

The Discerning Pilgrim
UNCP 4601.01 Spring 2025
Tuesdays @ 4:30pm- 6:50pm
Location: TBA

Instructors:

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Course Description:

Leadership can be challenging, rewarding, insightful, and *transformational*. As students approach graduation, we want to lean into our Jesuit mission, values and the lessons in leadership from St. Ignatius to prepare students to be men and women for others. Rooted in Jesuit values of intellectual inquiry, moral and ethical discernment, and service to others, we will encourage students to develop a comprehensive understanding of themselves, their field of study, and their role in society.

This course will provide seminar members with the opportunity to pause during their final semester of studies at Boston College to consider how the image of pilgrimage might assist them in interpreting all of life as an act of *faithful trust*. The intention is that this might be accomplished through a particular focus on life experiences occurring before, during, and after matriculation at Boston College—especially regarding one’s engagement with relationships, society, work, and spirituality. We will attempt to use hindsight and reflection on past leadership experiences (social, academic, and spiritual) to mine wisdom for the future.

We will consider questions like:

- How can St. Ignatius' journey provide us with leadership lessons that are relevant today?
- In what ways does my journey up until now, and moving forward, provide me opportunities similar to St. Ignatius' pilgrimage?
- Who do I surround myself with, and why?

- How can I learn in and through tension or difference?
- How do we examine life's journey to mine it for the great wisdom contained within it?
- And what contribution do companions, role models, conversation partners, and mentors make to assisting one through this kind of life examination?

Learning Goals:

The Morrissey College embodies the Jesuit, Catholic commitment to depth of inquiry, academic excellence and educating the whole person through a formative engagement with the liberal arts. As such, we will seek to engage students directly with society's most pressing problems and help them use their gifts to make the world a better place

Learning Objectives:

- **Understand and apply Jesuit Leadership Principles:** Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of Jesuit principles and Ignatian practices that they will be able to apply in their personal, professional and spiritual life.
- **Cultivate Authentic Leadership:** Students will develop self-awareness by identifying their values, strengths, and styles to practice leading with authenticity, humility, vulnerability, and dignity in the service to the greater good.
- **Cultivate an Interior Life:** Students will understand their life in the context of a pilgrimage, which will foster exploration of an ever-deepening interiority through selected *Spiritual Exercises*.
- **Develop Interpersonal, Communication and Spirituality Skills:** Students will strengthen their listening, reflection and feedback skills by engaging with peers, faculty, alumni and campus partners to provide and receive constructive feedback as well as articulate the meaning they have made from formative experiences throughout their undergraduate experience.
- **Promote Service and the Greater Good:** Students design and facilitate regular reflections, papers, and engage with one another as a cohort to understand, reflect and enact service (to one's self, their community, or one another) as a core component of their living promotion of their Jesuit education and the greater good.

Course Plan:

This course has four parts that build toward mid-semester and final projects related to shaping one's own leadership and discernment. This class views reflection, spirituality, engagement with community, discernment, and mindfulness as essential elements to being true to oneself and developing as an authentic leader. Each class has time devoted to strengthening those practices.

1. The first part, *Understanding St. Ignatius and Pilgrimage*, focuses on understanding St. Ignatius Pilgrimage and, in turn, your individual and collective leadership journey through your undergraduate experience at Boston College. We will seek to look back at experiences that helped shape St. Ignatius (and you) and learn how these experiences inform Ignatian practice and paradigm.
2. The second part, *Leaders on Pilgrimage*, will be an experiential component to the course in which students and instructors will walk in the steps of St.

Ignatius. This experience will help serve as both a living and learning component and allow individuals to see and experience the world as St. Ignatius did.

3. The third part, *Using Your Experience to Shape Your Future*, is about cultivating this knowledge for your use as a leader in the world. We will focus on making meaning of these experiences (academic, social, and spiritual) and helping empower you to enact these practices in your real-world, post-graduate life. This will also include how we respond to challenges, create community, “show up” in our everyday lives, and build greater capacity for resilience during inevitable difficulties or setbacks.
4. In your final presentation, we ask that you pull all course elements together to support students in finding meaning and purpose and developing their own purpose statement- thinking through how they will/can use this information in their life outside of BC.

Canvas:

Canvas is Boston College’s online learning management system. It will house the syllabus and will be the primary way in which we will communicate with you throughout the semester (reading updates, assignment details, etc.). You can access it through the Agora portal or log in from www.bc.edu/lms.

