

Ecothe@logies

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Sheri Prud'homme

sprudhomme@sksm.edu

510-845-8084 (home study-please keep calls between 9 AM and 9 PM Pacific Time)

Office Hours: By appointment

As theologians rooted in Judeo-Christian religious traditions have responded to the complex nexus of the injustices of ecological crises and social inequities, a variety of critical and constructive theologies have emerged. This course explores how ecotheologies, including ecofeminist, ecowomanist, queer ecotheologies, and Native American theologies of creation, have engaged the major issues in ecotheology, and in what ways these theologies address contemporary environmental/ecological issues. Each student will research one current ecological issue as a conversation partner for the theologies we will study. We will also be asking questions about the implications of these theological projects for liturgical practices, congregational mission, and the students' own constructive theological work where applicable. Weekly reading and regular online participation in Moodle's discussion board, weekly group work via synchronistic online tools, two synthesis papers, and a final project are required.

It would be helpful but not essential to have taken Unitarian Universalist theologies or another systematic theology class prior to the beginning of this class. If you haven't had an introductory theology class, read *A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-first Century* by John Buehrens and Rebecca Parker.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After engaged participation and successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- 1) Meditate in and reflect on a particular place in nature through time.
- 2) Critically reflect on relevant relationships between their personal spiritual and environmental practices and the ideas presented and discussed in the course.
- 3) Articulate the main ideas of the contemporary ecotheologies presented in the course, especially their perspectives on soteriology, eschatology, God, creation, and theological anthropology, and apply them in analyzing a contemporary environmental issue and the responses of one or more organizations addressing that issue.
- 4) Generate potential applications of their knowledge gained in this course to their own work in theology or religious studies or to their leadership in congregational life in the areas of ritual and worship, pastoral care, or congregational mission, including community engagement and public witness.
- 5) Create a collaborative, collegial learning environment in an on-line setting that fosters critical engagement with ecotheology texts and personal reflection about their significance and application to daily life and religious leadership.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Baker-Fletcher, Karen. *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit: Womanist Wordings on God and Creation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998. \$18 ISBN-10: 0800630777

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992. \$18 ISBN-10: 0060669675

McFague, Sallie. *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World and Global Warming*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008. \$20 ISBN-10: 0800662717

Mishra-Marzetti, Manish and Jennifer Nordstrom, eds. *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment*. Boston: Skinner House Books, 2018. \$18 ISBN: 9781558968134. The 2018-19 UUA Common Read.

Other readings will be posted on Moodle.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Deane-Drummond, Celia. *A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017. \$23 ISBN: 9781498236997

REQUIREMENTS:

This course will be conducted in a seminar style. We will all be researchers, teachers, and learners together. I have provided a set of readings and a structure to get us started, but the success of this course will depend on your active participation as a co-creator of our learning community. In keeping with the educational approach and philosophy of Starr King School <https://www.sksm.edu/about-starr-king-school/our-educational-philosophy/>. The course will ask for you to embody an ongoing practice of inquiry, study, action, and reflection. It will ask you to deepen your knowledge and wisdom by engaging with primary texts and primary experiences. It will ask you to come forth in your full, authentic presence including your knowledge, feelings and experience that may have been silenced. All of this will be undertaken within the context of trust in an empowering and liberating grace that is larger than ourselves and with the intention of leaning into the school's commitments to counter-oppressive theological education that advances religious leadership (through individuals and communities) for justice, compassion, and sustainability.

- 1) Create an introduction following the directions in Week 1. In order to accomplish our learning outcomes together, you will have to be willing to be known and come to know one another.
- 2) Journal weekly after completing a meditation in nature. See Week 1. Hand in your journal once mid-way through the course (Week 7) and once at the end.
- 3) Complete a review of library resources and turn in. See details in Week 2.

