

STM 593 ECOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course draws upon the timeless wisdom of nature and insights from science and theology. It is an introductory course which will explore spirituality from an ecological perspective that emphasizes the Christian responsibility to listen to and live in harmony with **Earth** and all creation, and to be co-creators with God in shaping the future. Insights from scientific evolutionary cosmology, Scripture, and Christian mystics will be highlighted during this learning experience.

OBJECTIVES

1. To become familiar with insights from scientific evolutionary cosmology especially with the cosmic principles of differentiation, autopoiesis and communion, and their implication for spirituality.
2. To deepen appreciation of the sacredness of all creation.
3. To identify some of the gifts of Scriptures, evolutionary cosmology, theology and Christian mystics in articulating a spirituality that values all creation.
4. To identify and develop attitudes and behaviors which enhance a relationship of respect and sustainability with creation.

SYLLABUS

1. July 6 **Introduction to Course**
Descriptions of Spirituality - Distinction between
Environmental, Ecological and Creation
Spirituality
Introduction to Cosmology
2. July 7 **The Three Cosmic Principles**
Thomas Berry's Twelve Principles
3. July 8 **Creation and the Bible**
4. July 9 **Mystical, Prophetic and Sacramental Approaches to**
Spirituality and Ecology
5. July 10 **Spiritual Disciplines/Praxis with Ecological Awareness**

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR THE COURSE

1. Required Reading - to be read before class:

Edwards, Denis. (2006) *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*.

Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Moseley, Lindsay. ed. (2008) *Holy Ground: A Gathering of Voices on Caring for Creation*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club.

Schut, Michael. ed. (1999) *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*. Denver, CO: Living the Good News.

A Course Reader 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.

Holmes, Barbara H. (2002) *Race and the Cosmos: An Invitation to View the World Differently*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity.

Swimme, Brian. (1996) *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos: Humanity and the New Story*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

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

How does your religious 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**

How does your spirituality and prayer practices/spiritual disciplines reflect your relationship to creation?

Due: First day of class

3. Fill out and send the attached questionnaire by June 29, 2009 to

Alexandra Kovats, csjp, Ph.D.

1104 21st Avenue East

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

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

1. Attend all class sessions. Consult with instructor if emergencies arise. (206) 322 8560
2. Read assigned texts and articles; review them and be prepared to discuss them during class.
4. **Reflection paper** on one of three questions provided.
5. Attend Brian Swimme's lecture, *Ecology: New Story*, on Friday night, July 10, 2009.

Grade Distribution:

Class Participation and engagement with texts: 70%
Reflection Paper: 30%

STMM 593-01 ECOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Ministry: _____

E-mail: _____

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

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

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

1.

2.

3.

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

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

6. What is your relationship to nature/creation?

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....

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Thank You!