

SYLLABUS
887: SACRED CEREMONIES AND CELEBRATIONS
1 ½ Day Optional Residency (Fall)
FACULTY: Rev. Jane Simmons, ThD
Date Revised: 7/5/10

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the natural cycles of human existence, from the joy of birth to the mystery of death, important changes occur throughout all of our lives. Celebrants and ministers have the honor of bearing witness to these pivotal moments. Ritual deepens the experience of these life events, supporting significant transition and rites of passage. The power of ritual lies beyond words, bringing participants into meaningful connection with the Sacred through the collaborative creation and facilitation of uniquely designed ceremony. In this course, students will research, plan, outline and lead traditional and non-traditional sacred ceremonies and celebrations. All ceremonies created during the course will be compiled onto a CD for each student to keep. During the optional residency, students have the opportunity to lead the sacred ceremony that they have prepared. This course is highly recommended for all persons seeking ordination.

FACULTY BIOGRAPHY

Rev. Dr. Jane Simmons is an ordained Unity minister, and holds a doctoral degree in Theology from Holos University Graduate Seminary. She is currently the International Teen Ministry Coordinator for the Association of Unity Churches and is adjunct faculty for Unity School's Spiritual Education and Enrichment program. Having served in three Unity churches in Canada and the United States, Jane has created and presided over ceremonies as diverse as weddings, holy unions, memorials, baptisms, christenings and vow renewals. In addition, she has conducted hand fasting and commitment celebrations as well as blessing ceremonies for babies, homes, pets, churches and places of business. As a speaker, retreat leader and HeartMath® Qualified Instructor, Jane has facilitated numerous seminars and conferences for New Thought spiritual educators. She is the author of *I of the Storm for Teens* and has written curriculum for both the teen and adult I of the Storm books. Jane has been a contributor to several publications, including *Unity Magazine* and *Natural Healer Magazine*.

FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION

Faculty Name: Rev. Jane Simmons Th.D.
E-mail Address: drjanesimmons@gmail.com
Phone Number: 816-600-2338
Address: 1016 SW Lakeview Blvd, Lees Summit, MO 64081

Conference Call #: 218-339-4600 - Access Code: 190488#

COURSE DELIVERY STYLE & PLAN OF ACTION

This course uses a balance of experiential methods and scholarly reference materials. In the residency, experience in planning and conducting ritual and ceremony is gained under supervision of the faculty. Those who cannot attend the residency use telephone conferencing to work with faculty to plan and conduct a local ceremony. A reflection paper describing the experience is required. The reading and writing assignments are accomplished through distance learning utilizing occasional conference call discussions. Students may proceed as follows:

1. Contact the Instructor by email.
2. Obtain the required textbooks and other materials.
3. Read the Syllabus, Outline of Assignments, and Assignment Schedule and clarify any questions you have on your individual plan of action for the course.

4. Submit all of your assignments and attend all telephone conferences according to the Assignment Schedule. Contact the instructor if there are problems with this.

RESIDENTIAL REGISTRATION

Register with the HU Bursar, Marilyn McGehee (888-272-6109) for the residency portion of the course. There is an additional \$25.00 per day fee for residency classes held at Unity Village.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Research the approach, the background, and the scholarly premise of traditional and non-traditional sacred ceremonies and celebrations choosing from a variety of possibilities including but not limited to: weddings, adult baptisms, infant christenings, memorial services, vow renewals, holy unions, commitment ceremonies, pet blessings, rites-of-passage, releasing ceremonies, house blessings, honoring of the seasons, and blessing for blended families.
- Develop skills in preparing and officiating at celebrations
- Demonstrate the ability to design and facilitate a sacred ceremony
- Discuss official regulations related to performing various ceremonies
- Use Conference calls for a collegiate exchange with one another to gain additional insights and ideas about ceremony and celebration.

Required Materials and Texts:

1. Beck, Renee and Metrick, Sydney Barbara, **The Art of Ritual: Creating and Performing Ceremonies for Growth and Change**, Celestial Arts, 2003. Available from www.amazon.com
2. Van Gennep, Arnold, **The Rites of Passage**, The University of Chicago Press, 1960. Available from www.amazon.com
3. Farmer, Steven D. Ph.D., **Sacred Ceremony: How to Create Ceremonies for Healing, Transitions, and Celebrations**, Hay House, Inc. 2002. Available from www.amazon.com
4. Huntley, Karyl, **Real Life Rituals**, Spiritual Living Press, 2005. Available from www.amazon.com
5. Bell, Catherine, **Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions**, Oxford University Press, 1997. Available from www.amazon.com
6. **Instructor's Supplemental Information Document**. Emailed by faculty to each student at beginning of semester.