- 4) Participate fully each week by completing the weekly readings, holding a conversation with your partner or group, posting and engaging in dialogue on the Moodle discussion board.
 - Have your reading done by Monday of each week. Meet with your partner or group sometime on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.
 - Initial posts for discussion are due by midnight on Wednesday.
 - Discussion will continue from Wednesday night through Sunday. This course will be a success in direct proportion to your investment in our learning community. We will construct our learning together.
- 5) A paper demonstrating your research and theological reflection on a case study of an environmental/ecological issue. See details in Week 4.
- 6) Final Paper or Project. See details in Week 11.

ABSENCES: One week's absence is permissible, but please do let us know if you need to be "offline" for a week. Additional absences can be negotiated with the instructor in extreme situations.

LEARNING DISABILITIES or OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you have any learning disabilities or personal situations that will affect your participation in the course, please let me know in the first week of the course so that we can make appropriate accommodations.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the appropriation of words and ideas written by others without proper attribution and is a serious violation of academic and personal integrity. It amounts to theft and is ground for dismissal from the school. At the same time, different cultures have different understandings of plagiarism. At SKSM we follow GTU Guidelines.

GRADE

If you need to take this course for a letter grade, I need to know by the end of Week 2 so that I can provide you with a rubric for evaluation of your work in a graded system.

PART ONE: Ecotheology

Week 1 – Introductions and Orientation

Introductions

Post a video introduction of yourself so that your classmates can come to know you a bit better. In addition to what you feel others need to know about you to foster a successful learning community, answer the following questions: (1) What motivates you to take the course? (2) What are your learning goals for the course? (3) What experience/background relevant to ecotheologies do you bring to the course? (4) What personal spiritual and environmental practices do you consider important to your daily life? **View your classmates video introductions.**

Syllabus

Read through syllabus and post any questions you have.

Weekly practice exercise

Throughout the course, once a week place yourself somewhere in nature and pay attention to what you experience. Engage your senses. If you find yourself distracted, return to your breath, smile in gentle friendship/amusement with yourself, and again return your attention to the place you are in. Be with the same place every week. It can be a long beloved place, or a place relatively new to you. Spend 10-15 minutes in the meditation and write about it for 5-10 minutes afterward in a journal that I will collect once in the middle of the course, and once at the end.

This exercise is inspired by ecofeminist Lina Gupta's assertion that you can't act on behalf of ecosystems as a whole without loving some specific spot of nature. She writes, "For a true ecofeminist, one has to be in love with Nature.... One has to love her enough to be motivated in making some physical or intellectual effort.... I think until one is thoroughly satiated by being in love with at least one particular part of Nature, one would not be able to comprehend what it is to love all of this physical world." While I can't put love as a requirement on the syllabus, I can assign paying attention, which is interrelated with love as noted by French Christian philosopher Simone Weil in her essay, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God."

Post a picture of your place to this forum.

Introduction of our primary theological nodes of investigation:

Soteriology—questions of evil, sin, atonement and salvation. What puts life at risk and what shelters, protects, and saves life? Does salvation occur in another realm or in this world?

Eschatology—the ultimate ends of life and of earth. Where are we going? What is the purpose of existence? Does it all head toward an apocalypse and renewal? Do we build the kingdom of heaven on earth? Is paradise already here and now? Will creation be separated in the end or do we share a common destiny?

The@logical Anthropology—What is the nature of human beings? Are we separate or interconnected and interdependent? How are we the same or different from other life forms? How are humans right with God and with one another? What is the role of love?

The@logy—how people speak of God. What is the nature of God and of reality?

Creation—how did all that exists come into being? What is the relationship of God and Creation?

Practice Thinking Theologically

Liberal religious traditions, particularly Unitarian Universalism has, until fairly recently, been in a several-decades-long period of eschewing theological reflection. Because of this, many of us are not in the practice of thinking theologically. To get our minds and hearts warmed up to the practice of thinking theologically, which will be important throughout the course, this week you will view this brief TED Talk by Van Jones and identify one or more theological assertions he makes in his talk. He will not use language that is traditionally considered theological language. He does not use the words God or creation, for example. But underlying what he does say are some theological assumptions. These ideas can be inferred. You will be like a detective deducing the theological ideas from his evidence and reasoning. I'm not suggesting you will come away with an entire systematic scheme of the theology underlying his TED talk. Simply pick one or two "nodes" from the list above and write about where you see that at play in his talk. After you've written yours, read a few of your classmates.

