Santa Clara University  
Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministries  

PROCESS OF CATECHESIS CATE 212  
Syllabus (Tentative)  
Summer Quarter 2013 Saturdays: 6/22, 6/29, 7/13, 7/20  
10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Kenna 105  
Deborah Ross, Ph.D.  

Course Description  
This course will explore the nature, goal, and process of adult catechesis, taking inspiration from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) as a model for all catechesis (General Directory for Catechesis, no. 90). The RCIA process offers a profound experience of grace for all involved and an incarnational model, which reveals the mystery of God becoming human in the person of Jesus Christ. As RCIA participants encounter the person of Christ, and prepare to cross the threshold into full membership in the Catholic community, the RCIA process engages them through body, heart, mind, and spirit.  

The course aims to provide pastoral ministers with theological content, and enhanced pastoral skills, with particular emphasis on the role of the catechist as a ‘threshold companion’ who accompanies others, either as they seek to enter the Catholic community, or as they engage in ongoing adult catechesis. The framework for the course takes inspiration from the four dimensions of catechesis: the word, community, worship, and service (RCIA, no. 75). The process of catechesis will therefore be explored through the themes of sacred storytelling, lectionary-based catechesis, catechesis and spirituality, sacramental initiation, the sacramental imagination, mystagogy, and mission.  

The course will meet on four Saturdays in the Summer Quarter and will include lectures and discussion, an online component, and the opportunity for students to share their experiences of catechesis and pastoral wisdom.  

Learning Goals  
- Students will explore themes relevant to the process of contemporary catechesis  
- Students will acquire a deeper theological background and pastoral skills to enhance their pastoral ministry and practice  
- Students will be encouraged to reflect upon their own lived experience and bring this into dialogue with the theological themes presented in the course  

Course Expectations  
Regular attendance and active participation is required in class. Students are required to read the designated reading assignments before each session and to:  
- Contribute to class discussion, especially regarding the reading assignments (designated reading for this course will be posted on Camino);
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- Complete a written journal reflecting upon themes from the course and in what way these may resonate with personal and ministerial experience. Journals will not be handed in but will form part of the class discussion and may be incorporated into the final paper;
- Participate in an online activity (see below); and
- Submit a final written paper (10-15 pages) which incorporates the themes of the course in a creative manner, alongside personal reflection, due on July 20. Each student will provide a ten minute overview of their final paper in class on July 20.

Course Credit

Final Paper: 50%
Participation: 30%
Online activity: 20%

Course Outline

Session One: Catechesis in Context; the Catechist as Threshold Companion (June 22, 2013)

- Introductions
- Overview of the course and explanation of course assignments
- Catechesis in context, including catechesis and the New Evangelization
- Introduction to models of catechesis
- Exploration of the role of the catechist as ‘threshold companion’

Session Two: Sacred Storytelling and Scriptural Catechesis (June 29, 2013)

- Storytelling and adult catechesis
- Scriptural catechesis; exploration of practical models for ‘Breaking Open the Word’

Reading Due:

*Please note: There will be no class on Saturday July 6*
Class online activity (due July 8)

As part of the course students will be required to participate in online discussions. Students will be asked to post two personal reflections on the course discussion board (on Camino). This activity may incorporate reflection upon course materials, personal experiences of ministry, or a relevant topic of each student’s choosing. (Further details of this exercise and guidance on this activity will be provided in the first course session.)

Reading Due:

Session Three: Sacramental Initiation and the Sacramental Imagination (July 13, 2013)

- Sacramental initiation in the RCIA
- Exploration of the sacramental vision vital to faith formation and the role of the catechist
- Reflection upon class online activity

Reading Due:

Session Four: Mystagogy and Mission (July 20, 2013)

- The mystagogic dimension of catechesis
- Mission and service
- Class discussion and presentations based upon themes from student journals and papers
- Sharing of catechetical resources
- Closing questions and conclusions
- Final written paper to be submitted

Reading Due: