

School of Theology and Ministry  
Seattle University  
901 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, PO Box 222000  
Seattle, WA 98122-1090

Summer Session 2019

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**STM5910**

**Adaptive action, faith and learning: Leading towards transformation**

July 22-26

Location TBA

9 am to 4 pm, 1 hour lunch break

**INSTRUCTOR**

**Mary Hess**

Office Hours: (email for appointment)

Office Phone: 651-236-7592

SU Email: hessm@seattleu.edu

mhess@religioused.org

**Texts and Materials**

Required:

- *Adaptive Action: Leveraging Uncertainty in Your Organization*, Glenda Eoyang and Royce Holladay, Stanford Business Books, 2013.
- *Learning While Leading*, Anita Farber-Robertson, Rowman&Littlefield, 2000.
- *Perseverance*, Margaret Wheatley, Berrett-Koehler, 2010.

Recommended:

- *Dialogic Organization Development*, Gervase Bushe and Robert Marshak, Eds. Berrett-Koehler, 2015. (There is a free excerpt of this book available on the web: <https://www.bkconnection.com/books/title/dialogic-organization-development>), and that is enough to introduce it to you.
- *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*, Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey, Jossey-Bass, 2007.
- *Transforming Congregations Through Community*, Boyung Lee, Westminster John Knox, 2013.

**Course Description**

Official course description:

What does adaptive action look like in communities of faith? Identifying the differences between technical and adaptive challenges only goes so far. This course will support the framing of effective community adaptive action, nourish students' personal resources for navigating systemic change, and draw on the deep theological/meaning-making resources of specific congregations, nonprofits and other entities. Students will work with case studies, explore various "art of hosting" techniques for supporting adult learning, and engage in contemplative practice to sustain their hope and resilience in the midst of dynamic change. This course is structured around student cases, and students will benefit the most from if they do the pre-work carefully.

Course Goals and Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course the successful student will be able to:

- (1) articulate their specific understanding of adaptive action, and their role in leading it
- (2) write an institutional case study, draw out its pertinent elements (particularly in terms of identifying adaptive vs. technical challenges), and formulate an adaptive action plan for engaging it

- (3) be familiar with and able to implement at least two practices drawn from “the art of hosting”
- (4) practice at least one form of mindfulness towards resilience
- (5) identify at least one specific personal learning challenge, and formulate a plan for their own growth in meeting that challenge which they will pursue in the following year

#### Learning Outcomes

For the **MAPS**:

- Knowledge of the interaction of religious/spiritual experience and culture in their ecumenical and multicultural dimensions.
- Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others.
- Ability to lead from spiritual depth toward practice for justice and wholeness in the world.

For the **MATL**:

- Demonstrate a *reflective* capacity for analyzing and articulating the student’s personal spirituality and “meaning-making” influences and structure, and its impact on the student’s leadership ideals, goals, and methodologies.
- Demonstrate a reflective capacity for engaging others in the discussion of the meaning structures of their lives and the organizations and culture(s) in which they live, particularly using the concepts and language of multiple intelligences, social and emotional learning and leadership theory, which can serve as a surrogate for traditional theological themes and issues.
- Demonstrate an ability to lead from a posture of an articulated spiritual-depth that is consistent with the student’s personally-defined values and the values of the organization in which the student works.

For the **MDIV**:

- Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others.
- Ability to articulate one’s relationship with God, as it is informed by theological reflection in one’s social context.
- Ability to guide and direct a Christian community (i.e. a congregation, parish, pastoral care unit, etc.) in its mission.
- Ability to engage the community with the larger social context and to articulate and communicate the mission that guides the community.

#### Assessment of student learning processes

Students will be required to write a case study prior to the first meeting of the class, process that case study during the week of the class, and revise it in light of the week’s learnings (see appendix of this syllabus for more detailed instructions). Students will also write a personal learning plan, based on the ideas explored in class and in the readings. Both of these written documents will be assessed using the grading rubric found in the appendix to this syllabus.

#### **Course Requirements**

- Attendance: students are required to attend all of the class sessions. As an intensive, week-long course any absence of more than one hour should be cleared with the instructor in advance and may require additional writing or reflection.
- Presentations: students will prepare and present a case study using adaptive action worksheets from their primary leadership context (see p. 4 and following of this syllabus for precise instructions)
- Participation: students will be required to participate fully in all class discussions
- Experiential Assignments: students will be required to identify one practice of mindfulness prior to the start of the in-person class, and practice it each day of the week-long meeting (see appendix for details); students will also be required to write a personal learning plan based on framework shared in class.