https://www.ted.com/talks/van_jones_the_economic_injustice_of_plastic

Week 2 Wordings from the Heart

Conversation Partners

You will need to be in regular conversation with another student(s) in the course. Groups can be either 2 or 3 students. Having reviewed the introductions, consider who might stretch or inspire your thinking or provide a set of experiences different from your own. Find a partner(s) who you can engage in some form of real-time communication throughout this first half of the semester and arrange a mutually convenient time for conversation about this week's reading. We may form new groups after reading week.

The aim of these conversations is (1) to deepen your understanding of the main ideas of the weeks' texts through dialogue with others; (2) to consider relevant relationships between your personal spiritual and environmental practices and the ideas presented in the text and discussed in your group, and (3) to generate a discussion question to present to the rest of the class. As a general rule of thumb, I suggest spending the bulk of your time unpacking the assigned texts rather thoroughly, half as much time relating your feelings and experiences to the texts, especially interconnections with your spiritual and environmental practices, and about 5 minutes determining a fruitful discussion question to present to the rest of the class.

To prepare for your conversation in partners/groups, each of you will need to complete the reading and create at least one good discussion question for each text assigned that week. See the criteria for a good discussion question in Week 3.

Preparation:

Read in its entirety

Baker-Fletcher, Karen. *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit: Womanist Wordings on God and Creation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998.

As you are reading, make note of the places where she makes a theological statement concerning our five nodes of theological investigation. Discuss these with your partner/group. Did you and your partner/s notice similar or different things? Are there places where you agree or disagree with each other about the author's meaning? What surprised you? What got you thinking about your own life and beliefs?

Assignment

Write your own wordings from the heart. How do you understand God and Creation? What are the essential components of eco-theology from your perspective? What are the experiences that give shape to your understandings? You can write in prose or poetry, story or essay, or all in any combination. Approximately 750-1200 words. Read your classmates' wordings from the heart and comment as you are moved to on at least three others.

Review of Library Resources

The GTU Library, as one of the finest theological libraries in the nation, has a wealth of resources on the topic of ecotheology. Spend some time browsing their holdings, including books, journals, and articles. Many are available digitally. Choose at least three that pique your interest, possibly sparking ideas that might assist you in your research paper or final project later in the semester. Post them here.

Week 3 Introducing the Field

Preparation:

Read the following

“Whose Earth is it Anyway?” James H. Cone, *Cross Currents*, Spring/Summer 2000, Vol. 50 Issue 1-2.

<http://www.crosscurrents.org/cone.htm>

“The Context of Eco-theology” by Laurel Kearns

From the *Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*, edited by Gareth Jones. New York: Blackwell Publishers, 2004.

<http://users.drew.edu/lkearns/eco-theology.pdf>

“Religious Ecology and Views of Nature in the West” from *Ecology and Religion* by John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2014.

Optional:

Read *A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth* by Celia Deane-Drummond

and/or "Ecotheology" by Sheri Prud'homme in *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment*, edited by Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom.

Assignment:

Discuss the readings in your pair/group. The aim of these conversations this week is primarily to deepen your understanding of the main ideas of the weeks' texts through dialogue with others. Each pair/group will be assigned one of the readings to generate a good discussion question to post on the Moodle discussion board. Your question is due by Wednesday at midnight. Please see the criteria for a good discussion in this week. Your pair/group will be responsible for shepherding your discussion thread from Thursday morning until the end of the weekend by responding to others, furthering the conversation with comments and deepening questions, and addressing areas of confusion about the reading if they arise. I will also participate in the discussions and can add clarifying comments as needed.

In addition, you need to participate in at least two other discussion threads in a substantive way (4-5 responses) between Thursday and the end of the weekend.

Good discussion questions:

Throughout this course, we will engage in discussions of many texts. The quality of our conversations around the authors' ideas in our pair/groups and in the class as a whole will, in part, depend on your capacity to ask good discussion questions of one another.

