Critical Assessment Form

List the 8 books (4 required, 4 chosen) and/or any handouts, articles, blogs, videos, you've read/watched:

1. Designing Your LIfe
2. The Road Trip that Changed the World
3. Difficult Conversations
4. Creative Minority
5. I Hear You (Sorensen)
6. How People Change (Tripp)
7. The Power of Mentoring (Sanders)
8. The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations (Schaller & Crilly

1) Why were these chosen?

Each of the four categories (counseling, dev. people, life change, understanding people) offers the range of personal development that I was hoping for with this class. I also checked the page count for each book because I'm a slow reader. I chose *I Hear You* because the most gripping part of our class lectures was the part about listening. I chose *How People Change* because, while the concept that people should change through discipleship is not new, I'm not quite sure what that looks like in many cases. I chose *The Power of Mentoring* because I want to grow as a discipler and leader. I chose *The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations* because spiritual conversations are precious to me, but I do not often start them with people who aren't Christians.

2) What was challenging? What was the most helpful? What was not helpful?

The overall range of topics was most challenging for me; I want to be good at everything, but I found as I read that several areas are hard for me, not natural. I want to be part of a dynamic Christian community (*A Creative Minority*) and be really good at starting small groups for seekers (*The 9 Arts*). There are too many things to practice and start and get good at at the same time. I felt overwhelmed several times. The most helpful book was *The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations* because the authors broke it down into tangible things that I know I can do; evangelism feels scary most of the time, but with these 9 arts, I feel like I can begin. Their writing style was kind and inviting; I felt empowered. The least helpful was *I Hear You*. Sorensen is not a counselor or pastor. He gleaned from his own experiences, which is cool in theory, but much of his advice for how to give feedback when you're listening is opposite of what Michelle taught, and many of his sample sentences felt rude. I chose to pass on most of his advice.

3) How have the readings continued to develop your approach to working with people? Were there any paradigm shifts for you? If so, what?

The range of these books addresses both the heart and hands levels. *How People Change*, for example, takes a deep look at the root of relational, emotional, and spiritual dysfunction. The authors emphasize that only a right relationship with God will rightly align these areas. This is internal work. On another level, Dr. Sanders addresses external aspects of relationship building through *The Power of Mentoring*. He discusses practical things to build vulnerable relationships. The paradigm shift I experienced was more of a broadening of what I imagine to be possible and what I can do. Previously, I wanted to focus on one aspect of church development (discipleship). Now I am exploring difficult conversations and evangelism.

4) How will the readings be applied to your personal and professional life?

I have applied *Difficult Conversations* in a professional relationship. The book was helpful in setting expectations because the conversation did not produce the desired result. I have passed along *Designing Your Life* to a friend who is in a career crisis. Most applicable for me at this point is *The 9 Arts*. I have started *noticing* and *praying* for people that I'd like to engage in spiritual conversation. I am preparing to take small steps to lead to big life change.