RSFT 4017
ECO Core Intensive: Educating to “Create Just and Sustainable Communities that Counter Oppressions”
Gabriella Lettini

Monday-Friday; August 17-21, 2015
Time: 9:00am-12:30pm-1:30-5:00pm

Educating to “Create Just and Sustainable Communities that Counter Oppressions” (“ECO”) is a core goal of Starr King’s M.Div. and M.A.S.C. degree programs. In this required core intensive, M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students work together to form a framework for counter-oppressive spiritual leadership. We will ask: how can spirituality, ministry, and religious activism respond to the multiple and intersecting realities of injustice, suffering, and oppression in our lives and our world? What models of justice and sustainable community invite our commitment? Drawing on Unitarian Universalist and multi-religious sources, we will explore how in the midst of a world marked by tragedy, sorrow and injustice there remain abiding resources of beauty and grace that nourish resistance, offer healing and call us to accountability and community building. Reading and writing assignments to be completed before the course. This course will include Moodle as a resource to share material, resources and ideas before and after the residential week in Berkeley.

The 2015 ECO Core Intensive will have a special focus on poverty and racial injustice.

RSFT 4017 3 Units
Minimum 6 Limit 20 Pin Required: Yes
Fireside Room

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through this course students will:

- Form a foundational understanding of Starr King’s commitments to Educate to Counter Oppressions and Build Just and Sustainable Communities
  http://www.sksm.edu/about-starr-king-school/our-educational-philosophy/.

- Understand poverty scholarship

- Employ interdisciplinary intersectional approaches and integrate theory and praxis, theology and ethics, spirituality, scholarship and community engagement.

- Create a community of learners and seekers who are able to work in collaboration with one another, with experts in the field and on the ground (including Poverty
Scholars), and who can bring their course learning to a larger public in their own communities

- Articulate how the issues explored in the course relate to their vocational journey and ministries
- Build their capacity to design a personalized educational plan, in consultation with their advisor, so as to deepen their knowledge, skills, and strategies for religious leadership and/or ministry that counters oppressions and creates just and sustainable communities.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the conclusion of this course students will:

- Have gained a deeper understanding of the causes and the impact of poverty, and be able to discuss and analyze the ways poverty manifests intersecting oppressions and injustices related to: race, class, gender, gender expression, environmental racism, immigration, ageism and ableism.
- Have learned and practiced an approach to scholarship and epistemology that privileges the knowledge, experience, and agency of those most directly affected by specific injustices and who are engaged in resisting/countering those injustices.
- Have deepened their capacity to respond to intersecting oppressions grounded in spiritual values, sacred texts, and religious practices.

**PROCEDURE**

This course will be heavily based on class discussion in a variety of formats. It will also involve short lectures by the instructor, class exercises, student presentations, visits by guest speakers, movie screenings, and field visits, striving to respect a multiplicity of learning styles and perspectives. It will also include brief opening rituals at the beginning and closing of each day.

**LEARNING STYLES AND SPECIAL NEEDS**

Within the intensive format, a diversity of learning styles and perspectives will be engaged. Students with special needs or learning disabilities that need to be accommodated to maximize their learning should identify those needs to the instructors. Communication in advance of the first day of the intensive will be helpful to assure adequate planning and preparation for special needs.
**GRADING/EVALUATION**

In keeping with Starr King’s educational philosophy, this course is offered on a credit/no-credit basis (grade recorded on the GTU system as P/F). The instructors will provide a narrative evaluation of your work which will assess holistically your performance in the different areas and requirements outlined below. Elements for the assessment of students will include class attendance, class participation, evidence of critical engagements with required readings, writings, Moodle postings and the performance of the class as a whole. As counter-oppressive religious leadership is best if done not in solitude but as a collective endeavor, we will place high value on collaborative learning by making it one of the evaluative criteria for the class. This will include the way we challenge ourselves to learn together as a group.

If you need or desire to receive letter grades please notify the instructors. For people requesting letter grades, we follow PSR guidelines ([http://www.psr.edu/grades](http://www.psr.edu/grades)).