- Due Dates: case study and worksheets are due July 15<sup>th</sup>, final version of case study and personal learning plan is due July 22<sup>nd</sup> (revisions in these timelines are possible in conversation with the instructor)
- Criteria for assignments and assessment and grading criteria are available in the appendix

## **Schedule of Course Activities**

### **Pre-work**

Write and submit your case study and associated worksheets (see guidelines in the appendix to this syllabus). The case and worksheets are due by midnight on Monday, July 15<sup>th</sup> via email to the instructor.

Read all of the assigned readings prior to coming to class on July 22<sup>nd</sup>

Choose one practice of mindfulness (see guidelines in the appendix to this syllabus), and begin to practice it.

### **Monday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Morning: Introductions and orientation to the class. Initial work with case studies and personal learning plans

*lunch break*

Afternoon: Theories of dialogic organizational development: personal stances and institutional engagement

Practicing mindfulness in one's context

### **Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Morning: The personal and social languages of change (distinguishing types of knowing, language for change, etc.)

*lunch break*

Afternoon: Storying your own leadership, the art of hosting/liberating structures

Practicing mindfulness in one's context

### **Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>**

Morning: Standing in inquiry, interdependent pairs, network exchanges, and the art of feedback

*lunch break*

Afternoon: Innovation co-laboratory

Practicing mindfulness in one's context

### **Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>**

Morning: Networked religion, the cultural worlds of emerging adults and other challenges

*lunch break*

Afternoon: Building on resources from within your community: Igniting wonder, engaging conflict, etc.

Practicing mindfulness in one's context

### **Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>**

Morning: Drawing it all together

*lunch break*

Afternoon: Final case reflections

Concluding rituals

**Note:** A final version of your case study, and your personal learning plan is due at midnight on this Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. This deadline may be amended through discussion with the instructor.

## Policies

- Attendance and participation in all class sessions is expected. If you know that you must miss some portion of a session, please contact the instructor in advance. Unexplained absences will result in lowering the final course grade by one full category for each day's absence. More than two full days' of absence will result in an incomplete for the course.
- Course assignments turned in late without advance permission will result in grades being lowered in proportion to the number of days late.
- Academic Honesty (including plagiarism): The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the academic policy regarding Academic Integrity as indicated on the Seattle University Registrar website, as noted in the box below.
- Disability: If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, please see related note in the box below.

### University Resources and Policies

#### Academic Resources

- Library and Learning Commons (<http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/>)
  - *(This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)*
- Academic Integrity Tutorial *(found on Angel and SU Online)*

#### Academic Policies on Registrar website (<https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/>)

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy *(only for those professional programs to which it applies)*

#### Notice for students concerning Disabilities

*If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.*

## **Appendices**

### *Working with a case study and adaptive action worksheets.*

The primary focus of this class will be the specific situations or “cases” that each student brings into the course. To prepare for our work together I am asking each of you to write up a brief case that will become your primary focal point during our time together. This case needs to be some kind of “sticky situation” that you have encountered in your leadership context. It might be a specific challenge or situation that has arisen recently, or it might be a recurring dynamic (such as systemic racism) with which you continue to struggle. As you write it up, please be sure to describe a specific situation or instance, the context in which it occurred or continues to occur, and what you understand to be the primary issues. Once you’ve written it – or at least a draft – deepen your engagement with it by utilizing the worksheets attached to this syllabus. These are exercises developed by the authors of the adaptive action textbook, and they are aimed at helping you practice the concepts found in that text.

### *Practices of mindfulness.*

One of the more challenging aspects of living, learning and leading through adaptive action is finding ways to remain resilient. In religious communities there are centuries of experience with practices that nourish and sustain hope in the midst of difficult experiences. In recent years many such practices have been clustered under the label of “mindfulness” or “contemplation.” Is there a difference between “contemplative” and “mindful”? Not so much, at least not in the ways I am using these terms in this course.

My intention is that you will choose one practice that you will experiment with during our time together, something that you can practice every day. You may choose a practice that is explicitly religious, such as centering prayer, or it might be an adapted physical practice (such as certain forms of yoga). One practice which many students have found fruitful is 20 minutes of silence followed by 10 minutes of free writing.

There are many places on the web where you can be introduced to practices of mindfulness. I find the Center for Contemplative Mind to be very helpful, and specifically their “tree of contemplative practices” found here: <http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree> Perhaps you already have a regular mindfulness practice, in which case you should feel free to continue using it as a basis for reflection in this class. Whichever practice you choose, make sure that it is something you are willing to try every day at a time that can be a routine for you during our week together.

For more information you can also browse here: <http://meh.religioused.org/web/Mindfulness.html>, or contact me via email for further ideas.