Readings and Materials:

Course readings are subject to change. The below list is a starting point, but may vary at the instructors’ discretion.

- Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings* (ISBN: 978-0-307-27742-8)
- Paul Alexander, *Three Minutes for a Dog: My Life in an Iron Lung* (ISBN: 978-1-525-525322)
- Otto Kroeger, *Type Talk: The Sixteen Personality Types that Determine How We Live, Love and Work*
- William A. Barry, S.J. *Praying the Truth: Deepening Your Friendship with God through Honest Prayer* (ISBN 987-0-8294-3624-2)
- *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company that Changed the World* by Chris Lowney
- *The Road to Character* by David Brooks
- Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (Selections which will be available to you on the course Canvas site)
- Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don’t* (Selections which will be available to you on the course Canvas site)

**Additional Selections will be supplemented from a variety of disciplines including articles, poems, selections from novels, journals, etc.*

Course readings will be available on Canvas, and anything that is not available for you on Canvas will be sent out through email. *The assigned reading must be done before class begins.* You do not need to purchase any texts for this class.

Course Assignments and Grading:

To allow students to demonstrate learning and growth in various ways, the course is designed with various assignments. Overall grades will be determined from the following assignments (please see below- full assignment descriptions will be posted on Canvas):

Class participation and in-class writing	20%
Weekly Reflection	25%
Co-Led Class Activity/Discussion/Reflection (1x)	15%
Midterm Assignment	20%
Final Reflection (10%) + Presentation (10%)	20%

All assignments are to be completed on time per the syllabus. Please email the instructors before a due date if an extenuating circumstance arises. We are open to alternative proposals to assignments. If you would like to format an assignment in another way, please write a one-page proposal and share it with the instructors. If approved, the alternative format may supplement assignments outlined below.

Class Participation and In-Class Writing

Class participation is vital to the learning process in this course, which centers on developing as a person and a leader. Class participation occurs during full-class discussions, pair or small group discussions and activities, and weekly in-class writing and feedback.

You are expected to fully review and reflect on the readings assigned in Canvas prior to each class and come to class prepared to share your reflections and ready to engage in prompted discussions and activities.

The weekly in-class writings involve responding to a prompt by writing freely on paper (or via Canvas Discussion Board) for several minutes, and then reading your writing to the class and receiving feedback. Participation also includes listening to other students share their writing and providing thoughtful feedback to them.

Weekly Reflections

Each week, students are required to submit a Reflection based on the prompts in Canvas that demonstrate learning and engagement with the material. Reflection papers should be 1-2 pages, double spaced, and should respond to the weekly prompts in the Canvas assignment. Reflection papers are due before class and should be uploaded to Canvas.

Co-Led Class Activity and Discussion

Once during the semester, each student will co-lead a class activity and discussion centered on that day's topic. The student pairs will meet with the instructor at least one week before the class to review their plan and receive feedback from the instructor that they are expected to incorporate. Additional information will be available in Canvas.

Midterm Assignment

Mid-Point Reflection: 4-6 Page Paper (11-12 pt Times New Roman Font, double spaced, MLA Format) Select one (no more than two) reading(s) or one theme on which to focus and use this space to reflect on the ideas—what is the author saying, how do you see this informing your personal, spiritual and professional life? Use this space to integrate concepts from class discussions or reflections to outline how you have used this course element to make meaning of your experience thus far.

If you'd like to explore other mediums or modes of reporting this reflection (orally, through a different medium), you are invited to meet with the instructors and have an alternative approved after proposal, discussion and approval.

Final Reflection + Presentation

What's Next Presentation? Using the lessons of St. Ignatius, class discussions, and the pilgrimage experience, how do you plan to integrate the lessons you have learned throughout your undergraduate experience at Boston College into your life outside of BC? What do you think you can continue to do, how will this inform your personal and professional practice, and how do you plan to "set the world aflame"? You should consider reflecting deeply on one of the following questions:

- How have these experiences shaped my personal development?
- How has your relationship between your leadership and your inner life changed from the start of the course until now?
- Looking back on your experiences throughout your undergraduate career, how do you think Boston College has helped you in your formation journey and in what ways will you commit to your formation throughout your journey?
- *Additional reflection prompts may be curated in conversation with instructors.*

DUE in class **April 29th**; Paper DUE **May 3rd** (see Canvas for additional information).

Attendance and Participation:

You are expected to attend all classes, be prepared for class, and participate in a meaningful and productive manner. Although class attendance remains as valuable and important as ever, you should not attend class if you do not feel healthy and well that day. If you feel ill, you should not attend class, and you will not be penalized for missing class. It is your responsibility to make up the class, for example by viewing the class video if available, meeting with the instructor, or learning the material in another way. Students should communicate to their professors if they think they should not attend class. Students who are unprepared will have this reflected in their final grade. Interviews are not a valid excuse for missing class, so please schedule your interviews so they do not conflict with class time. If you need to miss class, please tell the instructor as far in advance as possible

Technology/Electronic Devices:

The use of laptop computers, smart phones, smart watches, or other electronic devices is not permitted in class. Although most students confine their classroom use of laptops and other electronic devices to taking notes, too many students engage in other on-line activities. Also, research suggests that students learn more when they take notes by hand rather than using a computer. All electronic devices (cell phones, smart phones, etc.) should be turned off prior to the beginning of class. This is especially important given the focus of this course on reflection, mindfulness, and engagement with peers. If you need to use a computer because of a documented accommodation, please discuss this with the instructors at the beginning of the semester.

Recording Classes:

This class may be recorded by the instructors to assist students enrolled in the class who miss sessions due to an excused absence, such as illness. Students may not record/stream video or audio, or take photos in the classroom, or share portions of any recorded video or audio of the class with anyone outside of the class except with the written permission of the instructors and such other permissions may be required by law or University policies.

Accommodation Services:

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Rory Stein, (617) 552-3470, rory.stein@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Academic Integrity:

According to the University's Undergraduate Catalogue, "The pursuit of knowledge can proceed only when scholars take responsibility and receive credit for their own work. Recognition of individual contributions to knowledge and of the intellectual property of others builds trust within the University and encourages the sharing of ideas that is essential to scholarship. Similarly, the educational process requires that individuals present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique, and eventual reformulation. Presentation of others' work as one's own is not only intellectual dishonesty, but it also undermines the educational process." All students are expected to understand the university's policy about academic integrity; it can be found at: [University's Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy](#). Any violations of this policy will result in the student receiving penalties as prescribed by the University. This is a course that seeks your reflection and the wisdom gained from that reflection- there ought not be any need for anything artificial- it's your life.

Any acts of cheating, plagiarism, collusion, or other acts of dishonesty in this course will not be tolerated and will be fully penalized. If you need help in the proper use of

citations in your papers, please ask.

Technology Support:

You may call the BC Technology Help Center at (617) 552-HELP (4357), email help.center@bc.edu, live tech support chat, or visit the Technology Help website at www.bc.edu/help. Staff at the BC Help Center are always available to help you. You can get technology help regardless of where you buy your computer.

Course Schedule:

Note: Schedule is subject to change. See Canvas for latest updates. All readings and detailed assignment descriptions can be found in Canvas.

*All reading assignments are subject to change.

	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
1	1/14	<p>Introduction to Pilgrimage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Description: Explore the concept of pilgrimage as a sacred journey, distinguishing it from tourism, and reflecting on life as a spiritual quest.● Reflection Prompt: How do you see your life as a journey? What are you seeking on your personal pilgrimage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Read syllabus● Introduce cohort/set community guidelines <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Article: Are You a Pilgrim or a Tourist?● Celebrating Catholic Education by Fr. Himes <p>Optional Readings:</p> <p>-Podcast: 12 truths I learned from life and writing</p> <p>-Ignatian Spirituality and Leadership in Organizations Today</p> <p>-Shaping Theory and Practice: The Impact of Ignatius of Loyola's Approach to Transformation and Transformational Leadership</p>
<i>Part I – Introduction to St. Ignatius and Ignatian Practices</i>			

