

I. Course Description

This course helps students to understand the world's current ecological crisis and the ways how scholars of religion and theology have responded to this reality. Students will have the opportunity to develop their own ecological "constructive religious thought (a.k.a theology)"¹ by engaging with scholars from different areas of study in the broader field of Religion and Ecology. Discussions on human–Earth life-giving relationships challenges Christian ethics and provide a unique strategy for rethinking sustainability and the human-divine relationship. Broadening our understanding of sustainable development and justice to include economic, ecological, social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing may be a basis for the construction of new practices, rituals and myths for a planetary future that is not only ecologically ethical, but also promotes a healthy and sustainable Earth-human-divine relationship.

II. Course Objectives

1. Develop a critical understanding of the positive role and significance of developing ecological theologies and ethics that are informed by global issues.
2. Ability to identify and critically analyze hegemonic forces of certain Christian doctrines and theology that have shaped both positive and negative attitudes and practices concerning "Others"²;
3. Understand that social justice cannot be fully realized without affirming its intrinsic ties to environmental justice;
4. Develop competence on how to construct an argument and ability to differentiate it from a claim.

III. Contribution to MTSO's Educational Mission and Degree Outcomes

MTSO provides theological education and leadership in pursuit of a just, sustainable and generative world. This course aims at empowering religious leaders to recognize some of the major challenges posed by the environmental justice movement to theological ethics, develop theological reflection that is ecological at its core, and demonstrate ability to test the benefits of environmental ethics as a tool for constructive theological projects and Christian practices.

Specific Degree Outcomes

1. Develop a praxis-oriented religious ethics and theology capable of guiding activism, advocacy, and/or community organizing (MASJ);
2. Develop solidarity across the many aspects of human diversity, relating to persons from diverse cultural, religious, and social contexts with openness and integrity. Articulate the structural and systemic factors that impinge on such relationships (MDiv.).

III. Textbooks

Required Texts

See at Populi

Optional Texts

See at Populi

¹ Jenkins, Willis. 2017. "Whose Religion? Which Ecology?" In *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, page 28.

² This course refers to "unjustifiably dominated groups as 'Others,' both 'human Others' (such as women, people of color, children, and the poor) and 'earth Others' (such as animals, forests, the land). The preference to 'Others' is intended to highlight the status of those subordinate groups in unjustifiable relationships and systems of domination and subordination." Warren, Karen. (2000). *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*. Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC. Page 1.

IV. Course Requirements and Assessment of Student Learning

Each student will be required to do the following:

1. Class participation. 20%
2. Short Critical Review [Week 2]. 10%
3. Student-Lead Class Discussion. 20%
4. Reading Response [Week 6]. 10%
5. Outside Learning: 20%
6. Final Research Paper on a Topic of Choice. 20%

1. Attending and participating in class sessions and discussions: 20%

Credit will be given for engaged participation (quality, not quantity) in lecture, class attendance and preparation for in-class discussion.

- a. Engaged does not necessarily mean “voluminous;” you may be quite prepared and attentive without ever speaking up. I don’t track who speaks up and how often, so you can focus on asking questions that matter to you and making comments that are helpful to everyone.
- b. The interactive seminar nature of this course makes regular attendance and contributions essential. The most exceptional circumstances notwithstanding, excused absences from class sessions will not be granted. Please note that any absence will negatively affect your final grade.
- c. Preparation for in-class discussion. In order to prepare students for our class discussions, we will use a method called “structured and critical pre-reading.” This method empowers students to develop their own views (argument) on each topic addressed in the prescribed weekly reading list and enormously increases the chance for a good class discussion. Participation in this seminar requires careful reading of about 80 pages per week.

Reading responses: Before each class, submit a brief comment on one of the assigned readings of no more than 300 words. Do not try to summarize. A good way to approach a response is to select a topic or quotation that seems significant to you (because it is striking, or appalling, or importantly inexplicable), ask a question about it and respond according to the author’s or your own perspective. You may relate your comment to other readings from the same week and/or documentaries, but do not attempt to cover everything. Submit your reading responses at Populi under the Discussion tab according to each week (e.g. Reading responses [Week 3], Reading responses [Week4], and so on). This is due on Sundays by 12pm at the latest. Responses must address that week’s reading. You cannot make up for missing a previous week. However, you may skip any two reading responses. Please note that reading responses are not graded, so long as you engage the assigned reading with something near to thoughtfulness and attempt to develop an argument. Week 6’s reading responses will be longer and will be graded (see more information in the Student-led Discussion Assignment).