This course will ask you to place your attention on at least two levels regarding the course reading. The first level is to attend to the main ideas of each author, coming to understand them the best we are able. The second level is to analyze the implications for personal practice, congregational leadership and your own constructive theological projects.

The following characteristics of a good discussion question relate to the first level of increasing understanding of the points the authors are making:

1. A good discussion question is genuinely interesting to you, will likely interest others in the class, and calls for some thinking about the reading.
2. It cannot be answered yes or no.
3. It cannot be answered with a fact.
4. It should not call for a personal opinion outside the reading.
5. It should redirect the discussion to the reading itself.
6. It should ask the discussants to explain the author's meaning and not simply quote the author or authors.
7. It should be answerable with evidence from the reading and common information that has preceded it in the course.
8. It should permit several interpretations, i.e. it should be rich enough to offer several possible directions in its answers.

This week we will focus on the level of understanding the author's meaning. You will be asked with your partner to create a discussion question to engage your peers in the material for this week.

Shepherding a conversation

Your pair/group will be responsible for shepherding your discussion thread from Thursday morning until the end of the weekend by responding to others, furthering the conversation with comments and deepening questions, and addressing areas of confusion about the reading if they arise. I will also participate in the discussions and can add clarifying comments as needed. Here are some things you will need to do to shepherd the discussion:

- Start reading posts early
- Give constructive feedback
- Participate frequently/respond to people
- Stimulate conversation/keep the conversation going
- Make it real and keep it alive
- Respect everyone's contributions and experience

Some prompts that might be useful to stimulate the discussion:

- Can you clarify?
- Do you need anything else to answer this?
- Do you think...?
- Do you agree with...?
- So are you saying....?
- Have you seen....?
- So on the news/in my church/in the organization I'm researching, I noticed something similar....
- Where did you hear that?
- Do you have a reference for that?

Week 4 Case Studies on the Ground

Preparation:

Personal research—For the remainder of the course, I will ask you to place your studies of ecotheology in dialogue with an environmental/ecological issue. For this week, I want you (1) to identify an environmental/ecological issue that you find compelling, (2) research the issue to discover the economic, social, political, environmental, and attitudinal factors that contribute to it, (3) identify one or two organizations of people actively working to address the issue you have identified and analyze what they say about the issue and how they go about addressing it.

Explore the websites of the organizations and any films or interviews about the organizations. I have attached an example to give you a sense of what I'm looking for in this assignment. As the course progresses, we will be looking to see 1) if the theological writings in this course offer ideas, inspiration, or challenges in relationship to the organizations who are working on this issue, and 2) Do concerns and debates on this issue challenge/demand more from the theological positions of our writers.

Example: California Water

Assignment:

Ecotheology can at times seem ungrounded if it is not kept in dialogue with real environmental and ecological issues. The case studies you and your classmates have chosen will serve as a conversation partner to test out, critique, and open up theological assertions throughout the semester. In order for this aspect of our discussion to make sense, we will need to be acquainted with each others' case studies. Therefore, the assignment this week is to present your case study, addressing the following three points: (1) Identify the environmental/ecological issue and present its background, (2) Summarize the economic, political, environmental, and attitudinal factors that contribute to it, and (3) Describe one or two organizations of people actively working to address the issue you have identified, including your observations of what they say about the issue and how they go about addressing it, including links to their web site and/or films or interviews about them. You may use video, text, or any online presentation tool to present your case study to the class. Cite your sources. Remember to use the GTU library's resources.

Due on Moodle by Wednesday at midnight. Read your classmates' case studies by the end of the weekend. Ask clarifying questions or offer comments or additional resources as they arise.

One-One Conversations

Please email me to arrange a time we can talk on Skype or the phone for 20-30 minutes in the next week or two.

Week 5 – Soteriology

Preparation:

Read the following:

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Part Three: Domination and Deceit" in *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

Gebara, Ivone. "Introduction" in *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1999.

Keller, Catherine and Laurel Kearns. "Introduction: Grounding Theory—Earth in Religion and Philosophy" in *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

McFague, Sallie. "Chapter 1 and 2" in *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World and Global Warming*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

Discussion of the Readings:

Discuss the readings in your pair/group. The aim of these conversations is (1) to deepen your understanding of the main ideas of the weeks' texts through dialogue with others and (2) to consider relevant relationships between your feelings and experiences, especially personal spiritual and environmental practices, and the ideas presented in the text and discussed in your group. What surprised you? What touched your curiosity? What challenged you? What did you find particularly interesting?

Each pair/group will be assigned one of the readings for shepherding the discussion. Your pair/group will generate a good discussion question from the reading to post on the Moodle discussion board. Your question is due by Wednesday at midnight. Please see the criteria for a good discussion in Week 3. Your pair/group will be responsible for shepherding your discussion thread from Thursday morning until the end of the weekend by responding to others, furthering the conversation with comments and deepening questions, and addressing areas of confusion about the reading if they arise. I will participate in the discussions and can add clarifying comments as needed as well.

In addition, you need to participate in at least two other discussion threads in a substantive way between Thursday and the end of the weekend.

Case Study Reflection:

In thinking about your case study, where do you see questions of soteriology at play? Where is life put at risk and what shelters, protects, and saves life? In the rhetoric used by the groups addressing the issue, how are words and concepts related to evil, sin, atonement and salvation employed? Are any of the concepts from this week's readings relevant to what you are observing and reflecting on in your case study? Post your reflection by Wednesday at midnight and respond to at least two of your classmates' reflections by Sunday night at midnight.

Week 6 – Eschatology

Preparation:

Read the following

“Talk about the Weather: The Greening of Eschatology” by Catherine Keller in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1993.

“The Hope of the Earth: A Process Ecoeschatology for South Korea by Seung Gap Lee in *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, edited by Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

“The Church as Paradise in This World” p. 84-88 and “The Struggle for Paradise” p. 402-410 and “Epilogue” by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker in *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love for this World for Crucifixion and Empire*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008.

Discussion of the Readings:

Discuss the readings in your pair/group. The aim of these conversations is (1) to deepen your understanding of the main ideas of the weeks' texts through dialogue with others and (2) to consider relevant relationships between your personal spiritual and environmental practices and the ideas presented in the text and discussed in your group. What surprised you? What touched your curiosity? What challenged you? What did you find particularly interesting?

Each pair/group will be assigned one of the readings for shepherding the discussion. Your pair/group will generate a good discussion question from the reading to post on the Moodle discussion board. Your question is due by Wednesday at midnight. Please see the criteria for a good discussion in Week 3. Your pair/group will be responsible for shepherding your discussion

thread from Thursday morning until the end of the weekend by responding to others, furthering the conversation with comments and deepening questions, and addressing areas of confusion about the reading if they arise. I will participate in the discussions and can add clarifying comments as needed as well.

In addition, you need to participate in at least two other discussion threads in a substantive way between Thursday and the end of the weekend.

Case Study Reflection:

In thinking about your case study, where do you see questions of eschatology at play? Are any of the concepts from this week's readings relevant to what you are observing and reflecting on in your case study? Where are we going? What is the purpose of existence? Does it all head toward an apocalypse and renewal? Do we build the kingdom of heaven on earth? Is paradise already here and now? Will creation be separated in the end or do we share a common destiny? Post your reflection by Wednesday at midnight and respond to at least two of your classmates' reflections by Sunday night at midnight.

For Further Reading:

Keller, Catherine. *Apocalypse Then and Now: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

One of Keller's early classic works. It is an interdisciplinary study in how the myth of the apocalypse has shaped our basic ways of thinking about space, time, place, community, and gender. It includes an analysis of eco-apocalyptic thinking as well as traditional Christian notions of apocalypse.