**Class Attendance** - Attendance and participation in class discussions are essential components of this course, and all students are required to attend class and participate actively. Please be on time. Please refrain from texting, e-mailing or surfing the Internet for personal reasons during class. If you are waiting for an important call (e.g. as a chaplain, on a family emergency), please notify the instructors and sit next to the exit door.

**Class Participation** - It is absolutely essential to individual and group learning that you approach the beginning of this course having completed the required readings and prepared to engage in group discussions.

Credits and workload: **this is a 3 credits graduate class.**

**PREREQUISITE READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Required Books:**

Please read and critically engage the two texts below before the beginning of the course:


ARTICLES:

Please read and critically engage the articles below before the beginning of the course. All of these articles are available on Moodle in pdf format. Please go to Moodle and enroll in RSFT 4017 – ECO Core Intensive. The password is: ECO15. If you are an entering student and do not have a Moodle account yet, please contact the instructor ASAP. You will receive the articles via email.


McIntosh, Peggy, “White Privilege; The Invisible Knapsack”
http://amptoons.com/blog/files/mcintosh.html


PREREQUISITE WRITING ASSIGNMENT:
To be completed before the course and due on August 4 2015

Autobiographical introduction
Please write a 4-5 page essay reflecting on the way spirituality and justice work have connected and/or disconnected in your own life. What are traditions/influences/sources/experiences/people that have most shaped your spirituality and your connection with justice work at different moments in your life and that brought you at SKSM?

Please remember that this is a “public” document read by faculty and students: share only what you feel comfortable sharing at this time.

- **Due on August 4.** Please email it to glettini@sksm.edu, subject line: ECO Core intensive autobiographical introduction.

- Please also share this paper on Moodle, in the designated Forum.

- Please come to our first class on August 17 prepared to introduce yourself verbally for 2-3 minutes on the basis of the content of this paper.

- Please read all autobiographical introductions before August 17.

**Leading one of our ritual moments:** our work will be grounded in rituals and spiritual practices at the beginning and at the end of each day. The book *Trauma Stewardship* will serve as guide in these moments. I will circulate a calendar so that you can sign up to lead these moments in small groups.

**FINAL PAPER:**

Please write a 7-9 page integrative reflection on your major learnings in this course. Please make sure to address the following questions:

- What authors impacted you the most and why? Please engage with at least three of the authors read.

- How do you plan to engage poverty, economic and racial justice in your studies and in your present and future ministry? How will you work with your advisor and mentors to implement some of your ideas?

- How do you plan to maintain a sustainable life-style during your studies and in your present and future ministry? How will you work with your advisor and mentors on this goal?

**NOTE:** Essays should be double-spaced, font Times New Roman 12, with 1, 25 inch margins for our written comments. Please remember to insert your name, title and number of the
course, title of the assignments, date and page numbers. Please insert your last name in the name of the file. Footnotes should be in Turabian.

**Paper delivery:** Please e-mail the papers to the instructor by the due date (glettini@sksm.edu), Subject Line: ECO Core Intensive Writing Assignment. Please send the papers **by the deadline:**

All papers will be returned with the final narrative evaluations.

**Due: September 8, 2015**

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

If you have completed the recommended readings and still have time to dedicate to this course, these readings will offer useful additional material:


**SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

*Frozen River* by Courtney Hunt, USA, (2009). Class, gender, race, colonialism

*The Edukators*, by Hans Weingartner, Germany (2005). Class


*The Pawnbroker*, by Sidney Lumet, USA (1964). Race, class, faith traditions

*La Promesse (The Promise)*, by Jeanne-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, Belgium (1996). Race, class, immigration
Together (Tillsammans) by Lukas Moodysson, Sweden (2000). Gender, class, sexual orientations, radical politics
Free Land: A Hip Hop Journey from the Streets of Oakland to the Wild Wild West by Ariel Luckey
Living Broke in Boom Times: Lesson from the Movement to End Poverty, by Peter Kinoy and Pamela Yates, USA, 2007. 73 min. We will watch it in class.
Antonia's Line, by Marleen Gorris, Netherlands, 1996, 102 min. Gender, sexual orientation, re-imagining power
Soldiers of Conscience, by Gary Weimberg and Catherine Ryan, USA, 2008, 65 min. War
Sleep Dealer by Alex Rivera, USA/Mexico, 2008. 90 min. Immigration, poverty, colonialism
Bitter Bread/Pane Amaro: The Italian American Journey by Gianfranco Norelli, USA, 2009, 103 min. Immigration, poverty, class 2009.
Sankofa, by Haile Gerima, 1993. Germany, Ghana, USA, UK. 125 min. Slavery, racism