Aiming at improving students’ learning, this class will use ungraded self-assessment questions, which will be provided by instructor on assorted days (to be taken home or written in class).

Should any issues or problems arise that trouble you during the course, please initiate a timely and candid consultation with the instructor. Be aware that last-minute appeals or concerns may not be addressed immediately.

2. Short Critical Review [Week 2]: 10%

Half of the class will write on question “A” and the other half on question “B.”

A. Why Does Defining Religion Matter for Theological Studies?

B. How do Religious Views Influence the Human-Earth Relationship?

Answer these questions according to Whitney Bauman and/or Willis Jenkins’ required readings for Week 2. No more than 500 words. Be focused, avoid praising or criticizing the authors’ position in sweeping ways. Rather, define their positions and/or limits of their argument and/or approach, support your position by using examples from the texts. For instance, instead of writing, “Bauman writes a great article” or “Jenkins writes a terrible article,” this assignment asks you to consider which aspects of these articles seem especially relevant to answer the questions above. The main aim of this assignment is to practice how to integrate evidence in the development of an argument.

Due: Week 2 (February 10th).

Grading Criteria

An excellent project will meet the following criteria, showing that you can:

- summarize authors’ views in their terms;
- effectively use authors’ texts to support and develop your own argument;
- effectively integrate evidence in the form of quotes and/or paraphrases;
- employ scholarly conventions for citing sources, including in-text citations and references;
- organize your review clearly;
- revise deeply as well as edit carefully.

Week 3 and 4

At Week 3 students will engage in blind peer-review and submit their anonymous review at Populi under Assignment tab titled “Short Critical Review [Week 2].”

How to write a good feedback comment – Be helpful. Focus on strengths and weaknesses of the position taken by students, including how satisfactorily they answered the questions proposed. Answer the following question and submit your review at Populi.

1. Where does the writer show summary and understanding of the assigned text? Does it sufficiently present the authors’ main argument to readers who may not have read the article?
2. Where does the writer demonstrate understanding of key terms in author’s article?
3. What evidence does the writer draw on to support or explicate his or her argument? Has the writer effectively integrated and cited quotes or evidence? If not, say what the writer might do to integrate and cite quotes or evidence more effectively.
4. Are there so many unconventional features in the writing (spelling, sentence structure, vocabulary, and so on) that you found them interfering with your reading? Identify in particular one of these features so the writer can focus on it for his or her revision.
5. What did you like best about this essay?

6. What did you learn about your own writing/your own essay based on responding to this writer's project?

Due: Week 4 (February 24th).

3. Student-led Discussion: 20%

Students must choose one of the topics listed in the syllabus of the week of their presentation and engage with it by developing an argument that will either support their stand (in favor or against) or support a specific scholar's perspective on the topic of their choice. Students should use evidence from the readings so that they can have theoretical support and are strongly encouraged to also use case-studies of the day-by-day issues for supporting data. Each person has 5-10 minutes to present their argument and present a question to the class. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation. This can be very simple including only bullet points and your question for the classroom so that those who are more visual can follow your presentation with ease. Students must submit their position and PowerPoint presentation under the Reading Responses [Week X] and send a copy to the instructor on Fridays, or at the latest on Sunday by 8:00pm. Do not write more than one-page (you may use double or single space).