Brock, Rita Nakashima and Rebecca Ann Parker. *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love for this World for Crucifixion and Empire*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008. This incredible history of early Christianity explored through images and rituals of the early church demonstrates a rich history of religious life built around a celebration of a present Paradise. The members of the Christian communities honed skills of wisdom and compassion to discern good from evil to act justly and mercifully, supported by those who had gone before who existed in a nearby realm. Brock and Parker create a compelling case that the death and suffering Jesus on the cross enters as a central religious symbol only at the end of the first millennium of Christian history. The crucifixion-centered atonement and otherworldly salvation that have characterized much of 20th century Christianity were not present in the early centuries of the Christian church.

Reading Week

Final project proposal: The final paper/project needs to relate either to your scholarly goals or to one of the arts of religious leadership. Those particularly relevant to this course are the following: community engagement and public witness, pastoral care, ritual and worship, religious education, and scholarship. Examples include a worship or ritual series, a congregational program, a workshop for lay pastoral caregivers concerning ecological related care needs (such as despair, moral injury, or impacts of environmental racism), a children's, youth, or adult education program. A paper can be on a religious/theological topic, book, or theologian/scholar that has stimulated your thinking during the course (15-20 pages). All projects

should demonstrate engagement with course materials and the theological concepts we studied. If you present a project, you will still need to provide a written companion to the project (5-10 pages) to demonstrate your thinking that went into creating the project, including how the project engages the course materials and your experience from the semester. Correct grammar and stylistic form are expected. Papers should show evidence of having been carefully proofread! You are welcome to turn a draft paper or project in early in order for me to give you comments and suggestions, which can then be incorporated in the final paper/project. You will present your project to the class in one of the final weeks of the course. Your project must be turned in to me by the last day of the semester to receive credit for the course. The final project proposal is a one-page document that describes your final project/paper. List the resources you intend to use and any concerns you have. At least one resource must come from the GTU library. Due by Sunday at midnight.

Week 7 –The@logical Anthropology

Hand in your journals and I will read and return them to you. You can scan and email if that is easiest. Your journal needs to show evidence of the weekly practice of attention. Beyond that, it is entirely up to you how you write or draw that experience and what you notice about doing it.

Preparation

Read the following:

Spencer, Daniel T. “Chapter 10—Shifting our Grounding: From Social Location to Ecological Location in *Gay and Gaia: Ethics, Ecology, and the Erotic*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1996.

“The Human Person from an Ecofeminist Perspective” by Ivone Gebara, a chapter in *Longing for Running Water*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1999.

“Chapter Three: Who are We? Ecological Anthropology” by Sallie McFague. *A New Climate for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

For Further Reading:

Spencer, Daniel T. *Gay and Gaia: Ethics, Ecology, and the Erotic*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1996. This entire book is worth reading for its analysis of several ecotheologians through a queer theology lens. His work on the concept of “natural” as one that has been valorized in ecotheology even while it has been used to condemn members of LGBTQ communities is particularly insightful.

Discussion of the Readings:

Discuss the readings in your pair/group. The aim of these conversations is (1) to deepen your understanding of the main ideas of the weeks’ texts through dialogue with others and (2) to consider relevant relationships between your feelings and experiences, especially personal spiritual and environmental practices, and the ideas presented in the text and discussed in your group. What surprised you? What touched your curiosity? What challenged you? What did you find particularly interesting?

Each pair/group will be assigned one of the readings for shepherding the discussion. Your pair/group will generate a good discussion question from the reading to post on the Moodle discussion board. Your question is due by Wednesday at midnight. Please see the criteria for a good discussion in Week 3. Your pair/group will be responsible for shepherding your discussion thread from Thursday morning until the end of the weekend by responding to others, furthering the conversation with comments and deepening questions, and addressing areas of confusion about the reading if they arise. I will participate in the discussions and can add clarifying comments as needed as well.

In addition, you need to participate in at least two other discussion threads in a substantive way between Thursday and the end of the weekend.

Case Study Reflection:

In thinking about your case study, where do you see questions of theological anthropology at play? Are any of the concepts from this week's readings relevant to what you are observing and reflecting on in your case study? What is the nature of human beings? Are we separate or interconnected and interdependent? How are humans right with God and with one another? What is the role of love? Post your reflection by Wednesday at midnight and respond to at least two of your classmates' reflections by Sunday night at midnight.

