

HANDBOOK TO THE FAITH SEEKING JUSTICE – CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

(updated 2019)

Contents of the Handbook:

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FAITH SEEKING JUSTICE – Christian Leadership Certificate Program (from
the Shenandoah University Handbook, updated 2019-2020)

The Faith Seeking Justice – Christian Leadership Certificate Program is a three-year cohort program that integrates knowing, being and doing. Its aim is to prepare and empower leaders for the 21st century church who are committed to spiritual depth and social justice as integral aspects of the church’s ministry in a global context. The program combines religion courses with co-curricular experiences related to the themes of Spiritual Formation, Leadership Development and Doing Justice in a three-year cycle. Examples of co-curricular activities that may be approved for this program include covenant groups, meeting with a professional or spiritual mentor, participating in local, national, and/or international service-learning opportunities, attendance at conferences or retreats, taking leadership roles in on-campus groups or events and internships. Student will be expected to participate in 10 hours of approved co-curricular activities each semester while they are in the program.

Courses Required for the Faith Seeking Justice – Christian Leadership Certificate Program

Every effort should be made to take the courses presented below as part of a cohort. Where necessary some substitutions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

<u>Course</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credit hours</u>
REL 110	The Global Context of Christian Leadership	3
REL 112	Christian Discipleship	3
REL 21X	Any course on the Bible	3
REL 301	Christian Theology (with Leadership Project)	3
Total		12

Co-Curricular Requirements for the Faith Seeking Justice – Christian Leadership Certificate Program

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Documented hours</u>
Spiritual Formation	20*
Leadership Development	20*
Doing Justice	20*
Total	60

* Students are responsible for ensuring that their hours of participation in co-curricular activities are approved as fitting practical experience for the co-curricular theme and documented with the program director in a timely manner.

Mission, Goals, and Core Values of the Faith Seeking Justice – Christian Leadership Certificate Program

The Mission of FSJ: The Faith Seeking Justice Christian Leadership Program aims to prepare and empower leaders who are committed to spiritual depth and social justice as integral aspects of the Church's ministry in a global context.

Themes of FSJ: The FSJ program has three core themes that it integrate knowing, being, and doing: spiritual formation, leadership development, and doing justice. Each year, the program will focus on a particular theme and provide opportunities to engage more deeply in these areas.

Spiritual Formation: Students will engage in a faith that is owned, processed, and challenged.

Leadership Development: Students will gain skills in how to mobilize and organize people around a common goal.

Doing Justice: Students will learn about issues of justice and injustice locally, nationally and internationally and will work actively towards creating responses to confront them.

Core Values for FSJ:

1. Faith: Students will engage in a faith that is owned, processed, and challenged. Through the program, students will challenge former views, and reconstruct their faith and identity based on what they are learning and experiencing. This will be demonstrated by:

- Articulation: Students will be able to articulate beliefs and values clearly
- Formation: Students will be able to identify times in their lives where their faith has changed

2. Leadership: Students will gain skills in how to mobilize and organize people around a common goal. Through this they will grow in communication, visioning, growth, active listening, and caring for others. This will be demonstrated by:

- Events and programs: Students will help plan, organize and recruit for events in the Spiritual Life office and at home
- Group projects: Students will help lead group projects in FSJ classes

3. Community: Students will learn how to work together in an interdependent team

that encourages, affirms and empowers those in the group. Through conversation, experience, and the practice of shared life, students will develop community. This will be demonstrated by:

- Sharing: Students will share their lives with others in FSJ, encouraging mutual growth, listening, and communication
- Affirmation: Students will encourage and affirm those in their community, as well as encouraging further growth.

4. Justice orientation: Students will learn about issues of justice and injustice locally, nationally and internationally and will work actively towards creating responses to confront them. Through academic experience as well as co-curricular programming, students will be challenged to address structures and systems. This will be demonstrated by:

- Identification: Students will learn how to identify seats of power, how it is used and misused, and major contemporary social issues.
- Integration: Students will make personal choices that highlight their commitment to justice.

5. Integrity: Students will develop congruence and integration of their values, beliefs, and actions (what I value is what I believe is what I say is what I do is what I value). This will be largely measured through the other core values and whether they are lived out. This will be demonstrated by:

- Action: Students values and faith need to be integrated in their lives.
- Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on how the core values of FSJ are lived out in their lives.

FSJ Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this program of study, students will be able to:

1. Display basic biblical and theological knowledge necessary to assume leadership roles in the Christian community, with a particular emphasis on understanding the church's ministry in the world. (Basic Knowledge)
2. Master entry-level practical skills necessary for leadership roles in the Christian community, including skills necessary for working in the multicultural contexts created by globalization. (Skills)
3. Integrate knowledge with personal spiritual development and a commitment to social justice as an essential dimension of discipleship and ministry (Integration)

How FSJ Relates to the University's Mission and Commitments:

- to prepare “individuals...to be ethical, compassionate citizens who are committed to making responsible contributions within a community, a nation, and the world.”
- to “cultivate leadership to advance positive change and growth” with a particular focus on the church or Christian community.
- The importance of the global context of the church's ministry in the program is a reflection of the University's own focus on the world and cultural diversity.
- The program's combination of curricular dimensions with spiritual development and service under the direction of a professional mentor is consistent with the University's purpose of combining “professional and liberal learning” and its “commitment to self-reflection and personal development.”

Acceptance and Progression Policies of the Faith Seeking Justice Christian Leadership Program

The FSJ Christian Leadership Program is an academically rigorous program for those with the character and the calling for servant leadership in the Christian community. It also involves a dedication of University resources above those enjoyed by a typical student. The following requirements for entrance and ongoing participation in the program reflect its rigor and the privilege being part of a Faith Seeking Justice cohort involves.