These articles with accessible links below provide a summary on how to develop a research question, argument and thesis. Read them!

a. Developing a Research Question

<https://www.esc.edu/online-writing-center/resources/research/research-paper-steps/developing-questions/>

b. Developing a Research Thesis

<https://www.esc.edu/online-writing-center/resources/research/research-paper-steps/developing-thesis/>

c. Argument in Research Papers

<https://www.esc.edu/online-writing-center/resources/research/research-paper/argument-research-papers/>

Grading Criteria for oral and written presentation:

An excellent project will meet the following criteria, showing that you can:

- Effectively develop an argument (evident in both oral and written presentation);
- Effectively use authors' texts (may include other research data) to support and develop your own argument (evident in both oral and written presentation);
- Effectively integrate evidence in the form of direct quotation, paraphrases, and/or summary of authors view in their terms (evident in PowerPoint [if necessary] and written presentation);
- Employ scholarly conventions for citing sources, including notes (footnotes) or in-text citations and references (evident in PowerPoint [if necessary] and written presentation);
- Organize your oral presentation and essay clearly;
- Respect limits stipulated for time and paper-length;
- Revise deeply as well as edit carefully.

4. Reading Response [Week 6]: 10%

Week 6' reading response will be graded. It should follow the same format above. This must be submitted under the Assignment tab titled "Reading Response [Week 6]."

Grading Criteria for reading response. [Week 6]

An excellent project will meet the following criteria, showing that you can:

- Effectively develop an argument;
- Effectively use authors' text to support and develop your own argument;
- Effectively integrate evidence in the form of direct quotation, paraphrases, and/or summary of authors' views in their terms;
- Employ scholarly conventions for citing sources, including notes (footnotes) or in-text citations and references;
- Organize your essay clearly;
- Revise deeply as well as edit carefully.

5. Outside Learning: 15%

To enhance the course, students are required to spend at least 20 minutes in a (relatively) non-human environment 2-3 times a week. Pick a place to get to know throughout the semester. Practice being still and attentive, listening and observing. Spend part of the time with your eyes closed, listening. Try not to think about lists of things to do, but learn to be still. Students can spend some of their time in quiet reflection on a scripture, poem, course reading, or drawing a picture. "What do you learn from your 'place'?" "How does your 'place' change?" "How is your place reflective of the larger area; how is it connected to the larger bio-region?" After your 20 minutes, write down your observations and thoughts.

The second time outdoors at your place can be more active – walking, gardening, exploring, looking for birds – but still try to make it a place where non-human nature is predominant. From time to time I will assign poems. Keep a journal of these sessions. Students will be required to submit a reflection essay at Week 12 May 4th (two pages, double-spaced). You will be surprised by how hard it is to carry out this assignment, so you must be diligent, and that in itself is part of the point.

Due: Week 3 (six students) and 5 (other six students), for 3 minutes students will have the opportunity to share in class insights, realizations, complaints or experiences. There is no need to submit any written essay. Students will be graded on their preparedness and ability to develop self-reflexivity while engaging with the course's content, 5% for each time.

Due: Week 8 (six students) and 9 (other six students).

Due: "Reflection Essay" Week 10 (April 20th) on Monday any time before class starts. Students will be graded on their ability to develop self-reflexivity while engaging with the course's content. This must be uploaded at Populi under Assignments "Outside Learning (Reflection Essay)."

6. Final Research Paper on a Topic of Choice: 20%

See further information at the end of this syllabus Addendum A.

Due: Week 14 (May, day to be decided in class).

Volunteering at Seminary Hill Farm (Optional for Extra Credit): 2%

Students can opt to volunteer one day at the Seminary Hill Farm any day during the Spring Semester 2020 for extra credit. You will write 2-3 pages (double-space) report about your experience in being a farmer for one day and submit to Dr. E one week after you volunteered. Students will also have five minutes to share in class on their experience. Volunteer Coordinator Jenni Kafer at jkafer@mtso.edu.

Please note: If, for any reason, you are unable to participate in this activity a replacement documentary review can be assigned. Please don't hesitate to contact me if necessary.

"Eating Together Faithfully" (Optional for Extra Credit): 3%

Students who participate in the "Eating Together Faithfully" (April 30-May 2) and submit a two-page report, will receive extra credit on their final grade.

"Participants in this training for faith and lay leaders will learn about food that LAUGHS: local, affordable, uncomplicated, good, healthy and seasonal. In experiencing and exploring the Eating Together Faithfully (ETF) program, they'll become equipped to begin leading ETF small groups in their congregations and communities."