Week 8 – The@logy

Preparation:

Read the following:

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Part Four: Healing" in *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

Gebara, Ivone. "Chapter 3 – God: An Ecofeminist Approach to the Greatest of Mysteries" in *Longing for Running Water*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1999.

Kidwell, Clara Sue, Noley Homer, and George E. "Tink" Tinker. "Chapter 3: Deity." *A Native American Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.

Rivera, Maya. "Introduction" p. 1-13 and "Chapter 7: The Touch of Transcendence" 127-140 in *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2007.

Discussion of the Readings:

Discuss the readings in your pair/group. The aim of these conversations is (1) to deepen your understanding of the main ideas of the weeks' texts through dialogue with others and (2) to consider relevant relationships between your feelings and experiences, especially personal spiritual and environmental practices, and the ideas presented in the text and discussed in your group. What surprised you? What touched your curiosity? What challenged you? What did you find particularly interesting?

Each pair/group will be assigned one of the readings for shepherding the discussion. Your pair/group will generate a good discussion question from the reading to post on the Moodle discussion board. Your question is due by Wednesday at midnight. Please see the criteria for a good discussion in Week 3. Your pair/group will be responsible for shepherding your discussion thread from Thursday morning until the end of the weekend by responding to others, furthering the conversation with comments and deepening questions, and addressing areas of confusion about the reading if they arise. I will participate in the discussions and can add clarifying comments as needed as well.

In addition, you need to participate in at least two other discussion threads in a substantive way between Thursday and the end of the weekend.

Case Study Reflection:

In thinking about your case study, where do you see questions of God/the Divine at play? Are any of the concepts from this week's readings relevant to what you are observing and reflecting on in your case study? What is the nature of God and of reality as reflected in your case study? Post your reflection by Wednesday at midnight and respond to at least two of your classmates' reflections by Sunday night at midnight.

For Further Reading:

McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. The article from McFague mentions briefly her early contribution to the field of using the body as a model of God. This text is often quoted and the concept has been a lasting one in ecotheology.

Week 9 – Creation

Preparation

Read the following:

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Introduction" and "Part One: Creation" in *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

Keller, Catherine. Pre/face, Ch. 1, 9-14. *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Kidwell, Clara Sue, Noley Homer, and George E. "Tink" Tinker. Preface, Introduction, Chapter 2: Creation in *A Native American Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.

McFague, Sallie. Chapter 4: "Who is God? Creation and Providence." *A New Climate for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

Discussion of the Readings:

Discuss the readings in your pair/group. The aim of these conversations is (1) to deepen your understanding of the main ideas of the weeks' texts through dialogue with others and (2) to consider relevant relationships between your personal spiritual and environmental practices and

the ideas presented in the text and discussed in your group. What surprised you? What touched your curiosity? What challenged you? What did you find particularly interesting?

Each pair/group will be assigned one of the readings for shepherding the discussion. Your pair/group will generate a good discussion question from the reading to post on the Moodle discussion board. Your question is due by Wednesday at midnight. Please see the criteria for a good discussion in Week 3. Your pair/group will be responsible for shepherding your discussion thread from Thursday morning until the end of the weekend by responding to others, furthering the conversation with comments and deepening questions, and addressing areas of confusion about the reading if they arise. I will participate in the discussions and can add clarifying comments as needed as well.

In addition, you need to participate in at least two other discussion threads in a substantive way between Thursday and the end of the weekend.

Case Study Reflection:

In thinking about your case study, where do you see questions of Creation at play? Are any of the concepts from this week's readings relevant to what you are observing and reflecting on in your case study? How did all that exists come into being? What is the relationship of God and Creation? Post your reflection by Wednesday at midnight and respond to at least two of your classmates' reflections by Sunday night at midnight.

PART TWO:

Implications for the Arts of Religious Leadership:

Community Engagement, Public Witness, Pastoral Care, Education, Worship, Scholarship

Final Project Presentations

Weeks 10-14 will be presentations of final projects.

