

Ecology of Awakening Intensive

Draft Syllabus

3.0 units

Starr King School for the Ministry- Graduate Theological Union

Synchronous Zoom Times:

August 3-7 (10am-12pm PST) and August 10-14 (1-3pm PST)

INSTRUCTORS:

Kerry Brady (kbrady@sksm.edu)

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With guest instructors: Gopal Dayaneni and Brock Dolman

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Spiritual leaders emerging in this time of disruption, injustice and uncertainty face a great challenge - a challenge that requires our greatest resiliency, connectivity and imagination. The *Ecology of Awakening Intensive* takes up the question: who do we need to become, as individuals and as communities, in support of a just transition toward a regenerative future? Together, we will open to the wonder of being part of a creative, living universe and live into the invitation to shape faith-based movements that encourage spiritual growth, societal transformation and care for the living Earth. Throughout our time, we will consciously explore the mysterious and fertile meeting ground between our own creativity and the larger unfolding – between the personal and the cosmological – as we collectively re-discover and re-member who we are.

A core intention of the intensive is to ‘re-awaken’ to ourselves, to each other, to our place within the larger web and to that which calls each of us to be a regenerative presence to all of Life. In doing so, we support what cultural historian and “geologist” Thomas Berry called a ‘functional cosmology’, one that invites a practical, engaged and reverential relationship with a unifying origin story. We will open to what arises within our collective, including the ever-present grief of these times, in order to renew and revitalize the unique offering that is each of ours to bring to the world. As we become more adept at listening and responding to the creative intelligence of Life, within and without, we allow ourselves to be transformed and bolster our ability to transform larger systems, including the communities we serve.

The intensive includes engagement with themed readings and videos, community time via zoom and solo explorations in the places where we reside. A core opportunity is for each of us to deeply dwell in our own bioregion, recognizing the original people of our land, engaging directly with the larger ecosystem we inhabit and deepening our connection with our local kin. Joining us as guest teacher is master biologist and naturalist Brock Dolman, who will support us in deepening our connection with and our understanding of nature's brilliance and our own bioregion. We will also be joined by movement strategist Gopal Dayenani, who will guide us in imagining the qualities of a just transition, from an extractive economy to a regenerative one. We will become courageously curious about our roles in ministry, chaplaincy and community care and deepen into new possibilities to guide the communities we serve toward a similar place of awakening, connection and action.

This course is appropriate for M.Div. and MASC students at any point of their program. The intensive relates to SKSM thresholds 2 (Prophetic Witness and Work), 5 (Spiritual Practice and Care of the Soul) and 8 (Embodied Wisdom and Beauty) and the MFC Competencies 3 (Spiritual Development for Self and Others), 4 (Social Justice in the Public Square) and 7 (Leads Faith Into The Future).

COURSE FORMAT:

The *Ecology of Awakening Intensive* will be taught over two weeks, with an expectation that four hours each day be dedicated to the intensive - partly through group Zoom calls; partly through individual engagement in assigned practices. Synchronous Zoom Calls will take place on four days between August 3-7 from 10am-12pm PST and on four days between August 10-14 from 1pm-3pm PST.

Course components include:

- Multimedia preparatory materials
- Zoom sessions, including didactic time with core and guest instructors, group discussion, and council practice
- Individual work, including perception enhancing practices, connection with one's own bioregion, resiliency practices and reflections/journaling
- Regular engagement with a "tracking partner"
- Online discussions through Moodle

WHO IS THIS FOR: The *Ecology of Awakening Intensive* is for seminarians of all faiths and traditions who are interested in re-imagining creative, regenerative religious leadership. The program is for those awakening from the predominant cultural story of separation who are, in their unique way, working towards a resilient, thriving Earth

community for future generations. It is designed for those who have the capacity to move fluidly between inner/personal and outer/collective experience rather than for those who may, at this moment, be primarily focused on their own personal healing. While it is not designed primarily to resolve personal issues, healing, personal clarity and deepened connection can be natural outcomes of the process.

This immersion is grounded in Starr King School for the Ministry's commitments to counter oppression and create just and sustainable communities. We especially and intentionally welcome people of color, indigenous people and people with other identities who have historically been excluded from or invisibilized within environmental movements and communities focused on the land.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This three-credit course will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Students may take the course for a letter grade upon request. In addition to the SKSM criteria for assessing academic effort, ECO goals, and participation, evaluation will be based on the following course requirements:

- Presence and Preparation (40%) Students are expected to engage all assigned course materials. During the intensive, consistent attendance and active participation is essential.
- Engagement with Moodle and daily experiential assignments (35%)
- Integrative Reflection Paper (25%)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Over the course of the intensive we will:

- Re-member our deepest identity as vast, and intimately connected with all Life; and consider how our role as spiritual leaders might help others to do the same
- Immerse in deep ecology and living systems in support of our ability to think and act in partnership and attunement with Life
- Explore the power of ceremony and embrace Earth-attuning practices that want to be born in us and for the communities we serve
- Learn skills that ignite our innate resilience and build our capacity to be a consistent, compassionate presence
- Honor our grief and the personal and collective impact of these times
- Explore systems change and social transformation at individual and collective levels
- Connect with like-minded souls dedicated to creating a world where all beings have the right to co-exist peacefully in balance with the Earth

- Shift from prevailing feelings of overwhelm and disconnection toward renewal, restoration and reconnection

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of the course and its assignments students will be able to:

- Recognize our deepest identity as an inherent part of the universe, forever in flux and intricately woven into the web of life.
- Envision and engage in individual and collective practices that protect and promote the flourishing of all living things and the system of relationships of which we are part.
- Embody the experience of being engaged, co-active participants in the unfolding Earth community
- Practice new forms of ritual and ceremony interweaving spirituality, community care and justice
- Utilize a broader set of skills and practices that increase innate resiliency, strengthen our ability to navigate change and build our capacity to stay present and available to ourselves and each other
- Apprentice to living systems to increase our ability to engage like an ecosystem-in relationship and in process with life
- Bring deepened sense of grounding and connection to diverse forms of religious leadership.