

## **ED 220 Connections in Ecology and Religious Education**

Methodist Theological School of Ohio

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“We will discover that, for these reasons, our destruction of nature is not just bad stewardship, or stupid economics, or a betrayal of family responsibility; it is the most horrid blasphemy. It is flinging God's gifts into his face, as of no worth beyond that assigned to them by our destruction of them.”

“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.”

### **Catalog Description**

A course exploring harmonies and dissonance between models of religious and ecological education. It is designed for individuals who are seeking ways to integrate ecological issues as an aspect of the educational life of a vibrant community.

### **Course Goals:**

In this course you will:

1. Become acquainted with ecological religious models for education.
2. Frame a biophilic understanding of religious education.
3. Reflect critically on your place in the world and develop practices for reshaping your use of the world's resources.
4. Develop skills for planning and conducting an environmental audit.

### **BOOKS:**

#### **Required:**

Berry, Thomas. *The Great Work: Our Way Into the Future*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000.

Berry, Wendell and Norma Wirzba. *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2002.

Hall, Douglas John. *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990.

Moseley, Lyndsay, ed. *Holy Ground: A Gathering of Voices on Caring for Creation*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2008.

Orr, David. *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004.

Speth, James Gustave. *The Bridge at the End of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.

Wilson, E. O. *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*. New York: W. W. Norton Publishing, 2007.

Supplemental:

The Green Bible. New York: Harper Collins Publishing, 2008.

Brown, Lester. Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization. New York: W. W. Norton Publishing, 2008.

Defenbaugh, Daniel G. Learning the Language of the Fields: Tilling & Keeping as Christian Vocation. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2006.

Macy, Joanna. Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1998.

Smith, April. Campus Ecology: A Guide to Assessing Environmental Quality & Creating Strategies for Change. Venice, CA: Living Planet Press, 1993. (out of print, but available at used book sites)

Swimme, Brian and Thomas Berry. The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era: A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos. New York: Harper Collins Publishing, 1994.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Feb 3 – Intro and Syllabus review

Feb 10 - Read The Creation by Wilson

Begin to read 2 essays per week from Holy Ground for reflection journal

Feb 17 – No Class – will make up in April

Feb 24 – Read Art of the Commonplace Intro, Part 1 and Part 2.

March 3 – Read Speth to Chapter 6

March 10 - Break

March 17– Read Speth Chapter 7 to end of book

March 24 – Read Art of the Commonplace Part 3 to end of book  
Spiritual AutoGeography due

March 31 - Read The Great Work

April 7 - Holy Week Break

April 14 - Read The Steward through Section V

April 21 - Read The Steward Section VI to end of book

April 28 – Read Orr through Part Two

May 5 – Read Orr Part Three to end of book

May 12 – Completed draft of campus audit for submission to administration of MTSO

### **Assignments**

#### **Discussion and Class Participation (25%)**

Discussion will be a central part of this seminar and students are expected to attend each class having completed all of the assigned reading and ready to interact in an informed and helpful manner.

#### **Spiritual Auto-Geography - (25%)**

Write a 7-10 page reflection on particular places that have been significant contexts for spiritual or theological reflection. Writing exercise in February 24 class will offer further directions.

#### **Reflection Journal – (25%)**

Two entries per week on readings from the course. This may be done on a blog, in a computer document, or on paper. Journals entries will be turned in at 3 times in the course. You may write on any reading, but Holy Ground is provided as a primary reading source.

#### **Class Final Project (25%)**

The primary project for this class will be an environmental audit for the campus. This project will involve a significant part of the work of this course after the March break. A group grade will be assigned based on participation, research, writing and peer evaluation.

An alternative individual final project can be negotiated with the instructor, if desired.

#### **Class Attendance and Participation**

Individuals will have different styles for demonstrating full engagement with the class. Introverts and extroverts can participate without penalty. If you choose to do the required reading and bring your best ideas to the course, you will fully participate. If you have any concerns about this or other requirements, please set up a meeting and we will discuss it.

#### **Due Dates and Course Extensions**

All assignments are to be completed by the date assigned. If life circumstances beyond your control interfere with the completion of your work, you should speak with me to set a subsequent deadline. A course extension cannot be granted by the faculty but must be requested through the procedures described in the student handbook.

**Office Hours**

Please contact me by e-mail [tyanmeter@mtso.edu](mailto:tyanmeter@mtso.edu) or by phone to schedule an appointment if you desire a meeting. I will not be available for any meetings on Tuesdays prior to class.

**Academic Integrity**

I expect that each student will familiarize themselves with the academic policies found in the student handbook. Please pay particular attention to and abide by the policy statements on academic honesty. I expect that the ideas of others will be acknowledged and the sources for that work will be acknowledged, including sources accessed through the World Wide Web and other electronic media.