

STMA 569 Ecological Spirituality

Date: July 16 – 20, 2007

Units: 3 credits

Instructor: Alexandra Kovats, csjp, Ph.D.

COURSES DESCRIPTION

This course draws upon the timeless wisdom of nature and the insights of scientists, theologians and mystics. The course will explore an ecological spirituality that emphasizes the Christian responsibility to listen to and live in harmony with **Earth** and creation, and to be co-creators with God in shaping the future. Insights from scientific evolutionary cosmology, Scripture, ecofeminism, and the mystics as well as the role and task of humans will be highlighted during this course grounded in the creation spiritual tradition.

Prerequisite: STMM 561

Required Assignments:

1. Read a book by a nature writer/poet of your own choice. Please read it meditatively. **Write a three – four page double spaced reflection paper** engaging in dialogue with ideas and insights from the book. Be sure to include some of your own reflections, experiences and questions. Also include quotations and page numbers where relevant. Some possible authors include: Wendell Berry, Sharon Butala, Annie Dillard, Gretel Erlich, Loren Eisely, Barry Lopez, John Muir, Kathleen Norris, Mary Oliver, Brenda Peterson, Gary Snyder, Lewis Thomas, etc.

Due: First day of class

2. Write a three – four page double spaced reflection paper exploring **one** of the following questions:

How do your spirituality and theological tradition support and/or thwart your relationship with the natural world? **or**

What have you learned about Earth and creation from your experiences with family, religion, education and the bioregion in which you live? **or**

What are the gifts and challenges of the New Cosmology for your spiritual journey?

Due: First day of class

3. Gather some poems, readings, Scripture passages and songs that reflect some nature themes – fire, one of the seasons, water, animals, etc. Please bring them with you to class. These will be resources for a ritual that you will create during class as part of a small group.

3. Fill out and send the attached questionnaire by July 6th, 2007 to

Alexandra Kovats, csjp, Ph.D.

1104 21st Avenue East

Seattle, WA 98112 **or** e-mail it to: cosmicdancer@comcast.net

Required Reading - to be read before class:

- Edwards, Dennis. (2006) *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Maitland, Sara. (2002) *A Joyful Theology: Creation, Commitment and an Awesome God*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2002.
- Ruether, Rosmary Radford. (1996) ed. *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism and Religion*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Schut, Michael. ed. *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: a Christian Perspective*. Denver, CO: Living the Good News, 1999.
- Smith, Pamela. *What Are They Saying About Environmental Ethics?* New York: Paulist, 1997.

A packet of articles to be purchased at the SU Reprographic Services.

Please read all these materials with your “head and heart.” Take notes (not to be handed in) and keep track of questions, resistances, “ahas” and concerns that emerge for you.

Recommended Reading:

- Berry, Thomas. (2006) *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club.
- Gottlieb, Roger S. (2006) *A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future*. New York: NY: Oxford UP.
- Holmes, Barbara H. (2002) *Race and the Cosmos: An Invitation to View the World Differently*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity.
- Prevallet, Elaine, M. (2006) *Making the Shift: Seeing Faith through a New Lens*. Nerinx, KY: Knobs Haven Retreat Center.
- Swimme, Brian. (1996) *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos: Humanity and the New Story*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Ecological Spirituality STMA 569

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Ministry: _____

E-mail: _____

1. Why did you choose to enroll in this course?

2. What are some workshops/courses you have attended that focus on your relationships to creation and the environment?

3. What are some important resources that you have found that nourish, inspire and/or challenge you to ecological awareness? (books, videos, music, etc.)

4. Name three personal goals you hope to accomplish during this course:

1.

2.

3.

5. What fears/concerns do you have about this course?

6. Surface some questions, topics or concerns that you would like to explore in this course.

7. What is your relationship to nature/creation?

8. How is creation/nature part of your ministry?

9. What situations/processes/activities help you to learn best?

10. Other questions, comments, or suggestions that might help in creating this learning experience for you....

Please fill out and send this questionnaire by July 6th, 2007 to:

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Thank You!