Creation, Food, Land: Biblical Faith, Current Crisis

Course Description

Throughout the biblical story, land, economic justice, and food justice are intimately linked. These themes, in turn, are rooted in vibrant a relationship between creation and the Creator, not to mention creation and humanity. This course will explore such biblical themes in light of competing views of land, economics and justice both in biblical times and in our own context, locally and internationally. Interactions with indigenous views of land, land justice and food security for immigrants and the poor in our city, the transition movement, bioregionalism and watershed discipleship, will all contribute to a vision for a sustainable creation locally and on a global level.

Required Readings:


*Woodley, Randy, “Early Dialogue in the Community of Creation” in Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land, Justice and Life Together. Ed. Steve Heinrichs (Waterloo: Herald Press, 2013), 92-103. I have also included with this article the two poems entitled “Talking Waters” by Rose Marie Berger that bookend the article in the anthology.
Readings marked with an asterisk will be available digitally from the Professor after the first class.

Please come to each class prepared to answer the following questions about the required readings:
1. Summarize the main point of the article or chapters in one or two sentences. Does this reading raise any concerns or questions in your mind? Does it challenge anything that you had previously thought?
2. Does this reading change how you consider the role of creation in the Biblical story? If so, how? If not, why not?

Requirements

NB: The use of computers, laptops and ipads, tablets and cellphones is not permitted during class time in the course.

Class participation, worth 20% of the grade. Students are required to come to class prepared with one or two questions arising out of their readings for that class. Attendance for site visits is considered part of class participation.

Two reflection papers of approximately 5 pages worth 20% (10% each). Each paper should exegete a biblical text, locate it within the topics discussed in class and in the readings thus far.

One Research Paper worth 60% of the grade. The research paper must be based on a particular biblical text or theme and should locate the text or theme within the larger biblical canon, as well within its historical context. In addition, the paper should explore how this biblical text or theme illuminates or critiques contemporary environmental issues or practices. Academic protocols must be followed, using either Kate Turabian’s A Manuel for Writers or the SBL Handbook of Style. Whatever style is used should be used consistently. BD students are required to submit a paper of of 12-15 pages, with a bibliography of at least 10 entries. Since this is a research paper, your secondary sources should be used to help you explain, analyze and assess the text or topic under discussion. AD students are required to submit a paper of 15-20 pages with a bibliography of at least 15 entries. Since this is an advanced research paper, your paper should engage, appraise and debate your secondary sources, as well as integrate their insights to defend your thesis.

Additional Bibliography

M. Kat Anderson, Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California’s Natural Resources (University of California Press, 2013).

Bahanson, Fred & Norman Wirzba. Making Peace with the Land: God’s Call to Reconcile with Creation.

Berry, Wendell. The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture.

Berry, Wendell. The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural.
Berry, Wendall. *Bringing it to the Table: On Farming and Food.*


Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997).


Horrell, David G, Cheryl Hunt, Christopher Southgate and Francesca Stavrakopoulou, eds. Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives. (T&T Clark, 2010).


Jackson, Wes and Wendell Berry, Meeting the Expectations of the Land: Essays in Sustainable Agriculture and Stewardship.


Sobrino, Jon and Feliz Wilfred, eds .2001. Globalization and Its Victims. (Concilium

Wirzba, Norman. *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*.