SPIRITUAL DIRECTION (ADV CERT)

Overview

The advanced certificate in spiritual direction is designed to assess a student's potential to become a spiritual director, and it supports students in their efforts to:

- discern a call to this ministry;
- formulate a model of spiritual direction and chaplaincy, and
- develop the specific skills required to serve as a spiritual director.

Graduates of the program serve as high school and college campus ministers, retreat directors, and spiritual directors.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate facilities with methods of research in specific theological disciplines for post graduate and doctoral studies.
2. Students will communicate the Christian story competently to make it accessible through a variety of means (e.g. teaching, writing, dialogue, personal consultation).
3. Students will articulate the relationship between the Christian tradition and their professional practice and spiritual development.
4. Students will articulate a well-rounded knowledge and critical appropriation of Jesuit Spirituality and the Catholic intellectual tradition.
5. Students will use tools of literary, cultural, historical, and social analysis in the interpretation of various cultures and their relationship to the Christian tradition.
6. Students will demonstrate a well-rounded and critical appropriation of effective ministerial skill in ecclesial, congregational, and institutional settings with theological understanding and practical skills consistent with his/her specialization.

Admissions

All those looking to apply must have or submit:

- a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in theology, ministry, or a related field;
- nine graduate credits in fundamental theology and sacred scripture (which may have been taken as part of, or separately from, the master's degree coursework);
- evidence of at least one year of experience in ministry or under spiritual direction;
- a letter of recommendation from a religious superior or spiritual director.

One cannot consider being a spiritual director without first fostering one's own spiritual life. Students who feel drawn to this ministry are advised to start by seeking a spiritual director for themselves. Participation in monthly spiritual direction with a credentialed spiritual director for at least one year is a prerequisite for admission to this program. However, in some circumstances, if an applicant has met all other admission requirements, they may contact the program director to request a waiver of this requirement. Students are expected to continue in spiritual direction throughout their course of studies.

Resources regarding spiritual direction can be found at Spiritual Directors International and the Ignatian Spiritual Direction Initiative.

Requirements

Course Requirements

Course	Title	Credits
SPGE 7870	Spiritual Direction: Theology and Practice	3
PCGE 6440	Pastoral Counseling Skills	3
SPGE 6830	Discernment in the Christian Tradition	3
SPGE 7740 & SPGE 7741	Spiritual Direction Practicum I and Spiritual Direction Practicum II	6
One Spirituality elective course from the following:		*3*
SPGE 6702	History of Christian Spirituality I	
or SPGE 67(	History of Christian Spirituality II	
SPGE 6742	The Ignatian Way	
SPGE 6792	Contemporary Christian Spirituality	
Total Credits		**18**

The Spiritual Direction Practicum

The Spiritual Direction Practicum offers students the opportunity to fully discern their call to this ministry. Students are encouraged to develop spiritual direction definitions that align with their individual approaches. The Practicum's director and supervisors support students by offering their feedback and collaboration throughout the training program.

Before students are eligible to apply for the Practicum, they must have participated in one year of monthly spiritual direction sessions and have completed the following required courses:

- SPGE 7870 Spiritual Direction: Theology and Practice
- SPGE 6830 Discernment in the Christian Tradition
- PCGE 6440 Pastoral Counseling Skills

Students apply to enroll in the Practicum by writing a spiritual autobiography, submitting a referral form from a spiritual director, and participating in interviews with the Practicum's director and the coordinator of the certificate program. The interview component is essential to our assessment of students' readiness to enter the Practicum. GSE registers students for the Practicum after their acceptance has been reported to the assistant dean by the Practicum's director.

For further information, please see "Practicum Prerequisites" and "Applying to the Practicum" below.

Practicum Description

The Spiritual Direction Practicum is a two-semester (fall and spring) program designed for students who are discerning their potential for this ministry. The Practicum offers academic resources alongside supervised experiential spiritual direction, which allows students to attain higher proficiency as reflective practitioners. Through

this program, students gain the opportunity to integrate classroom knowledge with practical experience.

The Practicum sequence begins each fall semester and consists of the following courses:

- SPGE 7740 Spiritual Direction Practicum I
- SPGE 7741 Spiritual Direction Practicum II

The Practicum's two-term sequence consists of five components: monthly learning sessions, Blackboard discussions, reflection, spiritual direction practice, and individual supervision. Each component is described below.

1. Monthly Learning Sessions
These sessions[1] occur monthly from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and include:

- the study of different ways of prayer;
- prayer and reflection;
- updates on students' direction sessions and supervision sessions;
- lectures by the Practicum's director;
- small group collaboration, in which students practice listening and empathic skills by drawing personal experiences of prayer in a meditative, contemplative, and confidential setting in order to emulate the atmosphere of a spiritual direction session;
- group discussion of assigned articles and videos that address topics related to the practice of spiritual direction;
- role-play activities on issues related to the practice of spiritual direction.

2. Blackboard Discussions[2]

Students participate in eight online discussions (four in each term of the Practicum) on books and videos about spiritual direction using Blackboard's discussion board feature. Students write a major post that addresses their learning, impressions, doubts, reactions, concerns, and insights (200 to 250 words). Every student reads each of their classmates' major posts and then writes a minor post (100 to 150 words each) that responds to the contributions of two classmates.

3. Reflection

Each student submits a five-page reflection paper at the end of each semester (Practicum I and Practicum II) that responds to the following prompts:

1. Describe which readings most engaged or challenged you and why.
2. Choose one topic from the readings and discuss how you might apply it fruitfully to your own spiritual direction ministry.

4. Spiritual Direction Practice
Students are involved in the spiritual direction of two or more persons every three to four weeks. This practice begins in late October or early November and ends in May. Students are responsible for finding their directees. In the past, students have sometimes been assisted by the University's campus ministry office or have sought out individuals from their church, parish, community, and the like.

5. Individual Supervision
Students participate in seven, one-hour supervision sessions while using the verbatim format with a supervisor who has been assigned by the Practicum's director. There is one supervision session per month from November to May.

For further details, see "Practicum Course Requirements" below.

Practicum Prerequisites

1. Students must have participated in monthly spiritual direction with a credentialed spiritual director for at least one year before beginning the Practicum.

Students are encouraged to consult the following resources for finding a spiritual director:

- Fordham Campus Ministry
- Spiritual Directors International
- Ignatian Spiritual Direction Initiative

2. Before beginning the Practicum, students must successfully complete the three required courses listed below.

- SPGE 7870 Spiritual Direction: Theology and Practice
- SPGE 6830 Discernment in the Christian Tradition
- PCGE 6440 Pastoral Counseling Skills

Applying to the Practicum

Applications for the annual Practicum are considered from April through May. The three parts of the application (spiritual autobiography, interviews, and referral form) are described below.

1. The Spiritual Autobiography
Students compose and submit a spiritual autobiography (three to five pages, typed, and double-spaced) which focuses on your call to seek the ministry of spiritual direction. Each spiritual biography responds to the questions listed below.

2. Interview
After students submit their spiritual autobiographies, Father Francis X. McAloon, S.J., and Dr. Luz Marina Díaz will schedule interviews with applicants via Zoom. The instructors from your courses in Discernment in the Christian Tradition, Spiritual Direction: Theology and Practice, and Pastoral Counseling Skills may also be consulted in arriving at a decision regarding your application.

3. Your Spiritual Director's Referral Form

Students submit a referral form that has been completed by their spiritual director. The referral form should state the spiritual director's credential, length of the director-directee relationship (for at least one year prior), and the spiritual direction model. The referral forms should be sent as an email attachment to the Practicum's director, Dr. Luz Marina Díaz (aludiaz@fordham.edu).

After the steps above have been completed, students are sent an email that explains whether or not they have been accepted into the Practicum.

Upon Acceptance to the Practicum

1. The Assistant Dean will be notified of your acceptance to the Spiritual Direction Practicum. You do not need to register; GSE is in charge of the student registration process for the Practicum.
2. You will receive a **Welcome Letter** by email that includes important information about the Practicum.
3. Carefully review the information in the Welcome Letter with particular attention to the syllabus, requirements, evaluation, and individual remediation policy (IRP) plan. After your review, please print and sign the Welcome Letter indicating that you have read and understand the contents of this program and agree to abide by the policy and procedures outlined. Once signed, please attach your Welcome Letter to an email and send it to your program adviser and the Practicum's director, Dr. Luz Marina Díaz (aludiaz@fordham.edu). Your signed Welcome Letter will remain in your file.
4. **Proof of liability insurance coverage** for serving as a student spiritual director must be provided in writing, before Practicum I sessions begin, to the Practicum's director, Dr. Luz Marina Diaz (aludiaz@fordham.edu). Discounted liability insurance is available at www.americanprofessional.com/student to benefit student membership in Spiritual Directors International (www.sdicompanions.org).

Evaluation

Practicum I and II are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. A passing grade will be granted for satisfactory completion of all requirements (see "Practicum Course Requirements" for details). Additionally, students must demonstrate professional, ministerial conduct and mastery of spiritual direction skills. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Meeting professional standards of behavior in spiritual direction sessions;
2. Participating in Practicum and supervision sessions which address ethical behavior related to professional boundaries, professional identity, and openness to supervision;
3. Developing the necessary skills to meet the competency of a professional spiritual director including empathy, self-care, a contemplative attitude, and reflective listening;
4. Welcoming feedback in individual supervision, peer supervision, and small group settings (i.e. triads and quads);
5. Maintaining appropriate boundaries in Practicum, supervision, and spiritual direction settings;
6. Showing professional responsibility, personal maturity, emotional integration, and ethical knowledge and behavior as indicated in the Spiritual Direction Guidelines of Ethical Conduct.

Practicum Course Requirements

1. Attend and participate in all sessions and Blackboard discussions.
2. Submit a five-page reflection paper at the end of each semester (Practicum I and Practicum II) that responds to the following prompts:
   a. Describe which readings most engaged or challenged you and why.
   b. Choose one topic from the readings and discuss how you might apply it fruitfully to your own spiritual direction ministry.
3. Receive monthly spiritual direction.
4. Be involved in directing two or more persons every three to four weeks from late October or early November to May.
5. Meet seven times with a supervisor between November and May using the verbatim format.
6. Ensure the submission of the Initial Agreement with Supervisor form. The Supervisor will complete the form and send it to the Practicum's director at the beginning of Practicum I.
7. Submit the Supervisor Release form.[3] Students complete the form and send it to the Practicum's director at the beginning of Practicum I.
8. Ensure the submission of the Supervisor Evaluation. Supervisors send the Practicum's director an evaluation of students' progress at the end of Practicum I and Practicum II.
9. Submit a Verbatim, Contemplative Reflection form,[3] and your responses the summary evaluation questions. Students submit a verbatim (using the Verbatim form), the Contemplative Reflection form and a summary evaluation to the Practicum's director at the end of Practicum I and Practicum II.
10. Listen openly and share the fruit of personal prayer experiences in a reflective and confidential atmosphere within the group.
11. Additional activities may be required at the discretion of the Practicum's director.

[1] Monthly sessions are conducted following the dates on the Practicum syllabus.

[2] The Practicum's director and students determine the Blackboard discussion dates on the first session of each semester.

[3] These forms are included in the Individual Information Process document that is sent via email by the Practicum's director to supervisors and students at the beginning of Practicum I.