperion Press.
4. Nouwen, H.J.M. (1992). *Life of the beloved: Spiritual living in a secular world*. New York: Crossroad.

In preparation for seminar discussions, I encourage you to interact with all assigned readings as “stories,” reflecting on each with the following questions in mind (many from Nash, p. 155-56):

- ◆ Does the story touch my life in some way?
- ◆ Does the story have some sense of coherence?
- ◆ Does the story accomplish what its author might have set out to do?
- ◆ Does the story transport, entertain, excite, or edify us?
- ◆ Does the story help us to see the “real world” in a more imaginative way?
- ◆ Is the lesson in the story clearly rendered? Defensible? Realistic? Useful?
- ◆ Did I find anything surprising in the stories for today? What engaged my curiosity? Why?

## My Approach to Teaching & Learning

### Two Kinds of Intelligence

*There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired,  
as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts  
from books and what the teacher says,  
collecting information from the traditional sciences  
as well as from the new sciences.*

*With such intelligence you rise in the world.  
You get ranked ahead or behind others in regard to your competence in retaining information.  
You stroll with this intelligence in and out of fields of knowledge,  
getting always more marks on your preserving tablets.*

*There is another kind of tablet,  
one already completed and preserved inside of you.  
A spring overflowing its springbox.  
A freshness in the center of the chest.  
This other intelligence does not turn yellow or stagnate.  
It's fluid,  
and it doesn't move from outside to inside through the conduits of  
plumbing-learning.*

*This second kind of knowing is a fountainhead  
from within you,  
moving out.*

*--Jellaludin Rumi (Sufi mystic)*

With which kind of intelligence are you most familiar?

With which kind of intelligence are you most comfortable?

Which kind of intelligence have you found to be most privileged in the educational institutions you've attended? Within the workplace? Our society?

Now, be still and respond honestly to this question: Which kind of intelligence would you most like to cultivate in your own life . . . right now?

Why?

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In this quotation, Rumi draws our awareness to a powerful reality that has often been ignored in educational practice: two kinds of intelligence exist – the acquired (developed through means outside of

ourselves) and the preserved (developed through means internal to ourselves). Rumi suggests that we need both to live fully, wisely, harmoniously.

With few exceptions, formal education in the United States stresses the development of “acquired intelligence.” Over the past several years, however, a small group of educators (who often write about “transformational learning” and “contemplative education”) have begun to encourage a greater balance between the “acquired” and the “preserved.” Their writings have reminded us that a truly liberal education *informs* and *forms*, fostering a way of knowing that is spacious enough to value “outer” knowledge and “inner” wisdom, critical analysis and self-understanding, external observation and inner awareness.

My own approach to teaching and learning has been influenced by the writings of these educators, as well as the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and other Christian mystics. Recently, I have also been introduced to a range of Eastern contemplative practices. All of these learnings have challenged me to embrace an approach to teaching and learning that honors what Laura Rendon, in her July/August 2000 *About Campus* article, refers to as an “academics of the heart.”

At its core, an “academics of the heart” is integrative, holistic, and humanistic. Defined by its five key features, Rendon (2000) underscores that while each “is unique and plays its own role in the teaching and learning process, [an] Academics of the Heart is about how the pieces are integrated . . . each forms a piece of the puzzle that makes a complete whole; each nourishes the other” (p. 3).

What, then, are those pieces that, when connected together, comprise an “academics of the heart?”

- ◆ FIRST, an “academics of the heart” *values the creation of learning environments that “engage the heart as well as the intellect”* (p. 3). In my case, this means that I view the classroom as a “sacred space,” a place where “holy work is being conducted” (p. 4). Here, I believe it’s important to emphasize rituals and ceremonies that honor learning as a sacred act as well as to respect all who have gathered together to teach and learn. Accordingly, in my classes I attempt to make a good faith effort to enact the following ways of being, hoping that others will elect to do likewise:
  - *reverence*, honoring the dignity of each learner (and text) we encounter;
  - *humility*, recognizing the limitations on our own bounded knowledge, welcoming the gifts of new knowledge that accompany our learning together, and living with gratitude the mystery of what we cannot yet fully understand;
  - *generosity*, listening and learning from a stance of “seek first to understand and then to be understood”;
  - *compassion*, understanding that all of us come to this space with our own needs and concerns, and that caring for each others’ hearts is as important as sharpening each others’ minds; and, finally,
  - *love* – yes, love – recognizing that we are gifts in our own right as well as to each other, and that the opportunity to teach and learn together in this space is also a gift we must “pay forward” by sharing our learnings with others in our various communities. Here, Augustine’s teaching serves us well: “Love, love and do what you will.”
- ◆ SECOND, since an “academics of the heart makes *“teaching and learning a relationship-centered*

*process,” it is fundamentally “about connection and community” (p. 4). What this means, concretely, is that I believe all of us will learn much more (and enjoy the learning process far more) if we attempt to see and interact with each other as “companions on a journey” whose intentions are to learn, grow, and develop alone and with one another than as individuals prematurely pigeonholed into defined roles (e.g., the “expert” professor who decides what to teach, when, where, and how; the “novice” student who sits passively and absorbs knowledge and participates in the “limited resources” game of competing with his/her peers for one of the few high grades in the class). Personally, while I know I have studied much and thought deeply about many things, my knowledge grows every time I teach a course because of the robust discussions I enjoy with students. I am a learner first and a teacher second. Similarly, I know that many of you have experiences of value as well as deep thoughts on the material we will discuss this semester – gifts that I want to encourage you to share with me and every other learner in this class. Viewing and interacting with each other as “companions on a journey,” however, will likely not happen if we are unable to develop a classroom culture that welcomes vulnerability, encourages transparency, and safeguards trust. To build such a culture, I know I have to “model the way,” becoming vulnerable, transparent, and trustworthy in my relationships with you and the subject we are seeking to know. My hope is that you will do likewise, taking the following words from Thomas Merton to heart: “What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the rest are not only useless, but disastrous.”*

- ◆ THIRD, an “academics of the heart” *“honors and respects diverse ways of knowing . . . opening itself to different voices, and especially to voices that have been silent” (p. 4). I am fond of the saying, “You can’t hate a person whose story you know.” Hate is bred in fear, and fear is often grounded in ignorance. Opening ourselves up to other perspectives – intellectual, affective, spiritual – has the potential to enlarge our awareness of humanity and to increase our compassion and love for the diverse abundance of all creation. As such, in this course you will see that I have been intentional about “making lots of room” for “different voices” of religio-spiritual experience as well as for the “still, small voice” of silence.*

On this latter point, I have a confession to make: I am an introvert who derives most of her energy from solitude. Most of you will find this hard to believe when you see me in class, however, since I also greatly enjoy people and conversation! Sometimes, however, I recognize that I simply need time to think and reflect on a point that is made before engaging in a conversation about it. I know that I’m not alone here; several of you may also share this need for silence in the midst of conversation. Of course, I understand that some of you do your best thinking “outloud.” I want to respect this diversity by asking us to embrace an ethic articulated in a course syllabus by English professor Mary Rose O’Reilley:

*This course moves rather slowly and covers material in depth rather than breadth. Try to be patient with going back over the material in silence and slow time. I don’t like to talk all the time, or to hear other people talk all the time. I often have to sit quietly in order to come up with an answer or analysis; sometimes I have to write a little, and perhaps I will stop class to do that: or perhaps that is not stopping class but continuing it in a different way [JGH adds that all of you should feel free to request “pauses in the action” when you feel you need them]. I think that if we proceed in this rather contemplative manner*

*we can get to deeper understandings. This is not McSchool; there are no golden arches out front!*

- ◆ FOURTH, an “academics of the heart” attends to “matters of difference as well as togetherness. . . [Too] often we think we have to choose between community and individual expression. But as Margaret J. Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers . . . explain in “A Simpler Way,” life requires . . . honoring this paradox. Collectively we should discuss: What called us together? What did we believe was possible together that was not possible alone? What did we hope to bring forth by linking with others? (p. 5). I have no more to say here than this. My hope is that we will embrace the paradox in our learning community this term.
- ◆ FIFTH, an “academics of the heart engages in contemplative practice. Here comes the hard part – an academics of the heart begins not with what we do with or for others; it begins with what we do with ourselves. We cannot engage the hearts of our students without knowing how to engage our own hearts” (p. 5). And, with that, we have come full circle to where we began: a truly liberal education is not just about imparting and mastering external information (or “acquired intelligence”); it is also fundamentally about human formation (or tapping into “preserved” intelligence that cultivates inner awareness and self-understanding/knowledge).

From where I stand, I believe Laura Rendon is correct when she writes, “Contemplative practice is at the heart of the academics of the heart – it is the center of the mystery in the adventure of creating a new dream of teaching and learning” (p. 5). Given the subject matter of this course – as well as Ignatius’ teaching that a truly Jesuit education prepares its graduates to live as “contemplatives in action” – I cannot imagine *not* integrating contemplative practices into our weekly sessions! I will do this in two ways. First, I know from my own experience and with others that beginning class on a contemplative note (and one that often welcomes silence) often generates a life giving tone for what follows. With this in mind, I hope that you will join me and your peers in beginning our time together each week with an “opening offering.” Second, I have built contemplative practices into the formation requirement for this course. I know that at first engaging in some form of contemplative practice will be challenging. But I also know that, without it, none of us can ever become “academics of the heart” who live in an integrated, compassionate, and authentic manner. My hope is that by experiencing contemplation in this course, you will begin to escape the burden that too many young people feel in our culture today – a burden expressed candidly by Wayne Muller in his book, *Sabbath*:

*Whether they are Hispanic or Native American, Caucasian or Black, the more their lives speed up, the more they feel hurt, frightened, and isolated. Despite their good hearts and their equally good intentions, their work in the world rarely feels light, pleasant, healing. Instead, as it all piles endlessly upon itself, the whole experience of being alive begins to melt into one enormous obligation. It becomes the standard greeting everywhere: I am so busy.*

The second century church father, St. Irenaeus, once wrote that the “greatest glory of God is a person full alive!” Contemplation can help us to hear the “still, small voice” inside of us, deepen our concentration, broaden our awareness, and foster “deep learning” and understanding. Within the context of a liberal education that values an “academics of the heart,” it also promises to “wake us up” by tapping into our full humanity as learners who bring mind, heart,

body, and soul into all that we are and do.