Suggested Supplemental Texts:

1. Williamson, Gay and David, **Transformative Rituals: Celebrations for Personal Growth**, Health Communications, Inc. 1994. Available from www.amazon.com
2. Kingma, Daphne Rose, **Weddings from the Heart: Contemporary and Traditional Ceremonies for an Unforgettable Wedding**, Conari Press, 1995. Available from www.amazon.com
3. Macomb, Rev. Susanna Stefanachi and Thompson, Andrea, **Joining Hands and Hearts: Interfaith, Intercultural Wedding Celebrations**, Fireside, 2003. Available from www.amazon.com
4. Walker, Barbara G., **Women's Rituals**, Harper and Row, 1999. Available from www.amazon.com

HOLOS FACULTY-STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Students and instructor communicate frequently via email, and phone conferences create a collegial forum for sharing ideas among class participants. Telephone conferences and calls with instructors are the student's expense. Faculty should inform students of any times that they are not available for email or phone communication. Students should inform instructors if they will not be available for scheduled phone conferences. Students should allow three days for a response after emailing an instructor. If you have not

received a response after three days, re-send the email, call the instructor and leave a voice message. If you have still not received a response after two more days, forward your email communications with the instructor to the Dean of Faculty. Further action will be determined by the Dean of Faculty.

ASSIGNMENT FORMATS

- All written assignments must be **Microsoft Word** documents sent by email as attached files.
- All papers should be **double-spaced**.
- **FONT:** Times or Times New Roman.
- **E-MAIL SUBJECT LINE:** Always include your name and the Assignment number in the subject line of your E-mail and on the title page of your assigned papers.
- **END NOTES:** All referenced material must be cited using endnotes. Include the Author's name, the publication name, the publisher, the date of publication, and the page number.
- **FILE NAME: When you “save” your document, you MUST use the following format to name your Word file: Or your file will be returned so that you can add the proper file name and format: The document you attach to your e-mail should be in the following format:**

SmithJ_887#1.doc. (Last Name, First Initial_Course #, Assignment#.doc) Use Times, Times New Roman, or Helvetica fonts, 12 pt. and cite all referenced material using *Chicago Manual of Style* endnotes.

OUTLINE OF ASSIGNMENTS & PERCENTAGE OF COURSE

1. Assignment #1 –20% (Conference Call #1) September 14, 2010, 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone and (Ceremony Outline) Due Date: September 30, 2010
2. Assignment #2 – 25%
Two options:
 - (A) (Attend Optional Residency) October 7/8
(Submit reflection paper) Due Date October 30, 2010
 - OR**
 - (B) 1. (Conference Call #1b) October 12, 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone
2. (Lead Group Ceremony)
3. (Submit reflection paper) Due Date: October 30, 2010
3. Assignment #3 – 10% (Peer Reviews of Ceremonies), Due Date: November 30, 2010
4. Assignment #4 – 25% (15-20 page scholarly paper) Due Date: January 3, 2011
5. Assignment #5 – 10% (Revised Ceremony Outline) Due Date: January 7, 2011
6. Assignment #6 – 05% (Final Conference Call) January 18, 2011, 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone

DETAILS OF ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are based on a 20 Week Semester. Spring Semester begins the second Monday of March and Fall Semester begins the second Monday of September. (See website calendar for specific dates).

ASSIGNMENT #1

Due Date: September 30, 2010

Percentage of Grade: Conference Call – 05%; Ceremony outline - 15%

- **Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Students Will:**
- Research the approach, the background, and the scholarly premise of traditional and non-traditional sacred ceremonies and celebrations choosing from a variety of possibilities including but not limited to: weddings, adult baptisms, infant christenings, memorial services, vow renewals, holy unions,

commitment ceremonies, pet blessings, rites-of-passage, releasing ceremonies, house blessings, honoring of the seasons, and blessing for blended families.

- Demonstrate the ability to design and facilitate a sacred ceremony.

Required Texts and/or Materials: Students will utilize a variety of texts from the required materials list and chosen material from the suggested supplemental text list, as well as resources from the Instructor's Supplemental Information Document.

Assignment Description: Students first participate in Conference Call #1. Students then create an outline of their chosen ceremony and email it out to all class members for peer review.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Assignment #2, OPTION #1 (With Residency Component):

Due Date: Attend Residency - October 7 & 8, 2010 (1-1/2 days).

Submit Reflection Paper-October 30, 2010

Percentage of Grade: 25%

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Demonstrate the ability to design and facilitate a sacred ceremony.

Required Texts and/or Materials: Students will utilize a variety of texts from the required materials list and chosen material from the suggested supplemental text list, as well as resources from the Instructor's Supplemental Information Document.

Assignment Description: For those attending the optional residency, Assignment #2 will have two components, consisting of:

- Attending Optional Residency, October 7/8, where participants will lead his or her chosen ceremony with fellow students
- Submitting 3-5 page reflection paper, describing the experience of creating and leading the ceremony

Assignment #2, OPTION #2 (All-Distance Learning)

Due Date: Attend Conference Call #1b, October 12, 2010 (See Description of Call)

Lead a local group ceremony. Submit reflection paper by October 30, 2010

Percentage of Grade: Conference Call – 05%; Ceremony Facilitation Reflection Paper - 20%

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Students will:

- Develop skills in preparing and officiating at celebrations
- Demonstrate the ability to design and facilitate a sacred ceremony

Required Texts and/or Materials: Students will utilize a variety of texts from the required materials list and chosen material from the suggested supplemental text list, as well as resources from the Instructor's Supplemental Information Document.