### *Writing a personal learning plan*

This assignment is drawn directly from our assigned readings. Farber-Robertson, for instances, asks us to consider a number of concepts – “model 1 and model 2 social virtues” “theory-in-use” “espoused theory” “ladder of inference” and so on. She also describes how to begin to write a case study using a three-column format. In order to write a personal learning plan, you need to work through your initial case study with us in class. From that work I will invite you to envision a “small challenge” and to work through the implications of that challenge for your own learning. Kegan&Lahey (see recommended texts) have developed an “immunity challenge” worksheet which I will share in class. We will be drawing on that worksheet early in our time together, and it will form the basis of the personal learning plan you write as a final assignment. I will offer more directions in class as we do this together.

## Case Study

For this course I'm defining a case study as a conscious retelling of an experience of ministry in practice which you present to us for reflection. There is extensive information about a specific way of doing case studies in the Farber-Robertson course textbook. You do not need to use her format, but by the end of our week together you should be able to draw on the concepts she encourages in that book.

For the first submission of your case, carefully select an event, critical incident or conversation which when brought to this learning group will be real to you. Choose something which has been puzzling to you, has caused you concern, and/or has continued to impact your leadership. Please use pseudonyms for people and/or organizations involved in this case. It is important to be as detailed and honest as possible, in order to facilitate the most effective learning, but also to protect the confidentiality of people and institutions involved.

Elements to include:

### Background (what)

Set the event in context: Where did it occur – describe both the immediate context (church, nonprofit, home) and the larger context (geographic area, faith context, race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc.)? Who was involved? How and why were you involved?

### Description (what)

What happened? What did you do? Try to include only the most essential facts, as much detail as possible, balancing that with an attempt to stay as brief as is reasonable. Try to make clear where you are reporting on the situation (who, when, where, why, how) and when you are adding your own feelings and perspectives (“I felt,” “It appeared that she felt,” “I wonder if perhaps...”).

### Analysis (so what)

Identify the issues and relationships that were apparent as you viewed the situation. What was happening? Are these issues apparent in your written version of the situation? Who and how was someone(s) leading in this situation? How was God (or however you name transcendence) evident or absent?

### Evaluation (now what)

Estimate your own effectiveness in the event. Did you function effectively? Why? Why not? Did you do what you set out to do? What factors or forces emerged which you did not anticipate? What questions would you like this group to discuss that might be helpful to you?

Once you've described the event or situation in writing, and the issues involved, take a break and do something else – work on your mindfulness practice, eat a meal, visit with friends, sleep on it overnight – and then return to the situation by working through the following three worksheets (in the order listed) which have been developed by the authors of the *Adaptive Action* textbook. Each of these worksheets is somewhat similar, but uses a slightly different lens.

It is likely that this process will raise new questions and insights for your case study – make sure you jot them down somewhere so that when you get ready to revise your case for final submission you'll be able to include those insights. But please do not feel that you need to edit it before the initial submission – these are intended to be working documents, catalysts for both personal and shared reflection in class.

Once you've written up your case and completed the worksheets, email the entire packet to me by July 11<sup>th</sup>: [hessm@seattleu.edu](mailto:hessm@seattleu.edu).

## **One: Pattern Spotting in your case**

### **1. Generalization: *In general I noticed...***

*(This question allows for a view of the whole event at once to provide broad reactions. For instance: In general I noticed the team is productive and gets things done.)*

### **2. Exception: *In general... but...***

*(This question allows individuals to state what they missed or what they say that didn't fit the general patterns. For example: In general I noticed meetings start on time, but Jake was often late.)*

### **3. Contradictions: *On one hand... and on the other hand...***

*(This question allows the expression of paradoxes that occur to the observer. For example: On one hand Jake makes it to most meetings; on the other hand he is always late.)*

### **4. Surprises: *I was surprised that...***

*(This question allows participants to say what happened that they didn't expect, giving voice to more potent emotions like fear and joy. For example: I was surprised Jake was on time for Tuesday's meeting.)*

**5. Puzzles: *I wonder...***

*(This question allows individuals to uncover the patterns shaping their interactions. For example: I wonder what was different about last Tuesday that allowed Jake to show up on time.)*

**Other observations:**

These questions are drawn from the work of Glenda Eoyang and Royce Holladay, and found in their book *Adaptive Action* (Stanford Business Books, 2013).



## Two: Same and Different Tool

Do you feel stuck by a complex issue or problem that just won't go away? Perhaps one of these situations rings true for you day after day:

- That problem I thought I had solved keeps coming back.
- My situation is so complex I don't even know where to begin.
- Nothing ever changes around here.
- We all know there is a problem, but no one seems to know how to fix it.
- Things are changing so quickly that I don't know what to expect next.

How do you typically deal with your recurring problems, or sticky issues, when they come up? Do you find yourself approaching your complex issue or problem in one of the following ways?