In this class, then, my hope is to teach and learn with you in ways that will help all of us to become “academics of the heart.” I recognize that this approach to teaching and learning will sometimes be uncomfortable, awkward, and challenging. I also know deep in my heart, however, that if we dare to reach out and become companions to each other on this journey, our adventure will be a life-giving, inspiring, and enlightening one.

I do hope that you will join me this semester as companions – alone in solitude and together in community – who are committed to creating a place where “our spirits can be renewed and our souls restored.” I believe – and I hope you will to – that the “classroom” can be, as bell hooks (2003) tells us,

*a place where paradise can be realized, a place of passion and possibility, a place where spirit matters, where all that we learn and know leads us into greater connection, into greater understanding of life lived in community” (p. 183)*

## Evidence of Understanding: Evaluation Methods & Criteria

It is my perspective that evaluation should serve as an enriching activity that (1) helps us to demonstrate our understandings of a given subject to others, (2) provides for critical and constructive feedback that further clarifies and enhances understanding, and (3) promotes self-knowledge through self-assessment of what we have learned and the implications these new understandings may have for our continuing growth and development as educator-leaders.

Accordingly – and taking a cue from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in their excellent book, *Understanding by Design* – I have chosen to emphasize an approach to evaluation in this course that is grounded firmly in the following two questions:

- ◆ What kinds of performance or behaviors would provide authentic, “revealing and sufficient evidence” that the participant really understands the course material?
- ◆ What criteria will we use to assess the degree of understanding participants have of course material?

Regarding **evidence of understanding** (question one above), I am asking all students this term to complete TWO REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS as well as to select TWO ELECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS (one drawn from each of the “Elective A” and “Elective B” categories designated below). All are designed to allow you to (1) demonstrate your emerging understandings of content discussed in this course, (2) explore the relevance of these understandings within your personal and professional experiences, and (3) prompt reflection on the implications these understandings may have for your holistic growth and professional practice.

### MENU OF ASSIGNMENTS

Portfolio Item	Required Assignment?	Due Date	Points Possible
<i>Formation Covenant Activities &amp; Final Reflective Narrative Self-Evaluation (“Dear Jennifer” letter)</i>	<b>YES</b>	Formation Covenant due via email: January 25  Final Reflective “Dear Jennifer” Self-Evaluation due: April 30	30
<i>Faithful participation in and contributions to: (1) class discussions, (2) “salon” conversations, and (3) salon opening class offering</i>	<b>YES</b>	Ongoing participation  Salon-led Opening Offering TBD (five dates to choose from: 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19, 4/9, 4/30)	15
<i>Autobiographical “Religio-Spiritual” Story</i>	<i>Elective A</i>	<i>Individual stories will be shared with salon members on: March 5</i>	20

<i>"This I Believe" Essay</i>	<i>Elective A</i>	Individual essays will be shared with salon members on: March 5	20
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<i>"Personal Mission Statement"</i>	<i>Elective A</i>	Individual essays will be shared with salon members on: March 5	20
<i>Storycorp Interview with an educator who combines "Soul with Role" with accompanying reflective narrative</i>	<i>Elective B</i>	Individual storycorp interviews will be shared with salon members on: April 9	35
<i>Group Roadtrip Nation presentation</i>	<i>Elective B</i>	Group RT Nation videos will be shared with all class members on: April 9	35
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE</b>			<b>100</b>

### REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

**1. Formation Covenant & Final Reflective Narrative Self-Evaluation ("Dear Jennifer" letter) (Formation Covenant contract due JANUARY 29; "Dear Jennifer" letter due APRIL 30).** We know from learning theory that professionals enhance and improve their practice when they engage in reflective inquiry about their own practice. We further know that time spent in meditation and contemplation not only has stress-reducing effects on the human body (see, for example, Andrew Newberg M.D. and Mark Waldman's 2009 book, *How God Changes Your Brain*), but also that these activities help us to connect more intimately with our authentic selves, creation, and the divine. In light of this, I am asking each of you to keep a reflective journal throughout the duration of this course. This assignment is intended to provide a "sacred space" where, as Parker Palmer puts it, you can "listen for guidance from within" as you try to make sense of what you have observed and learned through three key sources of experience: (1) a set of spiritual practices you will elect and commit to for the duration of this course, (2) our class readings, and (3) our class discussions.

This assignment has **four components**.

**FIRST**, I am asking you to craft a "formation covenant." Appendix A of this syllabus offers a template for your covenant statement; use it as a guide to help you create your own. Please note that it is up to you to select those contemplative practices and formation activities you honestly believe you can commit to over the next 15 weeks (see below). **Your formation covenant is due either at the end of class on January 23 or, if you prefer, you may submit it via email to me no later than 11:59 p.m. on Monday, January 25th.**

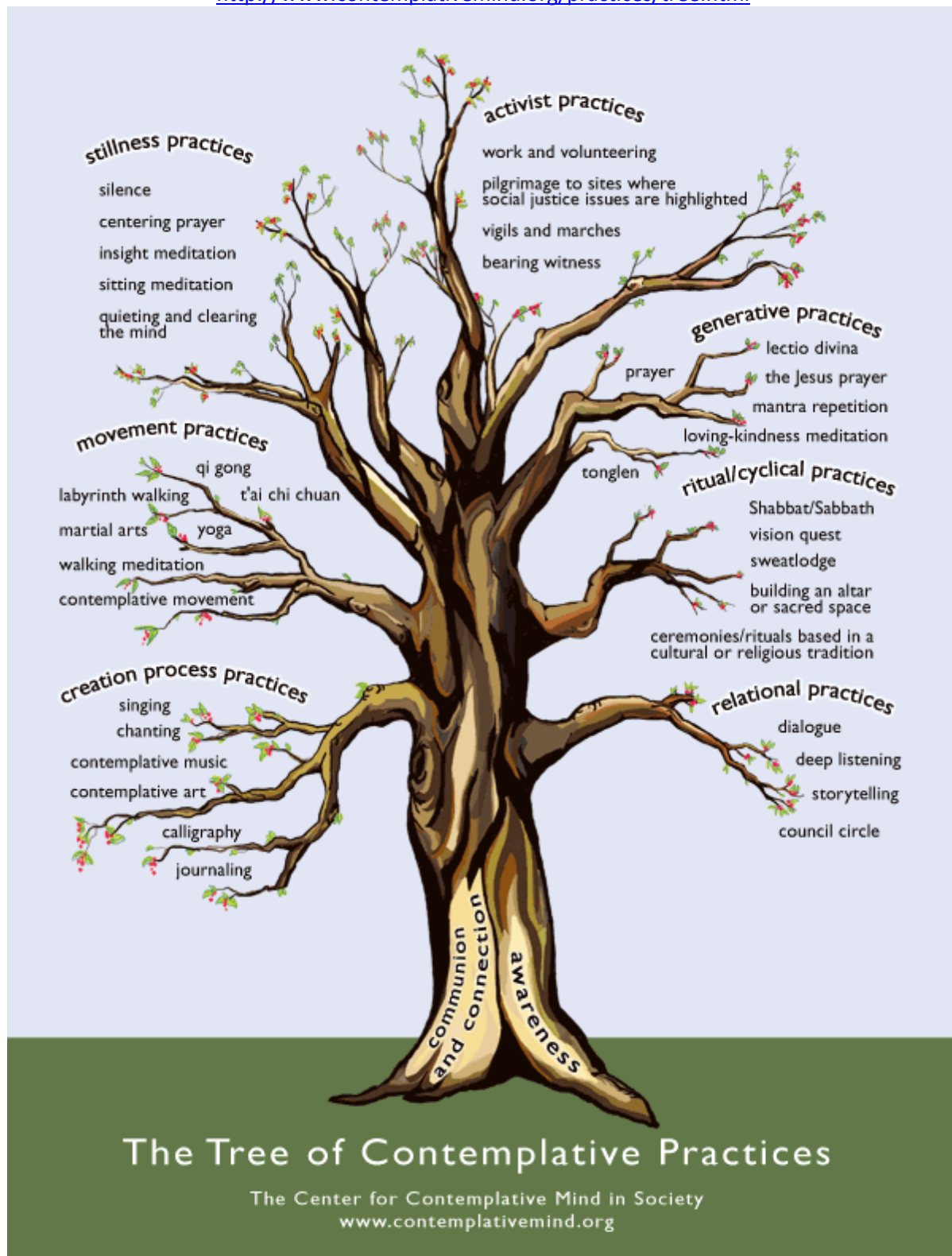
**SECOND**, and as part of fulfilling your covenant, I would like you to engage in a near-daily contemplative practice and a monthly formation activity. From my perspective, it is incongruent to teach a course on "Spirituality and Higher Education" and NOT include an element that invites intentional spiritual formation. As Laura Rendon has written, if we are to foster holistic growth and development with others, we must first "begin with what we do with ourselves" rather than for others. "We cannot engage the hearts of our students without knowing how to engage our own hearts. . . . Contemplative inner work awakens the spirit, leads to greater clarity of thought, and allows us to engage the heart in every aspect of our lives" (2000, p. 5).

For your covenant, please (1) select one contemplative practice from the “Tree of Contemplative Practices” to engage in 3 – 5 times a week across the duration of the semester and (2) a set of three formational activities from the list below to complete during February, March, and April (you may choose three different activities or the same activity for all three monthly outings). Of course, I am open to other ideas; please see me if you wish to pursue a practice that is not referenced by the “tree of contemplative practices” listed below.