Acceptance Criteria:

To be admitted to the Faith Seeking Justice Christian Leadership Program, students must:

- Have a 3.0 GPA or higher in high school (based on a 4.0 scale, unweighted) or for those who apply during their first year at SU, a 2.7 GPA.
- Show evidence of calling and commitment to leadership in the Christian community and concern for justice in the world.
- Submit at least one recommendation from the student's academic setting (teacher, administrator, guidance counselor or university faculty/staff member for current SU students) and/or recommendation from the student's pastor, youth leader or lay mentor from the student's church.

Progression Policies:

- The Department of Religion is committed to providing sections for the courses in the FSJ sequence that are reserved exclusively for the FSJ cohort. Occasionally, however, it may be necessary to allow a Religion Major to take a course with the cohort, especially during the third year.
- Every effort will be made to schedule the classes in the FSJ sequence at a time when there are no conflicts with students' required courses in other programs. Should a student be unable to take a course in the sequence because of study abroad, student teaching, or an unavoidable scheduling conflict, that student MAY be allowed to take the course outside a FSJ cohort.
- A student earning less than a **C-** in a FSJ class must retake the class outside the cohort if that opportunity presents itself the following year.
- A student must remain in good standing with the University.
- A student whose GPA is below 2.0 in any semester will be placed on FSJ academic probation for the following semester. During that semester, the

student may be deemed ineligible to participate in FSJ activities, including FSJ trips. In consultation with the his or her faculty advisor, the director of the Academic Success Center, the FSJ Co-Chairs, a student on FSJ academic probation will be required to develop a plan of action for improving academic performance submitted in writing and approved by the FSJ Co-Chairs by the end of the first week of the next semester.

- A student whose semester GPA is below 2.0 for two successive semesters will be dismissed from the program. The FSJ Co-Chairs will check student GPAs each semester.
- A student dismissed from the FSJ program for academic reasons is ineligible for readmission to the program; however, this does not affect their standing in the Religion Minor or Major programs, which are subject to University and College of Arts and Sciences requirements.
- Students are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook. A student on Social or Conduct Probation may be subject to review (See most recent Student Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook currently available at <http://www.su.edu/academics/academic-resources-information/undergraduate-and-graduate-catalogs/>)
- A student may be subject to review on the recommendation of such action by a mentor, a member of the Spiritual Life team, a faculty member, or a person in a supervisory relationship with the student for conduct that represents a serious violation of the standards of integrity necessary for Christian leadership.

Appeal and Review Process:

- Appeal of actions taken on the basis of academic performance will be considered by the FSJ Leadership Team. Academic appeals must be submitted in writing within two weeks of the end of the semester. Every effort will be made to consider and respond to such appeals prior to the beginning of the next semester.
- Where appropriate and at the discretion of the FSJ Co-Chairs, or at the request of the student under review, other faculty members and/or the student's faculty advisor may be consulted as part of the appeal process.
- Non-academic reviews will be conducted by the FSJ Leadership Team and two FSJ students (one FSJ2 and one FSJ3, elected by their respective cohorts). Non-academic reviews may be conducted at any time.
- A review may result in a range of outcomes including but not limited to:
 - Dismissal from the FSJ Christian Leadership Program. Students

dismissed from FSJ are encouraged to continue to pursue a religion minor/major.

o Other outcomes may include meeting with appropriate persons for spiritual care, life management coaching, study skill development or pastoral counsel. Students may be deemed ineligible to participate in FSJ activities, including trips. As occasions arise, reviews will be conducted within the context of covenant community, which the FSJ Christian Leadership Program seeks to embody.

Trip Expectations for the Faith Seeking Justice Christian Leadership Program

Each year, the Faith Seeking Justice Christian Leadership Program focuses on a theme (spiritual formation, leadership development, and a call to justice). Based on the particular theme for the year, the FSJ co-chairs and Leadership Team will choose an event that FSJ students will have the option of being part of. Throughout these events, students will be expected to more deeply engage the theme of the year. The goal is that students use these experiences to develop themselves in mind, body, and soul both individually and as a group. Examples of these trips in the past:

- 2018-19- Christian Community Development Association Leadership Conference (Leadership Development)
- 2017-18- Pilgrimage to Taizé Worship Community in France (Spiritual Formation)
- 2016-17- Day for All People advocacy training (Justice Advocacy)
- 2015-16: UMC General Conference in Portland, OR (Leadership Development)

Attendance: Each of these trips will be open to Faith Seeking Justice students. However, as these events will incur significant cost, time, and resources, there will be an acceptance process that will be required in order to attend:

- Students will be expected to fill out an application for each event that will be reviewed by the FSJ co-chairs.
- Each trip will have its own requirements and standards in order for students to attend. For instance, international trips will have stricter guidelines based on SU policy, travel issues and risk management. These guidelines will be determined by the FSJ co-chairs.
- Students who are on academic and/or conduct probation, or under review for either, may be deemed ineligible to attend these trips (see FSJ Acceptance and Progression Policies document).
- Students may be deemed ineligible if their conduct represents a serious violation of the standards of integrity necessary for Christian leadership and the FSJ program.
- Students may be expected to attend meetings, fill out forms, and do assignments in preparation for each event.
- Throughout the event, students are expected to abide by Shenandoah's Student Code of Conduct as well as embodying the values of the Faith Seeking Justice Christian Leadership Program. Failure to do this may result in the dismissal from the trip at the student's expense. Dismissal will be determined by trip leaders on a case-by-case basis.
- Throughout the event, students will be expected to reflect on the experience both

individually and as a group.

If students have ideas as to special events that would benefit the program, they can issue these to the FSJ co-chairs.