

**Introduction to Christian Education/Faith Formation
EMP 1431 HF 2015**

This DRAFT SYLLABUS is intended to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

Course Identification

Course Number: EMP 1431 HF
Course Name: Intro to CE/FF
Campus: Emmanuel College, Rm. 108, Wednesdays from 11-1 pm.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Johanna Selles
E-mail: Johanna.selles@utoronto.ca
Office hours: Office hours by appointment or in consultation with the class.

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

Required course, no pre-requisites

Course Description

This introductory course will provide an overview to learning theories and cognitive science in relation to religious education and faith formation. We will explore the *Christian and Religious Education* paradigm that has predominated contemporary faith education in Sunday Schools, catechesis and confirmation classes. The second model we will study is the *Spiritual Formation* paradigm and associated with spiritual “practices.” Our work will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is effective educational ministry and educational leadership in a post-modern world?
2. How does learning contribute to wisdom and what implications does wisdom have for our life, our imaginations, and our whole being?¹
3. How is the imagination transformed? What constitutes deep learning and big questions?
4. How does the whole life of a faith community teach through music, preaching, worship, liturgy, service, social justice, and spiritual practices such as hospitality, mediation, and prayer? What role can education play in preserving tradition and fostering innovation?

¹ James K. Smith. *Desiring the Kingdom*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009, pp. 24-5.

Course Methodology

Students will engage in small and large group activities to create and develop new knowledge. We will use art, reflective writing, meditation, movement, and role play to experiment with learning styles and multiple intelligences, developing an awareness of each other's diverse ways of making sense of the world while gaining insight into the learning process. As co-learners in this learning journey, we will engage in deep learning tasks that cross-curricular boundaries and give students control and choice in their topics and research.² Assignments will require individual and collaborative learning to construct knowledge, investigate and solve real problems and in the process give each other feedback and assess one another's work. Students will test leadership roles that invite change, build capacity, allow mistakes, and assess learning—reflecting on learning is an important part of that process. The learner will define learning goals and connect learning to personal/vocational aspirations using this class as an opportunity to work towards achieving those goals. Learners will be encouraged to address learning needs of real people and communities and collaboration with peers and experts outside the classroom will be encouraged. While we do this required work, we will also focus on creative capacities such as paying attention, intuition, curiosity, and reflection. While you investigate the history and traditions related to faith formation, you will continue to develop your ability to engage your creativity and to enable that of others in order to keep faith traditions both anchored and alive. Although it will not be graded or submitted, keeping a *learning journal* either hand written on your computer will greatly help in writing your final paper.

Course Outcomes

By the completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following EC M.Div. outcomes:

EC outcome #1: Critical engagement with religious faith and heritage

- Identify three paradigms for religious education (C.E., spiritual formation, Christian faith formation).
- Describe two experiences/mentors that shaped your own faith journey.
- Identify key texts from your religious tradition that support education and formation of faith.

EC outcome #2: Contextual and intercultural skills

- Compare aspects of your religious formation with that of another religious tradition. How is faith formed, communicated and celebrated in these traditions?
- Identify physical locations and cultural settings where faith is being transmitted, taught or formed in your context and evaluate the effectiveness of this religious education.
- Using a site visit of a religious education event, demonstrate the critically reflect on theory and practice, integrating your readings with your observations.

² M. Fullan and M. Langworthy. *A Rich Seam: How New Pedagogies Find Deep Learning*. London: Pearson, 2014.

EC outcome #3: *Spiritual and vocational formation*

- Describe how one's vocation will include educational ministry as a commitment to nurturing one's own and the ongoing formation of other's faith.
- Demonstrate commitment to empathic engagement with difference in the learning community of the classroom.
- Show evidence of awareness of gifts and challenges in relation to educational ministry and a commitment to spiritual practices to nurture that ministry.

EC outcome #3: *Knowledge and skills to facilitate education in the church and community*

- Apply theories of learning and development to various age groups to design appropriate learning events in the faith community.
- Experience vulnerability, risk, and courage in the learning community as a starting point for effective facilitation.
- Explore creativity and imagination as resources for effective learning about faith

Course Overview

The course is divided into 13 topics/weeks (including reading week) related to educational theory and practice. The topics might be adjusted to accommodate student interest or guest speakers.

Part 1

Introduction: Religious Education

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Content and Context
4. Development theories
5. Multiple Intelligence Theory (MI) and Learning Styles
6. Faith Development Theory (student reports on site visits)
7. Reading week

Part 2

Spiritual Formation/Building Communities of Practice

8. Memoir-transformation and conversion (Miles)
9. Culture and religious identity
10. Group Presentations (children/YA)
11. Group Presentations (adult/senior)
12. Group Presentations (not age but topic)
13. Final Class

Course Resources

Required Course Texts (to be finalized)

(If you would like to read before the course begins, I would suggest reading Sara Miles and other spiritual memoirs written by Rob Bell, Kathleen Norris, Anne LaMott, Lauren Winner, Bernice Eisenstein and others).

- Eisenstein, B. *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*. NY: Riverhead, 2006
- Miles, Sara. *Take this Bread. A Radical Conversion*. NY: Ballantine, 2007.
- Tye, Karen. *Basics of Christian Education*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008.
- Other readings can be found through links to academic journals through Robarts Library will be included in the course overview or scanned chapters. See announcement on the portal titled “How do I find the readings?”

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask the instructor for further help. Auditors must get a password from the registrar before the instructor can add them to the web.

Evaluation Quick Reference (see below for more details or see Blackboard for rubrics)

CE of origin paper	Due Week 2 (check dates)	Credit (no grade)
Site visit/integration	Due Week 6	30% and 8-10pp. Format
Research paper	Due Week 10	30% and 10 pp. Bibliography on separate page.
Teaching design and reflection on learning paper	Due week 12	1-2 pp. Bring copies for small group and we will do peer evaluation and presentation in class
Reflection on learning	Due one week after classes end.	Submit final copy of design (1-2 pp.) and your reflection paper (5-7) pages. Refer to the course readings.

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