**Tree of Contemplative Practices**

(practice 3 – 5 times/week)

For information (“how to’s”) on these practices, visit  
<http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.html>



### Monthly Spiritual “Date”

(choose one activity to practice for 2 hours monthly or three different activities, one each for September, October, and November)

- ◆ Take a long, solitary walk along the beach or in the woods
- ◆ Visit an art gallery and spend some “real time” contemplating a few pieces that speak to you
- ◆ Attend a worship service in a faith tradition outside of your own
- ◆ Go on a weekend retreat (Christians might be interested in the one day and weekend retreats offered by Charis Ministries, a Jesuit group focused on the spirituality of 20 and 30somethings – see [www.charisministries.org](http://www.charisministries.org))
- ◆ Spend a few hours reading – or writing – poetry
- ◆ Dance, do yoga, jog, bike – do something physical (and preferably alone) that will help you pay attention to your body and focus your attention on the life within in
- ◆ Engage in a devotional practice within your faith tradition (or try something outside of it!) (examples: praying with beads or icons, fasting, Eucharistic adoration)
- ◆ Attend a bible study
- ◆ Attend a workshop at the Shambhala Center of Chicago (7331 N Sheridan Road / 773-743-8147)
- ◆ Volunteer and serve others less fortunate or less privileged than yourself
- ◆ Paint or draw for a few hours
- ◆ Sing or listen to music for a few hours
- ◆ Consider attending a University Ministry activity at Loyola – for example,
- ◆ Participate in or observe a University Ministry activity at Loyola – check [www.luc.edu/missionandministry](http://www.luc.edu/missionandministry) for more details on events that Loyola’s Hillel, Muslim Student Association, Hindu Student Association, the Protestant Ministry, and Catholic Life offer. At the Water Tower campus, there are opportunities to serve a meal through the Labre Ministry (contact Nichole Chmela ([nchmela@luc.edu](mailto:nchmela@luc.edu)) for more information.

**THIRD**, I’d like you to journal about your experience. Please note that I am not asking you to “keep a journal.” As Jackie Bergan and Marie Schwan have written, “journaling is [a form of] meditative writing [that] is like writing a letter to one we love. We recall memories, clarify convictions, and our affections well up within us. In [meditative] writing, we may discover emotions are intensified. Because of this, journaling can also serve in identifying and healing hidden, suppressed emotions such as anger, fear, and resentment. It also can give us a deeper appreciation for the written word as we encounter it is sacred texts.”

Notice that journaling is NOT focused on writing a critique of your experience. It is also not the same as writing a “critical reflection paper.” As you move through this course, I’d like you to journal about your experience – with the readings, class discussions, and your selected contemplative practice(s)/spiritual date activities. Write more from your heart than your head; be open to listening to your spirit and giving it expression on paper. Generally speaking, I find that it’s very helpful (and formative!) to journal at least two or three times a week; I often do this after completing my morning contemplative practices. Sometimes my journaling is in the form of a letter to God, sometimes it is a poem, other times I simply write my own reflective musings. Since this is your journaling practice, however, I invite you to approach it in your own way, on your own time, and using whatever format(s) works best for you.

I will NOT read your journal entries, nor are you required to submit them to me. I will trust that you will engage in whatever journaling you commit to in your formation covenant.

**FOURTH**, I am adapting an assignment from Robert Nash’s course on “Religious Pluralism and Education” and asking you to write a reflective narrative self-evaluation on your semester’s experience in ELPS 429: Spirituality and Higher Education. While Nash invites students to articulate the grade they believe they deserve and to offer a “defense, rationale, or plea” to support their claim, I believe his interest (and certainly “my” interest) is in challenging students to articulate clearly, compellingly, and creatively what they “got out of” the time they just spent in the course. Toward this end, all students in Nash’s class are required to submit a 10 page “Dear Robert” letter for their final narrative self-evaluation.

I tend to share Nash’s assumptions about grades (e.g., that they are “more of a hindrance than a stimulus” for getting students “to dig deeply in the subject matter of a course like this”). Because of this, I am open to having you recommend and then offer a rationale for the grade you believe you should receive from me for this course. THAT SAID, I’m **far less interested** in reading a defense for a grade and **far more interested** in hearing you articulate and make sense of the **MEANING** this course had for you – as a soulful person and educator who is likely committed to combining “soul with role.”

Accordingly, **I’d strongly prefer that your narrative self-evaluation address this latter interest than the former** (if you go this route, however, feel free to recommend a grade for yourself near the end of the essay....I doubt you’ll need to defend it much, since, I suspect, the pages preceding it will be so thoughtful that your recommendation will make thoroughly good sense). Like Nash, I would like your narrative self-evaluation in the form of a personal letter to me (yes, that’s a “Dear Jennifer” letter), and I’d like it to be between 8 – 12 double-spaced, typewritten pages. While I do not require that you address the following in your narrative, I suspect you might find the following questions useful in assessing the impact of this course on your personal and professional development. Remember, however, that if you choose to respond to any of these questions, I would like the final version to be in the form of a personal letter to me and **NOT** an academic essay that works through each in a lockstep manner.

*General, overarching questions:*

- ◆ As you leave this class, what are the two or three most important learnings that you are taking with you? What has made these significant for you?
- ◆ What did I find most surprising about my experience in this course? What impact did this “surprising” development have on me?
- ◆ Different experiences affect us in different ways. Some have lots of “energy” – and that energy can be positive or negative. Reflect back over your time in this course. What experiences held a lot of energy for you (whether positive or negative – be concrete in describing them). Why do you believe these experiences were so “energizing” for you? Do you think any will linger with you for some time beyond the course? Why?
- ◆ What am I most grateful for during my time in this course? Least grateful? Why?
- ◆ What impact has this course had on my desire to lead, learn, or live more with “soul”? Be concrete in your illustrations. How will these learnings inform my future practice as a “soulful educator?”

*Structured Questions related to specific course features:*

- ◆ Return to the “This I Believe,” “personal mission statement” or “autobiographical religio-spiritual story” you composed earlier in the semester. Re-read it carefully. What adjustments would you make to your essay or story – if any – now that you are nearing completion of this course? Perhaps you have developed some new insights that you’d like to add, or perhaps you’d like to pen an epilogue to your piece that includes new questions you’re asking yourself as a result of your overall experiences in ELPS 429. In either case, write about those and their impact on your unfolding journey.
- ◆ Over the duration of the semester, you committed to one or more contemplative practices, a monthly spiritual “date,” and to journaling about your experience with both (and other dimensions of this course). Now that you have come to the end of term, what have been the challenges and gifts of this formative adventure for you? What did you learn about yourself and your own spirituality? Has your experience inclined you toward certain contemplative or spiritual practices? Disinclined you toward others? Reaffirmed one or more spiritual practices that you have engaged in previously? Whatever the case, offer some concrete reflections on how this component of the course affected your own holistic growth . . . and, as you see fit, your growth as a higher education professional as well.
- ◆ Reflect on the lessons you learned from completing either the individual StoryCorps interview or the group Roadtrip Nation project. How did your engagement in either activity affect you, personally and, perhaps, professionally? What overall impact did it have on your course experience this term?
- ◆ In this class, we paid attention to our own spiritual journeys as well as to broader narratives about faith development in young adults, the religious and spiritual lives of students (and the impact of various “factors” that influence emerging adult religiosity and spirituality), the religio-spiritual stories students tell, and how various practices can foster the holistic development of those who teach, learn, and lead in higher education. Reflect on the discussions we’ve had and the readings you’ve encountered (including the recommended text your salon group read this term). In light of your reflection, how are you making sense of your “faith” (broadly defined) commitments and how they will – or will not – affect your practice as a higher education professional? Be concrete in your reflection about what has – or has not – influenced you and how you will – or will not – act differently in your practice as a result of your emerging understandings.
- ◆ I have tried to be creative and open about the assignments I’ve required for this class, as well as welcoming of the diverse conversations we have experienced this term. But I make no claim to have a lock on the design of this course. If you are so inclined, I invite you to be creative and reflect on what this course has meant for you – and how you or others could possibly get even more meaning out of it – by composing a question, in-class activity, or required assignment/project that you’d like to see offered the next time this course is taught. In addition to describing the question/activity/assignment, explain why you believe it would contribute in a meaningful way to promoting the overarching goals/intentions of the course.

Although your “Dear Jennifer” letter can be informal, it should be mindfully written, integrate some of the required and recommended readings (primarily the book you read for your salon group) and reflect a fluent command of the English language (both in terms of narrative flow and proper usage of grammar/mechanics). Generally speaking, I find that students enjoy and get much more out of this assignment when they write this letter principally for themselves. I encourage you to do that, using this final narrative self-evaluation as an opportunity to work through what this class has meant for your

ongoing formation as a soulful educator. I suspect if you do so, your narrative will have the depth of authenticity and integrity that will more than persuade me of your active engagement in this course.

Your “Dear Jennifer” letter is due in class on April 30<sup>th</sup> (if you prefer to submit it electronically rather than in hard copy, feel free to do so). Please be prepared to share some of your musings with members of your salon that day.

**2. Faithful participation in and contributions to class and salon discussions (Ongoing; salon led opening offering TBD).** In her book, *Turning to One Another*, Margaret Wheatley writes that “conversation is the way human beings have always thought.” Good thinking doesn’t happen in a vacuum; it happens in dialogue with others. Like Wheatley, I believe that conversation helps us not only to “discover shared meaning by helping us to discover each other,” but that it also underscores what I consider to be a “truth” of our humanity: that “we are never as separate” from one another as we might think. Good conversations connect us at deeper levels – as unique individuals and as interdependent partners, as culturally storied people and as people bound together by the collective human story, as intelligent people and as imaginative human beings whose communal wisdom is always greater than the sum of their individual parts.