V. Course Schedule and Format

This schedule provides the general timing of topics, readings and assignment due dates. The online learning agenda found on Populi is always the most current and may vary from the schedule in this syllabus.

Section I

Religion and Ecology: Main Concepts

Week 1 (Feb 3rd): Introduction

Topics:

- Students Introduction
- Course Introduction
- Syllabus Discussion

Required Reading and Activities (Before Class Starts):

- a. If you have never watched any documentary on climate change, then watch *The 11th Hour*. Our library holds this documentary. You can also find at amazon to rent/buy or do a quick google search and find it for free online, e.g. <https://watchdocumentaries.com/the-11th-hour/> Although there are newer documentaries on this topic, this one brings the type of intersections that we will explore in this course in a clear manner.
- b. If you have already watched *The 11th Hour*, then please watch *Call of Life: Facing the Mass Extinction*. Our library does not hold a copy of this documentary but they can assist you with a link to assist online through other school's library, if you request. You can also find this to buy/rent at Amazon or for free at <https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/festival/play/7350/call-of-life--facing-the-mass-extinction>

Please note, this activity is important to guarantee that we start this class with a shared basic knowledge on the ecological issues that our current world face. This will count into your participation grade.

Week 2 (Feb 10th): Religion and Ecology.

Topics:

- What Is Religion?
- Why Defining Religion Matters for Theological Studies?
- What Is Ecology?
- How Do Religious Views Influence the Human-Earth Relationship?

Required Readings:

1. Bauman, Whitney A. et.al., 2017. *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, chapters 1 and 3.
2. Jenkins, Willis. 2017. "Whose Religion? Which Ecology?" *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, pages 22–32 [PDF].

Due: Short Critical Review. To be uploaded at Populi, under Assignments titled, "Short Critical Review." See Populi for more information.

Recommended Reading (Optional):

3. Soper, K. 1995. *What is Nature? Culture, Politics, and the Nonhuman*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
4. Tjernstrom, E. and Tietenberg, T. 2008. "Do Differences in Attitudes Explain Differences in National Climate Change Policies?" *Ecological Economics* 65(2): 315–324 [PDF].
5. Taylor, Bron. 2010. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 3 (Feb 17th): Climate Change: What Challenges Does It Pose to Theology and Ethics?

Topics:

- What Is Climate Change?
- What Is Theological Ethic?
- Why Is Climate Change a Theological Ethic Problem?
- How Does Ethical Views Influence Theological Constructions and Religious Practices?

Required Readings:

1. Cuomo, Chris J. 2011. "Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Responsibility," *Hypatia* 26(4): 690-714 [PDF].
2. Jenkins, Willis. 2013. *The Future of Ethics: Sustainability, Social Justice, and Religious, Creativity*, chapter "Introduction," pages 1-14 [ebook].
3. Bauman, Whitney, and Kevin J. O'Brien. 2019. *Environmental Ethics and Uncertainty* "Wrestling with Wicked Problems", chapter "Introduction," pages 1-14.
4. Vaidyanathan, Brandon, Simranjit Khalsa and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2018. "Naturally Ambivalent: Religion's Role in Shaping Environmental Action." *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 79(4): 472–494 [PDF].

Watch Shorth Video: "Against Empathy"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1zZ_eKSAAI

For more information see short text: <https://www.bostonreview.net/forum/against-empathy/peter-singer-response-against-empathy-peter-singer>

Due: For 2–3 minutes six students will have the opportunity to share in class insights, realizations, complaints or experiences. There is no need to submit any written essay. Students will be graded on their preparedness and ability to develop self-reflexivity while engaging with the course’s content, 5% for each time.

Recommended Reading (Optional):

1. Gardiner, Stephen. 2010. “Ethics and Global Climate Change.” In *Climate Ethics* [ebook].
2. Carson, Rachel. 1962. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Section II: Planetary Challenges

Week 4 (Feb 24th): Sustainability and Place.

Topics:

- Sustainability;
- Place as Part of Our Cultural Realities;
- How Are Ethics, Spirituality and Solidarity Connected to Each Other?