On the week you present your project, you will be responsible for delineating how your classmates should prepare before that week's class begins. This may include reading, looking over websites, or watching film. Along with presenting your project, you are expected to provide some guidance in the forum for how you would like your classmates to engage your project. Perhaps there is something you are hoping your project will cause them to reflect on in their lives or in their ministries/leadership. Perhaps there are outstanding questions or concerns that you would like your classmates to think with you about.

On the week you present your paper or project, have all materials to me to post by Sunday night, before the week begins, including any additional readings or resources you would like your classmates to read to be able to engage your presentation more fully.

Your materials and directions will be posted by Monday morning. Your classmates will have until Wednesday at midnight to post their initial responses to your presentation. Discussion will continue Thursday through Saturday. You will be responsible for shepherding the conversation regarding your presentation.

Week 10 – Education broadly understood

Preparation

Read the essays connected to the following spotlight:

Religious Study News’ “Spotlight on Theological Education” on “Environmental Justice and Interreligious Ecotheology”, edited by SKSM grad Rabbi Prof Dr Julia Watts Belser

http://rsnonline.org/indexb8f6.html?option=com_content&view=article&id=1458:environmental-justice-and-interreligious-ecotheology&catid=25:spotlight-on-theo-educ&Itemid=1616

Read “Learning to Change: Immersion Learning and Climate Justice,” by Kathleen McTigue in *Justice on Earth*.

Discussion of the Readings:

In your pair/groups discuss the readings. Using the insights here geared toward theological education... apply them to your context for ministry... higher education, congregation, organization... where do the perspectives mentioned here intersect with your calling? What excites you? What fears do you have? Post your reflection, individually, by Wednesday at midnight and then respond to at least three of your classmates in a substantive way.

Presentations of Projects Related to Education

Week 11 – Community Engagement and Public Witness

Preparation

TBA

Discussion of the Readings:

In your pair/groups discuss the readings. Using the insights here geared toward community engagement and public witness... apply them to your context for ministry... higher education, congregation, organization... where do the perspectives mentioned here intersect with your calling? What excites you? What fears do you have? Post your reflection, individually, by Wednesday at midnight and then respond to at least three of your classmates in a substantive way.

Presentations of Projects Related to Community Engagement and Public Witness

Week 12 – Pastoral Care

Preparation

TBA

Discussion of the Readings:

In your pair/groups discuss the readings. Using the insights here geared toward pastoral care... apply them to your context for ministry... higher education, congregation, organization... where do the perspectives mentioned here intersect with your calling? What excites you? What fears do you have? Post your reflection, individually, by Wednesday at midnight and then respond to at least three of your classmates in a substantive way.

Presentations of Projects Related to Pastoral Care

Week 13 – **Ritual and Worship**

Preparation

TBA

Discussion of the Readings:

In your pair/groups discuss the readings. Using the insights here geared toward ritual and worship... apply them to your context for ministry... higher education, congregation, organization... where do the perspectives mentioned here intersect with your calling? What excites you? What fears do you have? Post your reflection, individually, by Wednesday at midnight and then respond to at least three of your classmates in a substantive way.

Presentations of Projects Related to Ritual and Worship

(When taught in Spring Only: Earth Day is Wednesday, April 22. Many communities and organizations mark this day with public witness of some kind. Many congregations engage in worship with an earth day theme. For this week, either participate in or help to create public witness or worship related to earth day. If possible, connect with the issue from your case study in some way.

While you are participating or planning, critically engage your experience through the theological lens we have been developing this semester. What theological concepts/world-views are invoked? What are the strengths and weaknesses of doing so?)

Week 14 – **Scholarship**

Preparation

TBA

Discussion of the Readings:

In your pair/groups discuss the readings. Using the insights here geared toward scholarship... apply them to your context for ministry... higher education, congregation, organization... where do the perspectives mentioned here intersect with your calling? What excites you? What fears do you have? Post your reflection, individually, by Wednesday at midnight and then respond to at least three of your classmates in a substantive way.

Presentations of Projects Related to Scholarship