

STFT 4067 Educating to Counter Oppressions and Create Just and Sustainable Communities

Syllabus as of Sept 8, 2010

Fall 2010, 4.5 units

I. Overview: The ECO Seminar, offered every fall, is required of all Starr King M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students, to be taken as an in-residence course in Berkeley. Low-residency students are to take the course the first opportunity they have to be in Berkeley for a fall semester. M.A. students and students from other GTU schools are welcome, but not required, to take the seminar. The core faculty teaches the seminar, along with advanced students who serve as ECO TA's. The seminar incorporates students' knowledge and experience, and engages students in stepping up into religious leadership/ministry that counters oppression and fosters just and sustainable community. Overall, the course is designed to build a learning community in which students and teachers collaborate to embody the school's commitment to theological education that is multi-religious, counter-oppressive and student-centered. During the first 10 weeks of the semester students engage in work that prepares them to share their own original work with one another during the final 3 weeks of the seminar. Throughout the seminar there is an accent on spiritual and ethical practices that nourish and sustain justice work.

II. Course "Under Construction": The ECO Seminar is evaluated annually by the students who take the course, by the ECO TAs, and by the core faculty. Approaches that have proven to be of value are retained and new approaches are developed and incorporated annually – no two years are exactly alike. For the Fall 2010 seminar, the course will take as its starting point the U.S. occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the testimony of the Truth Commission on Conscience in War, sponsored by Faith Voices for the Common Good, Starr King School for the Ministry, and Union Theological Seminary (and many co-sponsors) held in New York City in March of 2010. From this starting point, the course will engage students in the religious response to intersecting issues of war, sexism and heterosexism, religious prejudice, racism, economic injustice/neo-colonialism, and ecological crises.

III. Teaching Team

Convenor: Rebecca Parker, President and Professor of Theology rparker@sksm.edu

To make an appointment, contact Jamie Krovontka, Ad. Assit to the Pres, jkrovontka@sksm.edu

Instructors: Core Faculty of SKSM

Ghazala Anwar, Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies

Dorsey Blake, Visiting Professor of Spirituality and Prophetic Justice and Dean

Ibrahim Farajaje', Professor of Cultural and Islamic Studies and Provost

Michele Favreault, Visiting Professor of Liberal Religious Education

Ayize Jama-Everett, Visiting Professor of Religion, Psychology, and Culture

Kurt Kuhwald, Visiting Professor of Practical Ministerial Arts and Prophetic Engagement

Gabriella Lettini, Professor of Theological Ethics and Director of Studies in Public Ministry

Susan Ritchie, Visiting Professor of Unitarian Universalist Heritage and Ministry

Jo Sanzgiri, Visiting Professor of Spirituality, Education and Work

ECO Teaching Assistants:

Jodi Tharan – Seminar TA/”Space Holder” jtharan@ses.sksm.edu

Susan Shannon – Workshop TA/”Space Holder” sshannon@ses.sksm.edu

IV. Seminar Meeting Time and Place:

Wednesdays, Sept 8, 2010 to - Dec 15, 2010

9:40-12:30, Fireside Room, SKSM

Seminar will not meet Oct 27 (Reading Week) or November 24 (Thanksgiving Break)

V. ECO Workshop Meeting Time and Place:

Wednesdays, Sept 8 to Dec. 15, 2:10 to 5 pm

Pacific School of Religion (PSR) Mudd 103

Workshop will not meet Oct 27 or Nov 24

VI. Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the seminar students will have increased their capacity to:

1. Understand, theoretically and experientially, ministry/religious leadership as a calling/way of life that fosters just and sustainable communities that counter oppressions
2. Articulate multi-religious theological, ethical, and spiritual foundations for creating just and sustainable communities that counter oppressions
3. Practice the “five-fold path of counter-oppressive religious leadership”
 - **Spiritual practice and soul work** that undergirds/sustains/inspires ECO/JSC work
 - **Troubling epistemologies and experiences** that transform knowledge, feeling, and awareness
 - **Theological/religious reflection** that creates frameworks of meaning that foster wholeness and liberation and critiques frameworks of meaning that contribute to structures of injustice/oppression

- **Engaged Presence/Restorative Action** in response to injustice and oppression
- **Building Just and Sustainable Communities** that counter-oppression and embody abundant life

4. Responsibly participate in a counter-oppressive learning community, attuned to the ethics of just and sustainable community:

Radical hospitality

Generosity – sharing one's gifts

Humility

Participation/Responsibility - stepping forward/stepping back

Accountability and solidarity

Intention and impact

Right relationship in communication

Respect for religious and cultural differences

VII. Expectations of Students:

Participate in weekly class session and workshops

Complete reading

View assigned films

Complete writing assignments: 4 reflection papers (2-3 pages), one on each aspect (except “engaged presence”) of the “Fivefold Path of Counter Oppressive Religious Life and Work”

“Spiritual Practice/Soul Work” Reflection due 9/22;

“Troubling Epistemologies and Experiences” Reflection due 10/13;

“Theological” Reflection due 11/3

“Building Just and Sustainable Community” Reflection Due 11/17

Note: You are responsible to turn in a copy of each of your reflection papers to your advisor/mentor and to arrange to meet with you advisor/mentor to discuss the paper. Ask your advisor if they want a hard copy or an e-version or both. Also, turn in a hard copy to ECO TA, Jodi Tharan, on the due date. No late papers.

Meet (in person or by phone) at least twice with your mentor/advisor to discuss your reflection papers.