2	1/21	<p>Who Are You? How do you listen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Description: Reflect on the importance of self-awareness, listening deeply to yourself and others, and fostering meaningful conversations.● Reflection Prompt: Reflect on a time when you truly listened to yourself or someone else. What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Readings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Selections from <i>The Conversational Word of God</i>○ Excerpt from <i>The Red Book</i>○ Examen Prayer
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		<p>did you learn from that experience?</p>	
3	1/28	<p>Loyola Castle: Place of Pivot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description: Engage with the power of memory and storytelling to understand how the past shapes your identity and guides your future. ● Reflection Prompt: How do your roots and past experiences inform your current values and future aspirations? 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selections from <i>Markings</i> by Dag Hammarskjold • Article: "How the Story You Tell About Yourself Affects Your Life" <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
<p><i>Part II- Reflecting on Your Past (Aligning lessons with St. Ignatius's Path)</i></p>			
4	2/4	<p>Xavier Castle: Xavier and St. Ignatius – Engaging Across Difference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description: Learn to navigate relationships across differences, embracing diversity as a source of growth and understanding. ● Reflection Prompt: Reflect on a relationship where you had to navigate differences. What did you learn about yourself and the other person? <p>Pilgrimage Preparation- Global Safety/Security</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpts from <i>Heroic Leadership</i> by Chris Lowney • Selections from <i>The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything</i> • Take Personal Values online assessment <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
5	2/11	<p>Montserrat: Laying Down Your Sword</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description: Examine the vulnerability required to let go of defenses and face challenges with honesty and courage. 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: <i>The Power of Vulnerability</i> by Brené Brown • Additional Reading TBA

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflection Prompt: Reflect on a recent risk you took or a new experience you tried. What did you learn from it? <p><i>Pilgrimage Preparation</i></p>	<p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
6	2/18	<p>Manresa: Life’s Laboratory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description: Discover the value of experimentation and taking risks to uncover purpose and grow in unexpected ways. ● Reflection Prompt: What is one new experience you are willing to try, and what do you hope to learn from it? <p><i>Pilgrimage Preparation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from <i>The Path Made Clear</i> by Oprah Winfrey • Additional Reading TBA <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
7	2/25	<p>Reflection Week/Students Choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description: Prepare for the pilgrimage experience by reflecting on intentions and readiness to embrace the journey ahead. ● Reflection Prompt: What are your intentions for the upcoming pilgrimage, and how will you approach this transformative experience? <p>MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT DUE</p> <p><i>Pilgrimage Preparation-</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assigned Reading- <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
8	3/4	<p>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</p> <p>*Pilgrimage Experience*</p>	

Part III- Using Your Experience to Inform Your Future

9	3/11	<p>Re-Entry: What's Next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Description: Reflect on how to integrate the insights from the pilgrimage into everyday life and navigate transitions authentically.● Reflection Prompt: How will you carry the lessons of the pilgrimage into your daily life and relationships?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Readings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Excerpt from <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> by Annie Dillard <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
10	3/18	<p>Re-potting Your Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Description: Explore ways to nurture personal growth, resilience, and spiritual renewal for the future.● Reflection Prompt: What practices or habits can help you prepare for continued growth and resilience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Readings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Selections from <i>Praying the Truth</i> by William A. Barry <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
11	3/25	<p>Friendships and Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Description: Investigate how meaningful connections evolve and contribute to a fulfilling life.● Reflection Prompt: Reflect on the relationships that have most shaped your life. What makes them transformative or enduring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Readings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ TBD <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>

12	4/1	<p>Conflict and Fear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description: Learn to navigate conflict with compassion and address fears in ways that foster understanding and growth. ● Reflection Prompt: How do you approach conflict in a way that promotes growth and mutual respect? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excerpt from <i>Crucial Conversations</i> by Patterson et al. <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
13	4/8	<p>Longing and Savoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description: Embrace the beauty and complexity of holding both joy and sorrow in your personal and shared experiences. ● Reflection Prompt: How do you navigate moments of longing or joy while honoring the complexity of life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Optional: <i>The Poet, The Prophet, The Warrior</i> by Rubem Alves <p>Complete Weekly Reflection Paper</p>
14	4/15	<p>Life Stages and Skills: Care and Grief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Theme Description: Reflect on encounters with grief and caregiving as moments of profound presence and meaning. ● Reflection Prompt: What have you learned from experiences of caregiving or encountering grief? ● Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TBD 	

		Final Presentations	
15	4/22	<p>*Substitute Monday Classes- No Class Meeting</p> <p>*Students' Choice*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Theme Description: Explore a topic chosen by the class to deepen collective learning and engagement. ● Reflection Prompt: What topic or question feels most pressing for you to explore as we near the end of this course? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TBD
16	4/29	<p>Last Class Celebration 😊</p> <p>FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE</p>	