



# Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

## *Course Identification*

Course Number : WYB3837HF/WYB6837HF  
Course Name: Creation, Food and Land: Biblical Faith, Current Crisis  
Class Location: Wycliffe College  
Class Day & Time: Tuesdays, 2-5pm

## *Instructor Information*

Instructor: Sylvia C. Keesmaat  
E-mail: s.keesmaat@utoronto.ca  
Office Hours: TBD

## *Course Prerequisites or Requisites*

No prerequisites.

## *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. **This course will include three site visits within the city of Toronto.**

## *Course Methodology*

The course will consist primarily of seminars with three site visits.

## *Course Outcomes*

This should list the course outcomes, the course elements that will help the students achieve these outcomes, and how course outcomes correspond to the BD Program outcomes given in the college's Statement of

Intended Outcomes for each of its BD programs. These should be set out in a clear manner, in a table (Nota bene: not all program outcomes will be achieved in every course):

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
<b>By the end of this course, BD students will be able to</b>	<b>This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:</b>	<b>This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and explain the development of the biblical themes of land, idolatry, image-bearing, jubilee and sabbath and describe those themes in an oral presentation;</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers	<b>MTS:</b> 1.1; 2.1, 2.3 <b>MDiv:</b> 1.1; 1.2; 2.1; 2.2; 3.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• locate and compare these themes in the context of a biblical understanding of creation and describe them in a short paper;</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers	<b>MTS:</b> 1.1; 1.2; 2.1; 2.3; 3.2 <b>MDiv:</b> 1.1; 1.2; 2.1; 2.2; 3.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• situate the biblical traditions concerning creation within the history and culture of the Ancient Near East and the Roman Empire;</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers, research paper	<b>MTS:</b> 1.1; 1.2; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; <b>MDiv:</b> 1.1; 1.2; 2.2; 3.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constructively and critically evaluate and articulate how biblical understandings of creation illuminate contemporary environmental issues and challenge contemporary environmental practice and defend their position in an academically rigorous research paper</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers, site visits, research paper	<b>MTS:</b> 1.1; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3 <b>MDiv:</b> 1.1; 2.1; 2.2; 3.1; 3.2
<b>By the end of this course, AD students will be able to</b>	<b>This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:</b>	<b>This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and explain the development of the biblical themes of land, idolatry, image-bearing, jubilee and sabbath and describe those themes in an oral presentation;</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers	<b>PhD:</b> 1; 4; 5; 6

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>distinguish and connect these themes in the context of a biblical understanding of creation and describe them in a short paper;</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers	<b>PhD:</b> 1; 4; 5; 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assess and interpret the biblical traditions concerning creation within the history and culture of the Ancient Near East and the Roman Empire;</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers, research paper	<b>PhD:</b> 1; 4; 5; 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>constructively and critically formulate and integrate biblical understandings of creation with contemporary environmental issues and contemporary environmental practice and defend their position in an academically rigorous research paper</li> </ul>	class participation, reflection papers, research paper, site visits	<b>PhD:</b> 1; 21; 2b; 2c; 3; 4; 5; 6

**AD Level** The Advanced Degree Council has developed detailed statements of “learning outcomes” for each of the advanced degree programs (ThD/PhD, MA and ThM). They are available as appendices in the respective Handbooks. “Learning outcomes” have to do in part with the level of knowledge and skill that will be characteristic of a typical graduate of the program. In accordance with this overall statement, instructors are required to develop a statement of learning outcomes for each course. These outcomes will provide one of the benchmarks for evaluation and grading. These should be formatted in the same manner as Basic Degree outcomes.

### **Course Resources**

#### **Required Course Texts**

\*Berry, Wendell, “The Whole Horse” in Norman Wirzba, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002).

\*Brueggemann, Walter, “The Land and Our Urban Appetites” in *From Interpretation to Obedience* (Fortress, 1991), 161-189.

\*Brueggemann, Walter, “The Liturgy of Abundance and the Myth of Certainty” in Davis, Ellen *Scripture, Culture, Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

\*Hawkin, David J, “The Critique of Ideology in the Book of Revelation and its Implications for Ecology” *Ecotheology* 8.2 (2003) 161-172.

\*Keesmaat, Sylvia C, “The Beautiful Creatures: Trees in the Biblical Story” published online in *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology and Culture* (www.thotherjournal.com). Issue #15. The Aesthetics Issue.

\*Keesmaat, Sylvia C. and Brian Walsh, “Land, Ecology and The Defilement of Home” Chapter 5 of *Romans Disarmed* (Brazos Press, forthcoming).

\*Myers, Ched, “From Garden to Tower: Genesis 1-11 as a Critique of Civilization and an Invitation to Indigenous Re-visioning” in *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land, Justice and Life Together*. Ed. Steve Heinrichs (Waterloo: Herald Press, 2013), 109-121.

\*Rossing, Barbara R, “River of Life in God’s New Jerusalem: An Eschatological Vision for Earth’s Future” in Deiter T. Hessel and Rosemary R. Ruether (eds.), *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of the Earth and Humans*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000. pp. 205-224

Wirzba, Norman, *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2003).

\*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.***

## **Course Website(s)**

- None

## **Class Schedule**

**Week 1** Introduction: The Issues and the Story

**Week 2** A Good Creation: The Responsiveness of Creation and An Agrarian Vision

**Week 3** Food Justice in the City: Site Visit

**Week 4** Image bearing, Servanthood and Indigenous Visions/1st reflection paper due

**Week 5** Image bearing and Idolatry

**Week 6** Creation in the Shadow of Empire: Land and Food Security

**Week 7** Indigenous Food Security: Site Visit or Guest Lecture/2nd reflection paper due

**Week 8** Creation in the Shadow of Empire: Land-Destroying Economics

**Week 9** Sabbath Economics and Jubilee/paper proposal due

**Week 10** Resilient Farming and Food Systems: Site Visit

**Week 11** Resurrection and the Land: Permaculture and Transition Towns

**Week 12** The New Earth: Watershed Discipleship/ Final Paper Due

## Evaluation

### Requirements

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.

Three reflection papers of approximately 5 pages each worth 30% (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 50% 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 Manual 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 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.

### Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR	Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
NCR	Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
SDF	Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty

AEG May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

### ***Policy on Assignment Extensions***

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

**One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.**

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

### ***Policies***

**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges ([http://www.trinityutoronto.ca/Library\\_Archives/Theological\\_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm](http://www.trinityutoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm)).

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

**Writing Style.** The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

### ***Bibliography***

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

Berry, Wendell. *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural*.

Berry, Wendell. *Bringing it to the Table: On Farming and Food*.

Bauckham, Richard. *Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology*. (Waco, TX: Baylor Press, 2011).

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Habel, Norman C. ed. *Readings from the Perspective of the Earth*. Earth Bible 1. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

Hamilton, Lisa, *Deeply Rooted: Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness*.

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