Assignment Description: For those not attending the optional residency, Assignment #2 will have three components, consisting of:

- Participating in Conference Call #1b.
- Leading a group through the student's chosen ceremony with at least three other people participating
- Submitting 5-7 page reflection paper, outlining the ceremony and describing the experience of creating and leading it.

ASSIGNMENT #3

Due Date: November 30, 2010

Percentage of Grade: 10%

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Develop skills in preparing ceremonies.

Required Texts and/or Materials: Copies of Assignment #2 ceremonies from classmates

Assignment Description: Peer reviews of ceremonies: Students will review submitted ceremonies and share remarks with class members.

ASSIGNMENT #4

Due Date: January 3, 2011

Percentage of Grade: 25%

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Research the approach, the background, and the scholarly premise of traditional and non-traditional sacred ceremonies and celebrations.

Required Texts and/or Materials:

1. Beck, Renee and Metrick, Sydney Barbara, **The Art of Ritual: Creating and Performing Ceremonies for Growth and Change**, Celestial Arts, 2003. Available from www.amazon.com
2. Van Gennep, Arnold, **The Rites of Passage**, The University of Chicago Press, 1960. Available from www.amazon.com
3. Farmer, Steven D. Ph.D., **Sacred Ceremony: How to Create Ceremonies for Healing, Transitions, and Celebrations**, Hay House, Inc. 2002. Available from www.amazon.com
4. Huntley, Karyl, **Real Life Rituals**, Spiritual Living Press, 2005. Available from www.amazon.com
5. Bell, Catherine, **Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions**, Oxford University Press, 1997. Available from www.amazon.com
6. **Instructor's Supplemental Information Document**. Emailed by faculty to each student at beginning of semester.

Assignment Description: Write a 15-20 page scholarly paper researching and exploring the following:

- Origin, purpose and role of ritual
- Types of ritual
- Elements of ritual
- Three phases/stages of ceremony
- Eight categories of ritual classification
- Sacred symbology
- Applications of ritual, citing traditional and non-traditional ceremonies

ASSIGNMENT #5

Due Date: January 7, 2011

Percentage of Grade: 10%

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Develop skills in preparing ceremonies

Required Texts and/or Materials: Peer reviews and instructor feedback

Assignment Description: Students will revise ceremonies taking into account peer review and instructor feedback and email to drjanesimmons@gmail.com for inclusion on the Class CD. All class members will receive a copy of the CD.

PHONE CONFERENCE #1

Phone number: 218-339-4600

Access Code: 190488#

Time: Tuesday, September 14, 2010, 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone.

Percentage of Grade: 05%

Required Texts and/or Materials: Instructor's Supplemental Information Document emailed to each student prior to conference call.

Description of Conference: During the call, students will choose one ceremony from variety offered in Instructor's Supplemental Information to outline and create.

Learning Outcomes of Conference: Develop skills in preparing and officiating at celebrations

PHONE CONFERENCE #1b (For students not attending Residency)

Phone number: 218-339-4600

Access Code: 190488#

Time: Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone.

Percentage of Grade: 05%

Required Texts and/or Materials: Students will utilize a variety of texts from the required materials list and chosen material from the suggested supplemental text list, as well as resources from the Instructor's Supplemental Information Document.

Description of Conference: During the call, students will consult with faculty, and ask any questions about the assignment as well as share the following information:

- Ceremony chosen
- Setting for facilitating ceremony
- Time and date of ceremony
- People with whom the ceremony will be shared

Learning Outcomes of Conference: Students Will:

- Gain insights for preparing and officiating at celebrations.
- Use Conference calls for a collegiate exchange with one another to gain additional insights and ideas about ceremony and celebration.

PHONE CONFERENCE #2

Phone number: 218-339-4600

Access Code: 190488#

Time: January 18, 2011, 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone

Percentage of Grade: 05%

Description of Conference: Students will process and share their experiences and insights in researching, creating and leading sacred ceremonies.

Learning Outcomes of Conference: Students will use the Conference call for a collegiate exchange with one another to gain additional insights and ideas about ceremony and celebration.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT:

Complete and return the course evaluation form you will receive a course evaluation form in August and February. You will receive notification of your final course grades only after you have submitted an evaluation for all courses you completed this semester. Students who plan to take an Incomplete in a course must wait until finishing a course before returning the evaluation form for the course.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THIS COURSE

GRADING: Part of the grade is based on how clearly and creatively you design the assignment. An "A" is assigned to work that is exceptionally clear, well organized, and contains original thought. A "B" is assigned to papers that are not exceptional but are well written and indicate an adequate understanding of the material.

Conference Calls: There are two or three conference calls during the semester. The preparation for these calls and the participation in the conferences is an important aspect of the final grade.

Grade of Honors: We encourage students to strive for honors in all that they do. However a grade of Honors is reserved for work that significantly exceeds the level of excellence required for an "A" or "B". It might be thought of as an A++!

Grade of Unsatisfactory: Students who fail to adequately satisfy the requirements or who do not demonstrate graduate level competency in the course will receive an Unsatisfactory grade. An Unsatisfactory grade in a Core course will require re-enrollment in the course.