COURSE CALENDAR

Intensive Week

Note: The following outline is a draft, subject to revision and fine-tuning as we proceed through the week, respond to emergent issues and pursue our learning goals.

ECO CORE INTENSIVE AUGUST 2015 SCHEDULE

Fireside Room

Monday: Building an ECO Learning Community

AM
- 9:00 Opening Spiritual Practice
  Ice-breakers
  Introduction to the class
  10:30ish body break 15 minutes
- Participants Introduce Themselves, based on their 3-5 page autobiographical paper

PM
- 12:30-1:30 Lunch Break – Self Care
- 1:30 SKSM ECO Statement History with Dr. Ibrahim Farajaje’
- Discussion of ECO statement
- **3:00 body break 15 minutes**
- Introduction to the Integrative Reflection Assignment
- *Trauma Stewardship*: journaling and small groups
- Closing Spiritual Practice, Adjourn at 5:00 p.m.

**Tuesday: Engaging Poverty Scholarship**

**AM**
- 9:00 Opening Spiritual Practice
- Introduction to the day
- Integrative Circle – Council Process
- **10:00ish body break 15 minutes**
- Film Viewing and Discussion: *Living Broke in Boom Times*
- Poverty Scholarship
- **12:30-1:30 Lunch Break – Self Care**

**PM**
- 1:30-3:00 Meeting with Poverty Initiative (via Skype)
- **3:00 Body break 15 minutes**
- The practice of Poverty Truth Commissions
- Integrative Circle – Council Process
- Introduction to Faithful Fools Visit
- Closing Spiritual Practice; Adjourn at 5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday: Visiting Community Sites and “Listening With Our Hearts”**

- 9:30-12:30 Site visit to the Faithful Fools in SF (see handout with directions)

- **12:30-3:00 Lunch – Back to Berkeley – Self-Care**

- 3:00 Spiritual Practice
- Reflection in Response to Site Visit – Small groups, large group
- Integrative Circle – Council Process
- 4:30 Closing Spiritual Practice, Adjourn 5:00 p.m.

**Thursday: Making the Connections**

**AM**
- 9:00 Opening Spiritual Practice – Integrative Circle
- 10:00 Intersectionality with Dr. Ibrahim Farajaje’
- **11:00ish body break 15 minutes**
  - Discussion on readings: small groups, large group

- **12:30-1:30 Lunch Break – Self Care**

PM
- 1:30 Integrative Circle – Council Process
- 2:45-3:45 Theatre of the Oppressed with Jiwon Chung
- 4:30 Closing Spiritual Practice, Adjourn 5:00 p.m.

**Friday: The Challenge of Poverty for Critical and Constructive Theology**

AM
- Opening Spiritual Practice, 9:00 a.m.
- 10:00 Sustainable Leadership with Tyson Casey
  Integrative Circle – Council Process
- **12:30-1:30 Lunch and Self-Care**

PM
- 1:30 *Trauma Stewardship*: Our intentions
- 2:50-3:50 Student Presentations: Each student in the class will present a 3-5 minute integrative reflection in response to our work together this week.
- **3:00 Body break 15 minutes**
- Closing Integrative Reflections
- **4:15 Closing Ritual**

**Integrative Period**

In the two weeks following the conclusion of the intensive, class participants will have opportunities to continue interacting and reflecting. The Moodle site will remain open for you to post follow-up comments to our class work and further responses to the posted articles. Posting on Moodle is optional.

You are invited to post your final integrative reflections on Moodle. I will leave the course open until the end of October so you may have a chance to read the final papers of your classmates. Posting is optional.