Henri Nouwen at Yale
Brandon Nappi, D.Min.
brandon@copperbeechinstitute.org
203.577.8867

The Dutch priest, writer, professor and beloved pastor, Henri Nouwen was one of the great spiritual luminaries of the twentieth century. His time as professor of pastoral theology at Yale Divinity School proved to be among the most prolific in his extensive career, with Nouwen writing more than one book per year during his decade at YDS. This course will explore Nouwen’s historical legacy and the essential themes that radiate through his work and life. As we read from his writings published during his tenure at Yale, we will join Nouwen in deep reflection about the role of love, doubt, sexuality, prayer, and silence in the spiritual life. We’ll also examine Nouwen’s ongoing thirst for solitude and his great esteem for Thomas Merton. Our learning will be enriched by spirited conversation, a visit to the Divinity School’s Nouwen Chapel, and contemplative practices such as Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, journaling, and mindfulness.

Optional Pre-Reading

- 87 Minutes, Kent Hoffman: http://www.eightysevenminutes.com/

Required Reading

Two texts are required for this course:

- The Genesee Diary, Henri Nouwen
- The Wounded Healer, Henri Nouwen

Class I: Life of Henri Nouwen

Homework:

- The Wounded Healer, Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, pages 1-52
- Draw a picture that illustrates a passage that resonates with you.

Class II: Ministry in a Dislocated World

Homework:

- Genesee Diary, Introduction and June, pages 13-48
- Journaling: 50 years later, how much of Nouwen’s description of the modern age still holds? Where do you find yourself in alignment or in tension with Nouwen’s diagnosis? How would you diagnose the great challenges of contemporary life in general and your ministry in particular?
• Take a photo that expresses the challenges of the modern world and text it to 203.577.8867 or email to brandon@copperbeechinstitute.org by 11 am tomorrow.

Class III: Genesee Diary
Homework:

• Genesee Diary, Chapter 3: August and Chapter 4: September, pages 97-147
• Journaling, 10 minutes, start writing and see what happens.

Class IV: Silent Retreat
Homework:

• The Wounded Healer, Chapter IV and Conclusion, pages 85-106
• Bring a passage from the reading that is personally resonant for you. Be prepared to share it and express why you chose it.
• Bring food to share with the class.

Class V: Wisdom Feast: Ministry by A Lonely Minister?
Homework: Love and be loved.