Commit to and practice a spiritual discipline for the semester

Keep a weekly log of learnings/insights, from which you will contribute to class discussions

Design and carry out with others, an ECO/JSC project focused on “engaged presence/restorative action” in response to Truth Commission on Conscience in War testimony - proposal due by Oct 13

Teach a session of the class, with your project group, based on the results of your ECO/JSC project (These will be scheduled for the final three weeks of the seminar)

Prepare a self-evaluation of your learning this semester in light of the learning outcomes articulated above, due in hard copy the last day of class.

Note: If you must miss a class for any reason, please inform Dr. Parker with an e-mail to rparker@sksm.edu; If you are absent twice without communication, you may be asked to leave the course.

VIII. Required Texts:

ECO Touchstone Texts, to be supplied by SKSM

Selected Sacred Texts for ECO Work, to be supplied by SKSM

Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation, Eboo Patel (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007) ISBN 978—0-8070-7726-9 Hardback \$22.95 Available in paperback

Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of A Marine, Tyler E. Boudreau (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2008) ISBN 978-1-032595 \$16.95 Paperback OR

War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning, Chris Hedges (Anchor, 2003) ISBN-10: 1400034639

Embracing Culture Competency: A Roadmap for Nonprofit Capacity Builders, Patricia St. Onge, et al (St. Paul: Fieldstone Alliance, 2009) ISBN 978-0-940069-68-8 \$29.95 Paperback

IX. Flow of the Semester – subject to adjustments and further planning:

Unit I: Spiritual Practice/Community Building

Sept 8 Seminar topic: Introductory Lecture, Rebecca Parker

Workshop: Film, “Weapons of the Spirit”

Sept 15 Seminar topic: Foundational Concepts for ECO Work

Discussion of Readings:

Thomas Starr King, “Speaking Out for Justice,”

Iris Young, “Five Faces of Oppression,”

Rebecca Parker, “Not Somewhere Else But Here,”

Patricia St. Onge, et,al, “Embracing Cultural Competency,” Introduction and Ch. 1, p. i-30

Workshop: An Afternoon of Chevruta Practice - led Jodi Tharan and Ibrahim Farajaje; an introduction of Selected Sacred Texts for ECO Work

Sept 22 Seminar topic: Re-discovering/re-creating spiritual grounding

Discussion of Readings:

Ebo Patel, *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim*

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 2, 31-44

Workshop:

Reminder: Reflection Paper on "Spiritual Practice/Soul Work" due today

Unit II: Troubling Epistemologies and Experiences

Sept 29 Seminar Topic: The Truth Commission on Conscience and War, Gabriella Lettini

Discussion of Readings:

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 3, 45-56

Workshop: Film, *Soldiers of Conscience*

Oct 6 Seminar Topic: Connecting the Dots: war, sexism, racism, economic injustice, and religious intolerance/Islamophobia, Ibrahim Farajaje

Discussion of Truth Commission Testimony at www.truthcommissin.org

Discussion of Readings:

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 4, 57-64

Workshop: Planning responses to the Truth Commission testimony – a time for class members to form themselves into groups and design projects

Oct 13 Seminar Topic: Giving and Receiving Testimony: Epistemological Privilege

Discussion of Readings

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 5, 67-78

Tyler Bodreau, *Packing Inferno OR*

Chris Hedges, *War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning*

Workshop: Music, Poetry and Art That Protests and Resists War (Rebecca and Jodi)

Reminder: Reflection Paper on Troubling Epistemologies/Experiences due today and Group Project Proposals due today

Unit III: Thea/ological Reflection

Oct 20, Seminar Topic: Religion and Violence:

Tracing the Theological Foundations for Christian Holy War and Resistance to War, Rebecca Parker,

Discussion of Readings:

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 6, 79-94

Workshop: *Lecto Divino*, Megan Dowdell

Nov. 3 Seminar Topic: Religiously Based Non-Violent Social Change:

Ghandi and King, Dorsey Blake and Jo Sanzgiri

Discussion of Readings:

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 7, 97-118

Workshop: Open Space

Reminder: Reflection Paper on "Theological Reflection" due today

Unit IV: Building Just and Sustainable Communities

Nov 10 Seminar Topic: Religious Communities as Schools for Just and Sustainable Community,

Susan Ritchie

Discussion of Readings:

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 8, 121-138

Workshop: Open Space

November 17 Seminar Topic: The Great Turning

Kurt Kuhwald, Connecting wars for oil with environmental crisis and the challenges ahead for religious communities and leaders

Discussion of Readings,

St. Onge, et al, "Embracing Cultural Competency," Chapter 9 and Resources (read what interests you), 139ff

Workshop: Open Space

Reminder: Reflection Paper on "Building Just and Sustainable Communities" due today

Seminar Presentations: To be scheduled

Dec 1

Dec 8

Dec 15

Reminder: Self Evaluation in light of the Learning Outcomes (listed above) due today

ECO TA Job Descriptions

The Seminar TA/"Space Holder" Jodi Tharan, jtharan@ses.sksm.edu

Works with President Parker to plan the overall seminar flow of learning

Participates in teaching the seminar

Assembles the Sacred Texts booklet and the ECO Touchstone Texts booklet

Works with President Parker and the Workshop TA to plan the workshops and recruit the workshop leaders/guests

Receives copies of student papers and self-evaluation

The Workshop TA/"Space Holder" Susan Shannon, sshannon@ses.sksm.edu

Works with President Parker and the Seminar TA to plan the workshops and recruit the workshop leaders/guests

Convenes/"holds space" for the ECO Workshops

Coordinates practical details of communication and arrangements for the workshops