With this in mind, I have designed this course to ensure that conversation is at its core. Earlier, I elaborated on the important role that storytelling will play in this class; to support this form of conversation (as well as others), I hope you will not only engage me and your peers in larger class discussions but, more specifically, will also enter fully into dialogue with members of your assigned “salon” this term.

**What is a “salon?”** The word, “salon” is French for “drawing room.” During the time of the French revolution, salons operated throughout France, often generating lively and spirited conversation on a range of topics. For our purposes, our class “salons” will function largely as places for small group conversation and reflective dialogue. I hope that these salons will provide a welcoming, safe space for class members to get to know one another better as well as to explore topics of mutual interest, some of which may be particularly challenging. I will commit 90 minutes of every class session (with the possible exception of session 6) to salon conversation. I have chosen to do this for three reasons: (1) I truly believe that conversation is at the “heart” of all meaningful teaching and learning; (2) I believe equally passionately that we will not have the courage to engage our students in “bigger questions” of faith, religion, spirituality, purpose or vocation unless we sound our own thoughts on these questions within ourselves and with others; and (3) I believe that most of us are generally poorly-equipped to deal constructively with the often uncanny questions and “conversational” behaviors our students present to us because we have either (a) not encountered them ourselves (and are taken aback by them) or (b) have not learned (or had the opportunity to practice) the skills necessary to engage in “deep listening” and respectful, open-handed dialogue.

At our first class session, I will assign each of you to five separate salons (not to exceed four members total). Generally speaking, all salon conversations will focus on one or more of the readings for the assigned class session; I will provide some introductory assistance to help guide those conversations. I will expect, however, that **every member take responsibility for serving as the convener/facilitator for one salon session.** Your group is welcome to meet wherever it believes it will *feel most comfortable and free to engage in meaningful conversation*: in our classroom, at a local coffee or tea shop, in a student lounge in our building or the Terry Center.

As part of your salon experience, I would like every group to prepare and facilitate an **“opening offering”** to begin our class sessions. The purpose of the “opening offering” is to provide a “beginning space” to calm down, focus, and ready ourselves for the teaching and learning that awaits. The opening offering that your salon prepares should be no longer than 15 minutes in duration, reflective in tone, connected in some fairly obvious way to the topic of the particular class session, and creatively expressive of your group’s spirit. I have used opening offerings for some time now, and typically draw upon poetry, music, prayers or spiritual practices from various faith traditions, stories, art, or symbols that evoke class members to enter – sometimes directly, other times indirectly – into the course topic for the day. I encourage you to be as creative as you like; this is your time, as a salon, to share your collective spirit with your classmates. **Your salon will sign up to prepare ONE opening offering on February 5, February 19, March 5, March 19, April 9 or April 24.**

Additionally, I am asking each salon group to select a book from the recommended readings list and discuss it as part of one or more salon meetings. If you would like to space the reading of your selected book over the course of the term and discuss it at a few salon gatherings, that is fine with me; if you’d prefer to set a due date to have the entire book read and then to discuss it at one meeting, that is fine with me as well! All of the books I have chosen are easy and enjoyable reads, and I know that they will evoke good conversation. You need not tell me when you are discussing your book or provide me with a summary of your discussion. I will expect, however, to read something about your selected book in the final “Dear Jennifer” letter that you will write to me. This can be brief; as you can well imagine, my primary interest will be in the formative impact the book had on your unfolding understanding of yourself as a person journeying toward wholeness.

I recognize that conversation is often messy. It seldom follows straight lines. As Wheatley reminds us, conversation can seldom be easily managed; it takes time. It requires us to listen carefully, to move beyond the comforts of neat and clear-cut categories, to welcome the stranger as well as the familiar guest, and to trust that in the messiness of all that is shared there is the real possibility of discovering collective wisdom. From where I sit, conversation requires courage, patience, open-handed generosity, mutual respect, time, and faith – the kind of faith that appreciates the depth of wisdom embedded in knowing that “conversation is always the way humans have thought together.” My deep dream for us this term is to participate actively and contemplatively in conversation – whether through large group discussions, contemplative opening offerings, storytelling, or salon gatherings – and, through this naturally human way of being together, to teach and learn much about the diversity of religio-spiritual narratives that mark our own and our students’ lives as members of the human race.

### **ELECTIVE A CATEGORY (choose one assignment)**

**1. Autobiographical “Religio-Spiritual” story (due MARCH 5).** Much of what we will do in this course has been influenced by my own belief that human beings are, by nature, storytelling beings. Our personal stories, or narratives, are shaped by a great many things: the schools we attended, the families in which we were reared, the economic realities of our upbringing, and the neighborhoods and surrounding “local cultures” that helped us come to know the world and our place in it. Indeed, our lives are stories, telling us much about our quests, our journeys, our “pilgrimages from here to there” (Nash, p. 60).

For many of us, religion and spirituality have been (and continue to be) powerful influences in the shaping of our life stories. If you elect to complete this assignment, I’d like you to reflect deeply on your own “religio-spiritual narrative,” or story. According to Nash, a good religio-spiritual story can help

us make more robust sense of the meaning and purpose of our lives, clarify our sense of personal identity, and shed light on what we value and why. My hope is that in writing your own story, you will develop a richer sense of your own religio-spiritual quest – including where you have come from, why you are now here, and where you may be going – as well as important insights into what your quest has been teaching you about “who you are, whom you belong to, how you should behave, and how you might come to grips with the mystery of your existence” (Nash, p. 63).

Although I would like you to limit your story to no less than five and no more than 10 double-spaced typewritten pages, I am not stipulating any other required elements for your narrative. It’s your story, and all of our stories will be different. I invite you to compose your autobiography in a way that speaks most authentically to your own truth; include what you believe has been – and might or might not continue to be – foundational to your faith/spiritual story. Your key challenges in this assignment will be (1) to remain truthful and authentic to yourself, and (2) to tell a good story that sheds light on your personal religio-spiritual quest or journey.

These questions may help to “prime” the storytelling pump. I offer them merely as suggestions; do with them what you will.

- ◆ When did you first become aware of the importance of religion or spirituality in your life? Who – or what – drew your attention to religio-spiritual issues at that time?
- ◆ What are your earliest memories of practicing a religion? Looking back, what religious symbols, practices, events, or experiences captured your imagination? Why?
- ◆ Can you recall a particularly memorable event or experience when you felt deeply the presence of God or a higher power (hereafter “the divine”) in your life? The experience might have occurred during a happy or sad time, recently or many years ago, in a typically religious or non-religious context. What was the experience, and how did it shape how you viewed the divine in your life? How you believe the divine viewed you? How did this experience, in turn, influence your religio-spiritual quest (and practices)?
- ◆ What have been some of the most difficult challenges you have experienced on your religio-spiritual journey? Some of your great joys? How have these experiences helped you make meaning out of the divine, your relationship to the divine, and the connection (if any) among you, the divine, and the purpose and meaning of your life?
- ◆ If someone asked you to describe yourself religiously or spiritually, what label (or set of labels/descriptors) would you use today? What would you have said at an earlier time in your life (perhaps at the beginning of your first year in college)? What do the descriptors you offer suggest about your religio-spiritual beliefs and values?
- ◆ Of the six different types of religio-spiritual “stories” Nash outlines in his book, which, if any, fits best with your own story as a child? Young adult? Your life at this moment? How do one or more of Nash’s stories help you to make meaning of your own spiritual quest/journey? Has reading Nash’s stories helped to raise new spiritual questions for you that you’d like to explore?
- ◆ What key questions or issues have driven your religio-spiritual journey so far? What questions remain unresolved? What questions have been answered? How have your questions changed over time? What, as the poet Rilke writes, are you currently doing to “love and live these questions” in your life right now?

An assignment of this sort cannot be graded, per se, on its “content.” What I can comment on, however, is the following:

- ◆ **Authenticity:** Is there a felt sense of authenticity and vulnerability in your story?
- ◆ **Clarity:** Is the storyline in the essay easy to follow? How well do you identify and articulate your story?
- ◆ **Persuasiveness:** Are there “concrete” examples offered in the narrative that illustrate clearly the particularities of your story and provide a context for understanding the reflective insights you offer within it?
- ◆ **Style:** Does the story read as a story? In other words, does it have a beginning, middle, and end? Does it show a sense of movement, such that it speaks to the development of religio-spiritual insights or understandings over time?
- ◆ **Fluency and Grammar/Mechanics:** Does the story demonstrate a fluent use of the English language and is it free of spelling and grammatical errors?

**2. “This I Believe” essay (due MARCH 5).** I have adapted this assignment from the “This I Believe” radio series broadcast on National Public Radio (NPR). According to its website, the famed news reporter, Edward R. Murrow, hosted the daily broadcast of “This I Believe” in the early 1950s, which featured a broad range of Americans “sharing insights about [the] individual values that shaped their daily actions.” These essays were eventually compiled into a book and sold more copies than any other book at the time except the Bible. Fifty years later, NPR revived the “This I Believe” radio broadcast, “Inviting Americans of all ages and all perspectives to examine their belief systems and then write a 350-500 word personal essay.” The result was, once again, a very popular radio broadcast and a unique curricular idea to inspire thousands of Americans – from middle school to old age – to explore, listen to, and develop a healthy respect for the values and beliefs of all Americans.

The purpose of “This I Believe” is a simple one. According to executive producer Dan Gediman, the goal of the broadcast “is not to persuade Americans to agree on the same beliefs. Rather, the hope is to encourage people to begin the much more difficult task of developing respect for beliefs different from their own.”

