

SP 2175
Transition and Transformation
JSTB, Fall 2006

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Class meets: 9:40-11:00 am, Mon & Thu, Mudd 104

Course Description

“The only constant is change.” This seminar will examine the experience of transition from the perspective of the Christian tradition, the human sciences, and contemporary spirituality. Students will be encouraged to reflect upon the transitions they have experienced/are experiencing in their own lives. The class will unfold in four parts: 1. A look at the *experience* of transition; 2. Analysis of transition; 3. Resources in the Christian tradition; and 4. How might we sustain transformation in our lives? Both personal and cultural transformation will be considered. Preference will be given to JSTB sabbatical students. This course counts as praxis course in the Pastoral Department for JSTB M.Div. students.

Topics

Part I: The experience of transition. Primarily a reading of Lamott, plus students' own reflection.

Part II: Analysis of transition.

- A) Reading of Bridges
- B) Different authors on grief and grieving

Part III: Resources from the tradition. Primarily a reading of Ignatius

- A) Autobiography
- B) Discernment

Part IV: Attending to transition. Primarily a reading of Bass and Dykstra

- A) Understanding “practice”
- B) Practices for all Christians
- B) Practices especially important to ministers (prayer, discernment, spiritual direction)
- D) Student presentations

Texts

Bass, Dorothy, and Craig Dykstra, eds., *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997

Bridges, William. *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1980.

Lamott, Anne. *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.

For those taking the course for credit: one other book of your choosing -- suggested list will be distributed later. This final book will deal with the relationship between personal and cultural transformation.

There is also a reader containing photocopied readings. This is available at Copy Central, on Hearst near Euclid.