



SPFM 6210 Discernment: Choosing Well (one credit)

North Park Theological Seminary

Fall 2026 Intensive, September 15 (9am –3 pm on campus),

16 (9 am –4 pm Retreat Center), and 17 (9am – 4pm on campus)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Ellen M. Kogstad, DDIV, Spiritual Director is an adjunct professor without a campus office. Please contact through email ekogstad@northpark.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Living a life of discernment based on the recognition of the work of the Spirit leads to decisions well made. Growing in awareness to the activity of God in one's life, transforms the desires of the individual follower of Jesus. Personal wholeness, character, and integrity flow from this process. Discernment is a gift and also a skill to be learned and developed.

This is a three day intensive class which includes a full day solitude retreat.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Grow in understanding of discernment as both a gift and a skill to live with greater integrity
2. Become proficient in the daily examen as a prayer practice
3. Attend a solitude retreat (Wednesday) to gain practice with silent attentiveness to the voice of God
4. Integrate learning through prayerfully writing a reflection paper

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path by Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon Au, Paulist Press (2006). ISBN 0809143720

Additional readings:

Discernment: The Art of Decision Making by Ellen Kogstad November 25, 2025. Available online at <https://seminary.northpark.edu/lina/faculty-voice/discernment/>

Scripture Readings: I King 3:5-15, Jeremiah 6:16, Romans 11:33-12:2, Matthew 7: 15-20, 1 John 4



ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING SCALE

Attendance and Participation Attendance and full participation is required for the full three day intensive.

Affirmation of Reading: Submit an affirmation of all reading completed on first day of class, September 15.

Reflection Paper A 6 page reflection paper will be submitted by Friday September 25, 5 pm CST following guidelines that will be provided in class

Grading: This class is Pass/Fail based on participation and completing all course requirements.

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Attendance at all three days is required.

Reading Assignments are to be completed by September 14 before class meetings begin. An affirmation of reading completion will be submitted on September 15

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
5. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments.

For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

TITLE IX & EQUITY



In accordance with Title IX, North Park employees who become aware of any incident of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on sex, gender, including pregnancy or related medical conditions, and other protected classes are required by law to notify North Park University's Title IX & Equity Team by submitting a report [here](#). The Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about students. The Senior Director of Human Resources and Deputy Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about employees. More information can be obtained here: [NPU's Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#).

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 15, 9 am – 3 pm on campus

Wednesday, September 16, 9 am – 4 pm Solitude Retreat. Location will be provided first day of class

Thursday, September 17, 9 am – 4 pm on campus