Given the diverse religio-spiritual beliefs that not only shape our nation but today’s world, I can only imagine how valuable it might be for us to have to engage the challenging task of articulating our own beliefs. If you elect to complete this assignment, I invite you to write a 350- 500 word essay (about 3 – 4 double spaced pages with 1” margins) that authentically describes an idea or principle in which you deeply believe. Please select a belief that is deeply important to you and which you will be able to illustrate well through a personal story. Additionally, you will need to discuss one or more lessons you have learned from living this belief over time. If you’re not able to do all three of these things, your essay will fall flat. As Kyle Dickson and Cole Bennett put it in their “This I Believe” curriculum writing guide”:

*For this exercise to be meaningful, you must make it wholly your own. This short statement isn’t all you believe; it’s simply a way to introduce others to some things you value. In spite of the name, your belief need not be religious or even public. You may decide to focus on commitments to family, service, political action, or the arts. As you look for a focus, try to choose concrete language and to find something that helps others understand your past, present, and future choices.*

To guide you in the construction of your essay, I am reproducing from the “This I Believe” website the following suggestions to guide your writing (see <http://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/>):

*We invite you to contribute to this project by writing and submitting your own statement of personal belief. We understand how challenging this is—it requires such intimacy that no one else can do it for you. To guide you through this process, we offer these suggestions:*

*Tell a story: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be real. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.*

*Be brief: Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. That’s about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.*

*Name your belief: If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.*

*Be positive: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.” Make your essay about you; speak in the first person.*

*Be personal: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.*

I strongly encourage you to visit the “This I Believe” website (<http://thisibelieve.org/essays/featured/>) and read/listen to at least three featured essays in order to get a “feel” for what a “This I Believe” essay is all about. Additionally, you may find the following suggestions by Dickson and Bennett helpful in crafting your essay:

- ◆ **Write from your authentic voice.** *The writer must create a narrative persona (or stance) that the reader believes authentic, or else the text risks coming off as trite or condescending. Voice is a difficult feature to discuss in writing, but readers can describe the stance a writer is taking as they react to a given style, dialogue, and point of view; they must choose whether to believe or identify. Thus, writers must seek to reveal true experiences, moments of relevance, and believed lessons learned; else, write fictional accounts as if they believed them to be true.*
- ◆ **Be mindful to narrative coherence.** *Most often covered in literary settings, the feature of narrative coherence regards the business of telling stories well: vivid description, controlled and appropriate pacing, subtle transitions, lively dialogue, and rich character development, for example. A personal essay generally relates a story and lessons learned; thus, if the storytelling fails, the whole essay usually fails.*
- ◆ **Stress communal relevance.** *At the end of the essay, the reader has the right to ask “So what?” and have it answered. A writer does not merely tell a story for personal reasons, but in order to communicate a larger truth to the reader; the story is the vehicle on which this truth, often*

*metaphorically, rides. The personal essay argues, in a way, that the beauty associated with being a human can often best be expressed through the sharing of stories. Thus, there often appear two distinct sections of a personal essay: narrative and comment. Sometimes they are neatly divided, with an immediate lapsing into a story with brief comments at the end, but such segmenting is not always the case. Other writers will choose to comment along the way, interspersing authorial intrusions into the narrative to call attention to pertinent ideas. Whatever the format, the reader understands the reason and the importance of the story beyond its aesthetic appeal. (Dickson & Bennett, pp. 5-6. Retrieved from <http://thisibelieve.org/documents/ThisIBelieveCollegeCurriculum.pdf>)*

An assignment of this sort cannot be graded, per se, on its “content.” What I can comment on, however, is the following:

- ◆ **Authenticity:** Is there a felt sense of authenticity and vulnerability in your essay?
- ◆ **Clarity:** Is the storyline in the essay easy to follow? How well do you identify and articulate your core belief?
- ◆ **Persuasiveness:** Can I, as a reader, say after reading your essay, “Ok, I can respect that?” Is there concrete evidence provided that supports your belief (usually in the forms of a memorable story or through vivid details)?
- ◆ **Style:** Does the essay read well? Does the essay have a clear beginning, middle, and end? Does the introduction capture attention and interest, and is this interest carried throughout the essay? Does the conclusion “punch home the main point?”
- ◆ **Fluency and Grammar/Mechanics:** Does the essay demonstrate a fluent use of the English language and is it free of spelling and grammatical errors?

**3. “Personal Mission Statement” (due MARCH 5).** Another way for us to express our religio-spiritual values and beliefs is through the construction of a personal mission statement. Writing a personal mission statement can be a challenging task because it forces us to clarify what values matter most to us. In the “This I Believe” essay, we are challenged to focus on one specific core belief and to illustrate that belief through a concrete story or illustration; in a personal mission statement, we are asked to commit to paper those core values and beliefs that we most want to guide our life, but we are not required to persuade anyone else about them.

What is a personal mission statement? In the most general terms, a personal mission statement provides a clear, succinct statement of your values and beliefs as a person, and how you can use your talents and gifts to make a difference in the world. Mission statements help us to clarify what we value, what we’re good at, where we want to make a difference, and how we want to focus our energy and actions over the long haul. They are, in some ways, aspirational documents because through them we articulate what matters most to us, who we truly want to become, and how we want to be remembered. As such, they are positive in tone; concrete about core values, beliefs, talents, and gifts; and personally authentic and inspirational (as you read your mission statement out loud to someone, for example, you should be able to say to yourself, “yes, this is me, and this is what I truly want my life to be about”).

I have written a personal mission statement. It was a deeply clarifying experience but also a very challenging one. I often refer to my mission statement to guide my daily actions (I actually have a copy of it on my iPod). If you elect to complete this assignment, I offer the following guidelines to craft your 1 – 2 page, single spaced statement:

- ◆ As with the religio-spiritual story and “This I Believe” essay, please take this assignment seriously. Drafting a personal mission statement is a challenging activity and it will take time and reflection to craft something of real, personal value to you. Don’t cheat yourself: give yourself the space and time to develop a statement that has the potential to serve as a useful compass to you well into your future.
- ◆ Personally, I found using Stephen Covey’s “personal mission statement builder” a very useful tool in constructing my own statement. You can visit his site at <http://www.franklincovey.com/msb/>. You will be prompted to register for a login, but the service is free. Once you have completed entering your responses electronically, you will receive a narrative printout in an essay format that answers these questions:
  - ◆ I am at my best when. . .
  - ◆ I will try to prevent times when. . .
  - ◆ I will enjoy my work by finding employment where I can. . .
  - ◆ I will find enjoyment in my personal life through . . .
  - ◆ I will find opportunities to use my natural talents and gifts such as. . .
  - ◆ I can do anything I set my mind to. I will . . .
  - ◆ My life's journey is . . .
  - ◆ I will be a person who. . .
  - ◆ My most important future contribution to others will be. . .
  - ◆ I will stop procrastinating and start working on. . .
  - ◆ I will strive to incorporate the following attributes into my life. . .
  - ◆ I will constantly renew myself by focusing on these four dimensions of my life. . .

With this statement in hand, you can then edit the document to reflect your own personal narrative style. Please bear in mind that the Covey template is only one of several that is available on the web. Feel free to check out others and then choose one (or create your own!) that best expresses your own personal mission.

Like the other assignments in the “Elective A” category, this assignment cannot be graded, *per se*, on its “content.” What I can comment on, however, is the following:

- ◆ **Authenticity:** Is there a felt sense of authenticity and vulnerability in your statement?
- ◆ **Clarity:** How well do you identify and articulate your core values and beliefs? Does a larger, core “mission” emerge in the document?
- ◆ **Style:** Does the statement read well? Does it read as a kind of “roadmap” that clarifies the core values and beliefs it espouses?
- ◆ **Fluency and Grammar/Mechanics:** Does the statement demonstrate a fluent use of the English language and is it free of spelling and grammatical errors?

### **ELECTIVE B CATEGORY (choose one assignment)**

**1. StoryCorps interview with an educator who combines “soul with role” (due APRIL 9).** One of my favorite programs on NPR is “StoryCorps.” Birthed by Dave Isay, the mission of StoryCorps is “to honor and celebrate one another’s lives through listening.” How does StoryCorps accomplish its mission? By inviting normal folks like you and me to sit down in front of a microphone and share our

stories. According to its website, “Since 2003, tens of thousands of everyday people have interviewed family and friends through StoryCorps. . . . Millions listen to our award-winning broadcasts on public radio and the Internet. StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind, creating a growing portrait of who we really are as Americans.”

If you elect to complete this assignment, I’d like you to conduct a StoryCorps type interview with an educator whom you believe well “combines soul with role” – that is, someone whose daily actions reflect genuinely their convictions of their deepest beliefs (for more on “combining soul with role,” read Palmer’s *The Courage to Teach* and pay special attention to his use of the words identity and integrity). Your interviewee can be an educator in the broadest sense of the term. For instance, my greatest spiritual teachers – and two people who have been great role models to me for how to live an authentic “soul with role” life – are my mother and my friend, Bill Creed S.J. I would encourage you to select someone who has left a real impression on you because s/he has lived from a deep place of authenticity and integrity. This person might be a parent, sibling, neighbor, friend, teacher, professional mentor, colleague, or, perhaps, someone you have admired from a distance but whose story or actions has inspired you over time.

Your interview should last no less than 20 and no more than 60 minutes in length. For the purposes of this assignment, I would like you to complete the following steps:

- ◆ **Step 1:** Please visit the StoryCorps website and listen to a few interviews. Doing so will give you a “feel” for the uniqueness of a StoryCorps interview.
- ◆ **Step 2:** Brainstorm who you’d like to interview. Remember: your interviewee should be an educator whom you believe well “combines soul with role.”
- ◆ **Step 3:** Set up the interview. Ask your interviewee if s/he would be willing to sit down and share some or his/her story with you. Be somewhat specific about your purpose/focus. Determine a location (it’s always best to meet an interviewee on his/her own turf) and ask permission ahead of time to audio- or videotape the interview.
- ◆ **Step 4:** Interview your selected person, recording your interview either on a digital tape recorder or via some other audio or video hand-held device (your iPhone, iPod Nano, FLIP recorder, camcorder, podcasting equipment). If you do not own a device like this, I own two digital audio recorders that I will happily allow you to use. Even better, as a student at LUC, you have borrowing privileges through the university’s Digital Media Laboratory (visit <http://www.luc.edu/digitalmedialab/index.shtml>). I encourage you to visit their website, to speak with a representative in their office, and to explore the resources that this office can offer you.
- ◆ **Step 5:** Once you have completed your interview, then the hard work of editing the content and reflecting upon it must begin. Since I and members of your salons can only listen to so much of an audio or video interview, **I’d like for you to take what you have and condense it into a presentation of no more than 15 minutes.** What this means, concretely, is that your final “StoryCorps” product can take **one of four forms** (please select the format that best utilizes your skills and which you’ll find most creatively satisfying):
  - ◆ **FORMAT A:** You can edit your audio or video segment down to 8-10 minutes in total length, and conclude with a 3-5 minute reflection on the “lessons you have learned” from your interviewee; OR
  - ◆ **FORMAT B:** You can become quite the editorial wizard, learning how to edit audio or video clips and creating a final, integrated audio or video product that tells a story.

Your final version must include interview segments with your interviewee as well as a segment that offers your personal reflections on the lessons you learned from your interviewee; OR

- ◆ FORMAT C: You can create a powerpoint presentation that features the key storylines from your interview. The presentation should include interviewee quotations (via audio or transcribed words), and your audio or written personal reflections on lessons learned; OR
- ◆ FORMAT D: You can transcribe your interview, and then write a paper that pulls out the key points of the interview and offers reflections on the lessons you learned from it (if you go this route, your paper should not exceed 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages).

Although I do not profess to know “exactly” what questions to pose in your interview, the following may be of use. The StoryCorps National Day of Listening “Do-it-Yourself Instruction Guide” (accessible at <http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/participate/>) offers great tips on how to conduct your interview, as well as good questions that you may want to ask. I have posted this guide to our course Bb site under the “assignments” tab. PLEASE CONSULT IT. As I have looked over their various questions, the following seem particularly appropriate for a “soul with role” interview (many of these are taken directly from their handout; I have adapted a few of them):

#### **Questions about working**

- ◆ Tell me about how you got into your line of work.
- ◆ What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?
- ◆ How has your own faith or spirituality informed how you go about living your life and carrying out your work?
- ◆ Do you have any favorite stories from your work life?
- ◆ What lessons has your work life taught you?
- ◆ How would you like to be remembered by the people whom you’ve taught, learned, led?
- ◆ Are there any words of wisdom you’d like to pass along to me, especially about how I might be able to combine “soul with role” in my work as an educator?

#### **Great questions for anyone**

- ◆ What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?
- ◆ Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did they teach you?
- ◆ Who has been the kindest to you in your life? How has this kindness informed how you interact with others – at home, at work, elsewhere?
- ◆ What are some of the most important lessons you’ve learned in life?
- ◆ Are there any words of wisdom you’d like to pass along to me?
- ◆ What are you proudest of in your life?
- ◆ How has your life been different than what you’d imagined?
- ◆ How would you like to be remembered?
- ◆ Do you have any regrets?
- ◆ What does your future hold?
- ◆ Is there anything you’ve never told me but want to tell me now?
- ◆ Is there something about me that you’ve always wanted to know but have never asked?

Of course, you are more than welcome to come up with your own questions (please do!), but I'd strongly encourage you to ask these three or four questions of everyone you interview:

- ◆ What led you to where you are today? Did you always know that you wanted to do this?
- ◆ Could you tell me a little bit about how your own faith or spirituality has informed how you go about living your life and carrying out your work?
- ◆ Another way to ask the former question is, What does it mean to you to live a life of purpose and meaning? How did you discover this? Do you ever find it difficult to live this way and, if so, what do you do to keep yourself on target?
- ◆ Grounded in your own experience, are there any words of wisdom you'd like to pass along to me about how to live a meaningful and purpose-filled life?

I'd recommend that you arrive at your interview prepared with your favorite 7 – 10 questions in hand. Having more questions is a good thing; it's better to have more – rather than less – data to deal with when you select material for your final product. That said, don't be afraid to ask questions that aren't on your list; follow your instincts here. Where you spot emotion in a person, probe a little further. I think you'll find most people will feel honored to tell you their story.

Finally, as you conduct your interview, please heed this important kernel of wisdom that has flowed from the StoryCorps project: don't ever forget that listening to someone else's story is "an act of love." Be compassionate, be gentle, and be respectful. And think about giving some of that love back by sharing your final product with your interviewee.

**2. Collaborative "Roadtrip Nation" presentation (due APRIL 9).** What am I passionate about? What do I really want to do with my life? What career is really worthy of my time and effort? These are vexing questions for most emerging adults in our culture. The young adult years are a time of significant vocational struggle and, unfortunately, most colleges and universities do a very poor job of helping students to reflect on and discern their vocational choices.

One way that the Academy can improve in this area is to give faculty and staff an opportunity to "muck around" with the questions of vocation in their own life. I am a strong believer that we cannot speak meaningfully with students about vocation until we are on speaking terms with our own vocational longings. Toward that end, this assignment will challenge you to reflect meaningfully on your own callings within the context of listening to others tell their "call stories."

In 2003, four recent college graduates in California found themselves perplexed by the question, "What should I do with my life?" Then one of them got an idea: why not sit down and have a conversation with others who have "figured out their callings" and had the courage to act on them? As this emerging adult correctly intuited, listening to someone else's story often has the positive effect of helping us to dig into and discover more fully our own passions and callings.

That is how Roadtrip Nation was born. As Mike Marriner and Nate Gebhard recount in their book, *Roadtrip Nation: A Guide to Discovering Your Path in Life*:

*The idea hit us . . . Why not take a roadrip across the country and talk to dozens of people who shed this noise [of what other people were telling*

*them to do with their lives] and defined their own paths in life? People who were truly happy with the road they chose to live. Maybe that could help us to do the same. Where were they in their early 20s? How did they shed all that noise around them? Did they always know what they wanted to do, or did they have to discover their passion? And if so, how? (p. xiv).*

If you elect to complete this assignment, I would like you to join forces with two classmates and conduct your own “mini Roadtrip Nation” (RTN) interviews. This assignment will require several steps, which I detail below. The **final product** will be a 30 minute presentation to the class that includes (1) audio- or videotaped segments of the group’s interviews with its chosen interviewees, (2) reflections on the key lessons the group learned from speaking with their interviewees, and (3) a concluding segment on how their own participation in this vocational discovery activity may have helped them develop new insights, understandings, or tools for speaking/working with college students around the theme of vocation.

**Procedure.** There are several steps involved in this collaborative project. I am outlining them here simply to help guide groups through the process. By all means, feel free to improvise in some areas and to seek me out as a conversation partner should you have questions. I have organized and facilitated two week-long RTN Alternative Spring Break trips for undergraduates, so I have some idea of the joys and challenges that await you!

**Step One:** The first step is to form groups. This assignment is highly collaborative in nature and will require you to work well as a group. Bear this in mind as you choose your partners. I strongly encourage limiting the size of your group to three members total.

**Step Two:** The second step is to visit the RTN website (<http://roadtripnation.com/>) and get a feel for what RTN is and what a RTN interview looks and feels like. If you click the “explore” tab on the website, you will have the opportunity to refine your search for interviews by career/passion interest or theme. Your group can visit the website collectively or individually (I encourage the former....it will help all of you to brainstorm your own possibilities in step three).

**Step Three:** Once you have formed your groups, each group member should take some individual, reflective time to ponder this question: “If I could interview anyone, who would it be? Who really inspires me? Whose passion for work and life so inspires me that I’d like to learn more from him/her how s/he came to define – and have the courage to pursue – his/her own path in life?” I’d encourage you to name three people: one or two who are local to Chicago and one who lives outside of the area. Don’t limit yourselves here; a lot of folks will actually sit down and speak with you if you ask them (and that includes so-called “famous” folks; I know this for a fact). Once group members have identified their individual persons of interest, the group should re-assemble and discuss their and decide how to proceed. As far as I can tell, there are three choices available to you:

- ◆ Your group can limit itself to interviewing folks in the greater Chicago area;
- ◆ If you are lucky enough not to have to work over spring break, your group can take an “independent roadtrip,” travelling wherever the group so chooses (but, unfortunately, at your own expense); or

- ◆ Your group can conduct a mix of face-to-face local interviews and telephone interviews, drawing on interviewees both local to and beyond the geographic boundaries of Chicago.

I will allow phone interview, but if it's possible, speaking with people face-to-face usually turns out to be a more meaningful experience.

**Step Four:** Armed with a potential interviewee list and a solid idea of how you'll proceed, your group will now need to discuss logistics. Since I will require ALL members of the group to ATTEND all interviews, it's very important that some "collective calendaring" occur now. Take some time to look at your calendars and block out days/times for your interviews. You will need this information BEFORE you begin to contact people for interviews.

**Step Five:** As part of your preliminary planning, your group also needs to determine whether it wants to audio- or videotape your interviews (determining this now is important, since you will have to seek permission from your interviewees to do either). Here, I'd encourage you to err on the side of comfortability: if you feel confident and comfortable with a camcorder (and, especially, if you know how to edit or rip video), then choose this option. If you do not own a digital recording device (iPod Nano, iPod, digital camera, camcorder, FLIP camcorder), you may borrow one for FREE through the university's Digital Media Laboratory (visit <http://www.luc.edu/digitalmedialab/index.shtml>). I encourage you to visit their website, to speak with a representative in their office, and to explore the resources (including training) that this office can offer you. Indeed, this may be one good time for your group to explore its collective strengths/talents and engage in a pragmatic division of labor. If one person is really talented with technology, that person may want to take on that responsibility for the group. If another is really good at coordination and organization, that person may want to contact interviewees and schedule them. If another is really good at constructing storylines for a group presentation, that person may want to take on that responsibility. You get the picture; play to your strengths!

**Step Six:** Now that you have a sense of when your group may be able to meet with selected interviewees and you know how you want to proceed in recording them, the work of scheduling interviews up comes into play. Each member of the group is REQUIRED to conduct ONE 30 – 60 minute interview with a person of interest on his/her list. Accordingly, each group member is responsible for setting up his/her interview with that person (or, if your group so chooses, the "group coordinator" may assume this role). It may take a bit of hunting on your part to find contact information for your person, so don't drag your feet on this step. I strongly encourage you to be courteous when you contact your potential interviewee and not attempt to set up interviews with LESS than two weeks' advance notice (RTN gives some good advice here; see "RTN: Getting the Interview" under the "assignments" tab on our course Bb site). Once an individual "lands" an interview, please communicate your success to group members immediately so that they can "block out the date." Again, I want all members present for the THREE or FOUR (number of interviews depends on group size) TOTAL interviews that will be conducted for this group project.

**Step Seven:** Now it's time to conduct those interviews! To help with this process, I have attached some good advice from the fine folks at RTN (see "RTN: In the Meeting" under the "assignments" tab on our course Bb site). The questions they suggest for your interviews are helpful, but their ideas on actually conducting the interview are better. When my students and I did our RTN spring break interviews, we typically asked questions like these:

*Good Opening Questions*

- ◆ Where were you when you were our age, and how did you get from there to where you are today?
- ◆ You're pretty successful now. Looking back, did you ever wonder if you would be successful? Did you ever go through a period where you were basically clueless about what you wanted to do with your life? What was that like, and what did it teach you?

*Good In-Between Questions*

- ◆ Have you always known that you wanted to do this for your life's work? If yes, what's your first memory of knowing X was really important to you? If no, what other kinds of paths did you go down before the lightbulb went off and you chose to do what you're now doing?
- ◆ Did you ever feel pressured to become something other than who you are and what you do right now? How did you deal with that noise?
- ◆ Have you ever been afraid or scared by your "calling?" What got you over the fear – it anything? What still scares you?
- ◆ What obstacles have you overcome to get to where you're at today?
- ◆ As you look back on your life today, what would you have done differently, if anything?
- ◆ What keeps you going – what helps to sustain your calling?

*Good Closing Questions*

- ◆ If you had one piece of advice to give us as we get ready to jump into the real world, what would it be?
- ◆ Imagine you are holding a microphone to our generation. What would be the two or three most important things you would want to say to us?

Of course, you are more than welcome to come up with your own questions (please do!), but I'd strongly encourage you to ask these three or four questions of everyone you interview:

- ◆ Tell me about how you got into your line of work. What led you to where you are today?
- ◆ Has your own faith or spirituality informed how you go about living your life and carrying out your work in any way? (If so, ask them to elaborate)
- ◆ Another way to ask the former question is, What does it mean to you to live a life of purpose and meaning? How did you discover this? Do you ever find it difficult to live this way and, if so, what do you do to keep yourself on target?
- ◆ Are there any words of wisdom you'd like to pass along to us as we seek to better live out our lives with passion and purpose?

As I noted in the StoryCorps instructions above, I'd recommend that you arrive at your interview prepared with your favorite 7 – 10 questions in hand. Having more questions is a good thing; it's better to have more – rather than less – data to deal with when you select material for your final product. That said, don't be afraid to ask questions that aren't on your list; follow your instincts here. Where you spot emotion in a person, probe a little further. I think you'll find most people are honored to tell you their story.

Finally, as you conduct your RTN interview, please heed this important kernel of wisdom that has flowed from the StoryCorps project: don't ever forget that, at its heart, listening to someone else's story is "an act of love." Be compassionate, be gentle, and be respectful.

**Step Eight:** This is a very important step that I want your group to take seriously. Once you complete each interview, please take 30 minutes to debrief your interview. Begin by asking the person who selected the interviewee this question, "So, what was that experience like for you? What did you find most memorable about listening to your selected interviewee? What is going to "stick" with you from this experience?" Then, from there, have a discussion in your group about "memorable moments" from the interview, what you learned about the person's passion and calling, and lessons you may have learned from this experience. Be sure to take some informal notes, because these reflections will help you when you prepare your presentation.

**Step Nine:** Finally, once you have conducted and de-briefed your interviews, you'll have to pull together your 30 minute presentation for your classmates. Similar to the StoryCorps formats described above, you may select one of four formats for your presentation:

- ◆ **FORMAT A:** You can select audio or video segments from your interviews and show about 15 minutes of them IN total length before offering (1) reflective comments on the "key themes" you noticed in your interviews and (2) the three or four "lessons you learned" as a result of your RTN experience; OR
- ◆ **FORMAT B:** You can become quite the editorial wizard, learning how to edit audio or video clips and creating a final, integrated audio or video product that tells a themed story that includes interview segments with your interviewee as well as a segment that offers your own personal reflections (especially on lessons learned); OR
- ◆ **FORMAT C:** You can create a powerpoint presentation that features the key storylines from your interviews. The presentation should include interviewee quotations (via audio/video segments or transcribed words), and your group's personal reflections on lessons learned; OR
- ◆ **FORMAT D:** You can dream up another possibility for your group presentation with my approval.

**Final course grades will be assigned as follows:**

Total Points Earned	Final Grade
95 and over	A
91 – 94	A-
88 – 90	B+
85 – 87	B
82 – 84	B-
79 - 81	C+
75 – 78	C

72 - 75	D
Below 71	Fail

Regarding ***evaluation criteria***, the following items will inform my/our assessments:

- evidence of outside-of-class preparation for class activities and discussions;
- active engagement and involvement in class activities;
- organization and clarity of expression and thought in written projects and verbal presentations;
- integration of class readings and discussions in required assignments;
- effort to reflect meaningfully on your own holistic development and to consider thoughtfully how you might integrate your spiritual commitments into your professional practice;
- efforts to support the teaching, learning, and holistic growth and collegiality of peers;
- proper grammar/mechanics and professional appearance of written projects.

**As a matter of fairness and courtesy to all class participants, I will assess penalties for late papers** (except in the case of emergencies, whereupon I must be notified). First, I will not provide extensive written feedback on papers that are submitted late. Second, I will deduct one point for each day that an assignment is submitted past the due date.

## Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education's Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at: [http://www.luc.edu/education/academics\\_policies\\_integrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml). For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: [http://www.luc.edu/education/academics\\_policies\\_main.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml)

## Harassment

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject

to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link:

<http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

## Accessibility

Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola.

Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term.

The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at:

<http://www.luc.edu/sswd/>

## Technology

We live in an increasingly technological world and, as professionals in the teaching and learning enterprise, we need to be able to access and use technology effectively. Accordingly, I will be using the following technological tools in this course: email, youtube video, on line internet sites, Blackboard, and video clips from various DVDs. I will expect you to develop further your own technological skills through (1) the use of a word processing program for submission of required written assignments; (2) retrieving course readings and other materials via a dedicated internet Blackboard site; (3) using email as a way to communicate with me and your peers outside of class; and (4) accessing various e-journals and virtual library resources for class assignments.

## Diversity

Giving the growing diversity of learners, the ways in which people learn, and the ever-widening explosion of global knowledge, this class is, by its very nature, focused on diversity. This course – through required readings, videos, assignments, and discussions – will enhance students’ understandings of the diverse purposes of higher education, the competing knowledge stakes that influence curricular decision-making, the variety of ways in which people teach and learn, and what all of this means for how to design effective learner-centered courses, workshops, and programs. It is my hope that this course will challenge all of us to develop a deeper appreciation toward a variety of teaching, learning, curricular and assessment approaches that go beyond our own valuable – but bounded – understandings. In part toward that end, we will adopt conversational practices that will seek to honor not only our own voices and those of others, but also the “still, small” voice that often is largely ignored in campus discussions of diversity.

## WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

### Session 1: Journeying Here, Journeying Together, Journeying Alone 1/22/11

Topic	Required Readings	Activity Preparation	Assignments Due
<b>Introduction to the Course</b>	1. ELPS 429 Syllabus 2. Nash, Ch 1, pp. 1-14 only 3. Schneiders, S. (2003). Religion vs. Spirituality: A contemporary conundrum [Electronic version]. <i>Spiritus</i> , 3, 163-185. 4. Patel, E. (Nov, 2007). Religious diversity and cooperation on campus. <i>Journal of College and Character</i> , 9. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.collegevalues.org/journal.cfm">http://www.collegevalues.org/journal.cfm</a>		
<b>Journeying Together</b>	1. Palmer & Zajonc, pp. 136-146 only 2. Nash, Ch 6 (pages 167 – 189 only)	1. Think honestly about how you might respond to this question: <i>What do you need from yourself and others in order to feel safe having honest and meaningful conversations about religion, spirituality, faith, and vocation in this class? What guidelines might help us, as a community, to create this kind of safe space?</i>	
<b>Journeying Here</b>		1. Please bring a cultural/spiritual artifact – an image, a piece of art or jewelry, a piece of music, a poem, a personally meaningful or sacred text – to class is significant to you. If possible, please select an artifact that was important to you as a child/adolescent and pay particular attention to the meaning it evokes in you: what was your memory of the artifact as a child and how has that memory grown or changed for you now? Contemplate your artifact in light of these words by the theologian Frederick Buechner: “[Memory is] more than looking back to a time that is no longer; it is	

		looking out into another kind of time altogether where everything that ever was continues not just to be, but to grow and change with the <i>life that is in it still.</i> " What life did your artifact have for you as a child....and what life does it have for you now? What do both say about the spirit that lived in you then and wants to live in you now?	
<b>Journeying Alone</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the "formation covenant:" description on p. 11 of this syllabus.</li> <li>2. Newberg, A. &amp; Waldman, M.R. (2009). "What does God do to your brain?" Chapter 3 in <i>How God changes your brain</i>. New York: Ballantine.</li> <li>3. Newberg, A. &amp; Waldman, M.R. (2009). "Exercising your brain" Chapter 8 in <i>How God changes your brain</i>. New York: Ballantine.</li> </ol>		Complete Appendix A in the ELPS 429 Syllabus and either bring this with you to class today or submit electronically no later than 11:59 p.m., January 20.

## Session 2: Setting A Context: Meaning Making in Emerging Adulthood 2/5/11

Topic	Required Readings	Activity Preparation	Assignments Due
<b>Emerging Adulthood</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Smith, Ch 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>2. Finder, A. (2007, May 2). Matters of faith find a new prominence on campus. <i>The New York Times</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/02/education/02spirituality.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/02/education/02spirituality.html</a></li> </ol>		
<b>Making Meaning out of Meaning Making: Theories of Faith &amp; Vocational Development and Young Adulthood</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fowler, J. W. (2000). Faith development theory and the human vocation. In <i>Becoming adult, becoming Christian: Adult development and Christian faith</i> (pp. 37 - 61). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</li> <li>2. Tisdell, E. J. (2003). The great spiral: Spiritual development as a process of</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In anticipation of today's meeting, please reflect on how your own faith story relates to the theories discussed in Fowler, Tisdell, and Love. Be prepared to narrate some of your own faith story in light of these theories with salon members.</li> <li>2. Prepare one to two questions to ask of a panel of lay and ordained professionals who work</li> </ol>	

	<p>moving forward and spiraling back. In <i>Exploring spirituality and culture in adult and higher education</i> (pp. 93 – 116). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>3. Love, P. G. (May/June, 2002). Comparing spiritual development and cognitive development [Electronic version]. <i>Journal of College Student Development</i>, 43, 357-373.</p> <p>4. Nash, Ch 6 (pages 189 – 195 only)</p>	<p>with and discuss “life’s big questions” with emerging adults . Please post one or two of your questions to the course discussion board no later than Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>.</p>	
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### Session 3: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults 2/19/11

Topic	Required Readings	Activity Preparation	Assignments Due
<p><b>The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults</b></p>	<p>1. Smith, Ch 4, 5, 8, &amp; 9</p> <p>2. Lindholm, J.A. (Sept/Oct, 2007). Spirituality in the academy: Reintegrating our lives and the lives of our students [Electronic version]. <i>About Campus</i>, 12(4): 10 -17.</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <p>3. Astin, A.W., Astin, H.S., Lindholm, J.A., &amp; Bryant, A.N. (2004). The spiritual life of college students. Final report retrieved from <a href="http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu/spirituality/reports/FINAL%20REPORT.pdf">http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu/spirituality/reports/FINAL%20REPORT.pdf</a></p> <p><i>[This is the full research report upon which Lindholm draws in the second reading listed above. If you want to “dig into” that research, read this report. I have required Lindholm because she does a nice job presenting data from both the HERI student and faculty surveys in a</i></p>	<p>1. There is a lot of dense reading for this week. While I expect everyone to complete the assigned readings, I would like each member of each salon to “dig into” one chapter individually (chapter 4, 5, 8, and 9) and to prepare one or two questions for “salon dialogue.” Please prepare evocative and engaging questions and post these to the course discussion board no later than Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. I will then compile them and your salon can choose which questions to discuss on Saturday.</p> <p>2. Prepare one question to ask of a panel of undergraduate students and recent graduates whose stories may reflect one or more of the “religio-spiritual” stories outlined in Nash. As you prepare your questions, ask yourself this question: “If I could ask just one question of a student who believed in an orthodox (or wounded believer, or secular</p>	

	<i>narrative format]</i>	humanist, or ....) narrative, I'd really, really, really want to ask this." Please post your question to the course discussion board no later than Thursday, February 17 <sup>th</sup> .	
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**Session 4: Stories We Live By: Young Adult Religio-Spiritual Narratives**  
**3/5/11**

Topic	Required Readings	Activity Preparation	Assignments Due
<b>The Religio-Spiritual Stories Young Adults Tell</b>	1. Nash, Ch 2, 3, 4 2. Smith, Ch 6 3. Patel, E., & Meyer, C. (Nov, 2009). Engaging religious diversity on campus: The role of interfaith leadership. <i>Journal of College and Character</i> , 10. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.collegevalues.org/journal.cfm">http://www.collegevalues.org/journal.cfm</a>  Recommended: 1. Nash, R.J. (August 2007). Understanding and promoting religious pluralism on college campuses. <i>Spirituality in Higher Education Newsletter</i> , 3, 1 – 9. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu/newsletter_new/">http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu/newsletter_new/</a>	1. Be prepared to share your chosen assignment with members of your salon.	“This I Believe” Essay  OR  Personal Mission Statement  OR  Autobiographical Religio-Spiritual Story

**Session 5: Fostering Integrative Education in the Academy**  
**3/19/11**

Topic	Required Readings	Activity Preparation	Assignments Due
	1. Palmer, P. J. (1998). “Introduction: Teaching from Within,” and “The Heart of a Teacher” (Chapter 1). In <i>The courage to teach</i> . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2. Palmer & Zajonc, Ch 1, 2, 4 & 5 (and read at least 1 vignette in each Appendix) 3. Palmer, P.J. (Nov/Dec, 2007). A new professional: The aims of education revisited [Electronic version]. <i>Change</i> , 39, 6-13.	1. I have two activities designed for today, but I know that all of you will be busy completing either your StoryCorps or RTN presentation. Therefore, I will NOT require any activity preparations for this week.	

**Session 6: Called to Become Whole: Exploring Vocation and Purpose**  
**4/9/11**

Topic	Required Readings	Activity Preparation	Assignments Due
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haworth, J.G. (2010). Discerning God's calling. In D. Bass and S. Briehl, <i>On our way</i>. Nashville: Upper Room.</li> <li>Marcia, J. E. (2002). Identity and psychosocial development in adulthood. <i>Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research</i>, 2(1), 7-28.</li> <li>Parks, S.D. (2000). The gifts of a mentoring environment. In <i>Big questions, worthy dreams: Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose, and faith</i> (pp. 127-157). Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider your own vocational journey in light of Haworth's chapter. How, if at all, did her chapter "fit" with your vocational decision-making experiences as an emerging adult? What "tools" or "strategies" might you use from this chapter to inform your own conversations with students about their "callings?"</li> </ol>	Individual StoryCorps Interview w/reflective essay  OR  RTN presentation

**Session 7: Combining Soul with Role: Living, Learning, and Leading as Educators**  
**4/30/11**

Topic	Required Readings	Activity Preparation	Assignments Due
<b>Combining Soul with Role</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Palmer &amp; Zajonc, pp. 125-136; 146-149</li> <li>Gwande, A. (2007). On washing hands. In <i>Better: A surgeon's notes on performance</i>. New York: Picador.</li> <li>Jett, Q. (Jan/Feb, 2000). Praying for the academy. <i>About Campus</i>, 5, 31-32.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be prepared to discuss in your salons the general themes articulated in your "Dear Jennifer" narrative self-evaluation.</li> </ol>	"Dear Jennifer" Final Narrative Self-Evaluation

## Appendix A

### Formation Covenant TEMPLATE (feel free to edit this document to reflect your authentic commitments)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that during my time in ELPS 429: Spirituality and Higher Education, I will be undertaking an experiment in holistic development that embraces and values intellectual rigor, affective sensitivity, spiritual awareness, and embodied knowledge. Toward this end, and in a good faith effort to foster my holistic growth and development, I am committed to doing the following over the 15 week duration of the course:

- Reading all of the assigned readings, and doing so in a way that challenges me to be:
  - open to and critically aware of my own assumptions;
  - attentive to the emotional responses accompanying what I am reading;
  - humble – rather than certain – in my attitude and disposition toward what I am reading and learning, reverencing the vast mystery that surrounds us; and
  - reflective and discerning about how what I am reading and learning can (in)form my approach to learning, leading, and living.
- Engaging in conversations (in and out of class) about class readings in a manner that:
  - respects others and their backgrounds, points-of-view, and emerging commitments;
  - invites curiosity and a willingness to suspend judgment, such that I may hear and know others in a way that I would like them to hear and know me;
  - demonstrates my own courageousness (“open heartedness”) to speak with and listen to others about topics that “really matter” but for which there may be no easy or clear answers; and
  - assumes trust and honesty.
- Practicing a “hermeneutic of generosity” toward in-class activities;
- Making a good-faith effort to foster my own holistic growth and development by adopting the following contemplative practice(s) three to five times a week:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Spending at least two hours of “quality time” monthly on the following formative activity/activities:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Journaling my thoughts and feelings as I move through the course, paying special attention to those that well up within me as I read items related to the class, participate in class conversations, and engage in my weekly contemplative and monthly formative activities. My journal is my journal – how much I choose to write, how I choose to write it, and what I choose to write is entirely up to me.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, further understand that this course will likely challenge me to consider connections among my intellectual, vocational, and spiritual interests that may sometimes be difficult or challenging for me. Accordingly, and if I so choose, I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to accompany me as a conversation partner on this journey. I will share, as I feel comfortable, aspects of my experience with this person on a (weekly, biweekly, monthly) basis over the duration of the course. Finally, I commit to be gentle, honest, and loving toward myself, taking “breathers” when necessary, and embracing the spiritual wisdom that comes from practicing some concrete form of “Sabbath” – preferably on a weekly basis – throughout the duration of this course.

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Signature

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Date