- Wishing the problem would just go away
- Settling for a temporary fix
- Waiting for your problems to solve themselves
- Blaming others for creating or failing to solve them

As you've likely already discovered, none of these approaches will effectively solve your issue. So what else can you do?

The "Same & Different" tool is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to engage with a sticky issue you face.

My sticky issue is:

How is this issue the same or different than it was a year ago?

Same

|

Different

|

|

|

|

|

What are the similarities and differences between this issue and related issues that are not so sticky?

Same

|

Different

|

|

|

|

|

How would I like this issue to be the same and different in the future from how it is today?

Same

|

Different

|

|

|

|

How do multiple people in your group/setting view the issue the same and differently?

<u>Same</u>		<u>Different</u>

Insights and Options for Action: Very often the process of answering these questions, and brainstorming the similarities and differences with your issue generates new and innovative options for action. Write down 3 insights you've seen:

(1)

(2)

(3)

If you still find yourself stuck, focus more closely by asking three additional questions about your answers above:  
Which of these similarities and differences has no significant effect on the issue? (Put "0" in front of those.)  
Which ones make the issue worse? (Put "-" in front of those.)  
Which of the similarities or differences make the issue better? (Put "+" in front of those.)

Select only one of the similarities or differences and figure out how to reduce its negative or increase its positive value. This additional step may uncover a new way to engage with your sticky issue. If not, then move to action by choosing one of the items and planning action to shift it. You may want to strengthen a positive similarity or difference, or weaken a negative one. You may focus on increasing or decreasing similarities or on increasing or decreasing differences. Whatever you choose, take the action and see what happens.

How does your sticky issue transform? Then begin the process again—What? So what? Now what?

(What?)

(So what?)

(Now what?)

This simple approach isn't always easy, but it does always generate new insights and options for action to reframe or remove the stickiest of your issues. Give it a try.

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### Three: Got a Tough Decision To Make?

#### Understand Three Factors That Go Into Any Decision

Have you ever been impacted by a decision that made no sense? Have you wondered how anyone would make a particular choice? Perhaps you've struggled yourself to make a tough decision.

Decision-making is a dynamical process. Neither individual nor group decision-making is a linear process because all decisions emerge from the complex interactions of multiple patterns of thought. The Decision Map is a tool that helps you see the factors that influence a decision and become aware of their interdependencies.

The three interdependent factors that shape most decision-making include:



Using the Decision Map...

The Decision Map is a versatile, robust tool that offers insight at all levels of your current situation. This tool can be used to facilitate decision making for groups or for an individual. We have used it for conflict resolution, strategic planning, school reform, meeting design, and team building. In any case, the process is similar. Make certain that the participants first understand the meaning associated with each of the three factors on the Decision Map. Then use the following questions to ask participants to reflect on their own world view, reality and rules.

- World View – represents the background, education, and experiences an individual or organization brings into the decision process.
- Rules – represents the social expectations, standards and guidelines that are factored into a decision, either consciously or unconsciously.
- Reality – represents what is actually observable right in front of you and its impact on your situation.

**World View:** What are my/our personal beliefs?

**World View:** How do I/we feel about the decision?

**Rules:** What rules are important here?

**Rules:** What are the written regulations or policies that apply?

**Rules:** What are my/our own simple rules or values that apply?

**Rules:** What would be socially acceptable or appropriate here?

**Reality:** Is there a part of reality I/we might be missing?

**Reality:** What exists in reality in this situation?

**Reality:** How can I/we gather further facts and/or data?

Ideally, with any given decision, all three factors of the Decision Map should be relatively balanced. This builds the coherence needed to achieve the goals of your organization. Difficulties arise in decision making when one factor begins to overpower the other two. All three factors are connected on the Decision Map, meaning a change in one, changes all.

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**Grading Form for STM5910**

(4 is truly excellent, 1 is needs significant support, N/A is not applicable)

N/A

Participation in class	4	3	2	1	_____
Verbal communication skills	4	3	2	1	_____
Responsible for own learning	4	3	2	1	_____
Openness to different viewpoints	4	3	2	1	_____
Theological reflection	4	3	2	1	_____
Acceptance and utilization of feedback	4	3	2	1	_____
Independent and critical reasoning	4	3	2	1	_____
Interdisciplinary thinking	4	3	2	1	_____
Examining current understanding of self	4	3	2	1	_____
Examining current understanding of ministry	4	3	2	1	_____
Social and cultural analysis	4	3	2	1	_____
Engagement with assigned readings	4	3	2	1	_____

Writing skills:

N/A

Case write-up	4	3	2	1	_____
Quality of worksheets	4	3	2	1	_____
Personal learning plan	4	3	2	1	_____
Ability to organize thoughts	4	3	2	1	_____
Writing factors (grammar, spelling, logic, etc.)	4	3	2	1	_____

Further comments: