

Hesychia School of Spiritual Direction

Description of classes

Week One

Welcome to Hesychia and Desert Spirituality

Our first class is designed to introduce you to the program and its leadership, your fellow participants, the Sonoran Desert and the history of desert spirituality. We explain the importance of our location and our indebtedness to the desert fathers and mothers and what the contemplative tradition of spiritual direction and *hesychia* are all about.

Instructor: Father Greg Wiest of the Redemptorist Renewal Center

Introduction to the Evocative Method we Teach

Honoring the Shy Soul

Responding Skills

The practice of spiritual direction is the focus of all our practicum sessions. We begin the week of practicum with a basic introduction to listening skills; an explanation of the non-directive or “evocative” mode of spiritual direction which we teach and promote; and an outline of how we will handle our small group practicum sessions, which are the heart of our teaching about practical skills. Instructor: Teresa Blythe, Director of the Hesychia School

Contemplative Listening

Learning the art of listening deeply with the ears of the heart.

Instructor: Teresa Blythe

Openings and Blocks

Understanding the concepts the terminology we use for the movements of the Spirit in spiritual direction.

Instructor: Teresa Blythe

Lectio Divina

An experiential class of learning about the ancient Benedictine practice of “sacred reading.” You will learn about lectio divina and practice it in different ways.

Instructor: Rev. Rachel Srubas, pastor of Mountain Shadows Presbyterian Church and Benedictine Oblate

Theologies encountered in spiritual direction

An overview of many of the different theologies you may encounter in directees as you do spiritual direction.

Instructor: Rev. Greg Foraker

Observing a real spiritual direction session

We bring in an experienced spiritual director and a person who has agreed to be the directee for you to observe a real session in action. Time for observations and reflection is included.

Instructor: Greg Foraker

Stages along the Spiritual Journey

This session looks at the many stages that humans frequently move through as they seek God along a spiritual path. It will provide you with a framework to help you assist a person regardless of where they may be on their journey.

Instructor: Rev. Greg Foraker

Week Two

Introduction to Interfaith Spirituality

What does it mean to embrace a multi-faith world? This class helps you prepare for the many presentations you will receive in the week-long exploration of spiritual guidance in many traditions.

Instructor: Greg Foraker

Spiritual Direction in the Jewish Tradition

The practice of spiritual direction in the contemplative tradition is becoming more common among Jews. This class will give a brief overview of Jewish spirituality and will give you insights into how spiritual direction may differ in the Jewish tradition.

Instructor: Rabbi Helen Cohn, spiritual director and leader of M'kor Hayim congregation

Spiritual Guidance in the Hindu Tradition

You will receive an introduction to Hinduism and the spirituality of the Hindu people. The history of this ancient faith will also be discussed. Our instructor will tell many stories from his faith tradition that illustrate how spiritual guidance (under a guru) is perceived.

Instructor: Dr. Sanjay Manchanda

The spirituality of Buddhism

The philosophy of Vipassana or "mindfulness" meditation will be introduced with history, philosophy and practiced outlined. This class includes a practice of mindfulness meditation, led by the instructor.

Instructor: TBD

Spiritual Guidance in the Islamic Tradition

This class is a presentation on the history, beliefs and practice of orthodox Muslims. The instructor will explain the many practices that make up the spirituality of Islam (word meaning submission to Allah).

Instructor: Dr. Aneesah Nadir, community educator and retired ASU Social Work instructor

Spiritual Direction for the "Spiritual but not Religious"

Many people coming to spiritual direction may have little to no background in traditional faith but are seeking a deep and meaningful relationship with God. Working with them may feel a bit different than working with persons who come from one tradition. Our instructor will help us with language and skills that can free us to work with these sincere seekers.

Instructor: Rev. Amanda Petersen, director of Pathways of Grace spiritual life center in Phoenix.

Spiritual Guidance in the Apophatic and Mystical Traditions

For some people, the spiritual path is more about emptying than about belief. This class will help you understand how to work with a directee who may be non-theistic or from a mystical tradition.

Instructor: Rev. Amanda Petersen.

12-Step Spirituality

The Oxford Group's highly successful Alcoholic Anonymous program (and its many offshoot organizations) has had an enormous impact on spirituality in the United States. Many people coming for spiritual direction will refer to "12-step spirituality" as their faith tradition. This class outlines the 12 steps and discusses how spiritual direction can benefit from understanding them.

Instructor: Rev. Elizabeth Lyman, Hesychia graduate and addictions specialist

Putting it all together

This class, at the end of week 2, allows a lot of time for discussion and integration of what you have seen, heard and learned together.
Instructor: Teresa Blythe and Greg Wiest

Week Three

Principles of Spiritual Discernment

Discernment is one spiritual practice that drives many people into spiritual direction for guidance. It means “faithful choices,” and there are many ways to help a person discern around their life choices. Principles from the Quaker and Ignatian tradition will be presented.

Instructor: Teresa Blythe

Psychological Dimensions of Spiritual Direction

Therapy and Spiritual Direction are quite different yet there are psychological dimensions of spiritual direction that you need to be aware of. Our instructor is a therapist and a spiritual director and will lead you through a way of understanding the human person that will help you determine the difference between the two kinds of relationships.

Instructor: TBD

Spiritual Direction with victims of Trauma

A person with trauma in their history may especially benefit from the gentle and accepting nature of the non-directive spiritual direction. Find out what trauma is, what the person with trauma needs, and get tips on how to handle those times when you may need to help the person get additional care.

Instructor: Jami Parrish, therapist and spiritual director

Working with Images in Spiritual Direction

Dream images, art work, images from film or television, traditional spiritual images—all of these come up in spiritual direction. This class will offer you some tools for working with images in spiritual direction.

Instructor: Rabbi Helen Cohn

Grief Work in Spiritual Direction

Tips for working with clients who are deeply in grief.

Instructor: Jami Parrish

Supervision of the Spiritual Director

Everyone who does spiritual direction needs a supervisor. To drive this point home, we hold an actual supervision session in front of the class so you see how valuable and supportive this process is. We will explain what supervision is, how it is done, and how to find a supervisor.

Instructor: Rev. Amanda Petersen and Teresa Blythe

Group Spiritual Direction & Clearness Committee

Several models of group spiritual direction are presented along with the benefits and challenges of each one. Special attention is paid to the Quaker practice of communal discernment known as “clearness committee.” The group will form a clearness committee to help a designated focus person with a discernment question.

Instructor: Teresa Blythe

Hesychia School Syllabus
teresa@teresablythe.net

Writing as Spiritual Practice

Whether or not you see yourself as a writer, the written word has an important place in the spiritual journey. We will explore our relationship to words and our instructor will evoke from you some writings about your spiritual life.

Instructor: Rev. Rachel Srubas

Week Four

The Spiritual Director's Code of Ethics

This class digs deeply into the small booklet "A Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors," and discusses topics such as dual relationships, beginning and ending spiritual direction relationships, and confidentiality.

Instructor: Teresa Blythe

Boundary Awareness and Transference in Spiritual Direction

Knowing where you end and the other person begins while working in spiritual direction.

Understanding the dynamics of transference and counter-transference.

Instructor: TBD

Gender Identity and Spiritual Direction

Gender is a fluid concept and it is important for spiritual directors to be aware of this fluidity. This class is designed for all who want to share their experiences of how their gender identity and spirituality intersects.

Instructor: Rev. Greg Foraker, Rev. Karen MacDonald and Davin Franklin-Hicks

Setting up a Spiritual Direction Practice

This is our "nuts and bolts" class about how to let the world know you are accepting directees and what to do once you get them. Covers issues of where to offer direction, how to market yourself, how to ask for and receive compensation, and ways to network in the community.

Instructor: Teresa Blythe

Self Care for the Spiritual Director

A class designed to highlight the importance of extreme self care for the person who works as a spiritual guide for others.

Instructor: Rev. Teresa Cowan Jones, interim pastor of Painted Hills UCC and founder of Sacred Space of Tucson.

Working with Resistance in Spiritual Direction

What to do when you or the directee seems "stuck." What resistance is and how to work through it.

Instructor: Rev. Greg Foraker

The Mind-Body-Spirit Connection

In the quest for wholeness, we must pay attention to all of who we are—mind, body and spirit. This class will help us learn to relax our body and listen to our body so that our mind, body and spirit may come into alignment.

Instructor: Natasha Korshak, yoga and mindfulness instructor at Miraval Life in Balance resort

Spiritual Direction with LGBTQ persons

An exploration of spirituality for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer person and some issues that may come up when working with this community.

Instructor: Fr. Greg Wiest

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Note to reader: Some of these classes or instructors are subject to change at the last minute due to teacher availability. However, we do our best to keep our classes consistent from program to program.