Required Readings:

1. Bauman, Whitney, and Kevin J. O’Brien. 2019. *Environmental Ethics and Uncertainty” Wrestling with Wicked Problems*, chapters 1 and 2.
2. Jenkins, Willis. 2017. “Sustainability.” In *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, chapter 14.
3. Whitney, Kimberly. 2003. “Greening by Place: Sustaining Cultures, Ecologies, Communities.” *The Journal of Women and Religion* 19/20: 11-25 [PDF].
4. (Optional Short Reading) “In Detroit, A New Type of Agricultural Neighborhood Has Emerged.”

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2019/11/05/food-community-detroit-garden-agriculture/?fbclid=IwAR1evPyrznd8bONxMRF9pHoCOYiLo4HED3Bpz81NTTfMiSsSHnkLK0uZzqA>

Watch “What is Permaculture” <https://permacultureprinciples.com/>
and “Permaculture Design Principles” <https://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

Due: Peer-Review Feedback on Short Critical Review. To be Submitted at Populi under Assignment Tab titled “Short Critical Review”

Week 5 (March 2nd): Race and Environmental Justice.

Topics:

- Ecology, Theory on Race and Ethnicity;
- Environmental Justice Movement;
- The Civil Rights Movement and the Overlap with the Ecological Movement.

Required Readings:

1. Bauman, Whitney, and Kevin J. O'Brien. 2019. *Environmental Ethics and Uncertainty* "Wrestling with Wicked Problems, chapters 3 and 4.
2. White, Carol Wayne. 2017. "Race and Ethnicity." In *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, chapter 6.
3. Bohannon, Richard and Kevin J. O'Brien. 2017. "Justice." In *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, chapter 13.
4. Harris, Melanie. 2017. "African Diaspora: African American Environmental Religious Ethics and Ecowomanism." In *Routledge handbook of Religion and Ecology*, pages 199–207. [PDF]

Watch "A Fierce Green Fire," if you are interested to learn more about environmental justice movements in different countries. There are several places in the internet (e.g. YouTube) that you can rent this documentary online. Watch "Shelter in Place" if you are interested to learn more about examples of environmental racism. This documentary, currently is free with Amazon Prime subscription.

Students who would like to save money, then **listen to the podcast:** "Let Them Drown: The Violence of Othering in a Warming World" by Naomi Klein

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v38/n11/naomi-klein/let-them-drown>

Please note that this podcast ends at 47:15 minutes, the remaining is a great Q&A that you can also listen if possible.

Due: For 2–3 minutes six students will have the opportunity to share in class insights, realizations, complains or experiences. There is no need to submit any written essay. Students will be graded on their preparedness and ability to develop self-reflexivity while engaging with the course's content, 5% for each time.

Recommended Readings (Optional):

1. James Cone, Whose Earth is it anyway? <http://www.crosscurrents.org/cone.htm>
2. Britton-Purdy, Jedediah. 2016. "Environmentalism Was Once a Social-Justice Movement: It Can Be Again." <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/12/how-the-environmental-movement-can-recover-its-soul/509831/?fbclid=IwAR1ljBtqoMH-BVwEPOsFQmAKy5Chrdfnu5MI0H2wVeKWicwKEZ-fXFsuHps>

Extra Resources on Environmental Justice for The Curious.

Case Studies:

"Toxic Wastes and Race at the Twentieth Century"

<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/toxic-wastes-and-race-at-twenty-1987-2007.pdf>

International Movements:

Brazilian Landless Worker's Movement (Movimento Sem Terra/MST)

<http://www.mstbrazil.org/content/history-mst>

South Africa's Church Land Movement

<http://www.churchland.co.za/>

News Articles:

“Environmental Racism in America: An Overview of the Environmental Justice Movement and the Role of Race in Environmental Policies”

<http://www.goldmanprize.org/blog/environmental-racism-in-america-an-overview-of-the-environmental-justice-movement-and-the-role-of-race-in-environmental-policies/>

“Environmental Justice: An Interview with Robert Bullard”

<http://www.ejnet.org/ej/bullard.html>

Desmond D’SA – 2014 Goldman Prize Recipient Africa

<http://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/desmond-dsa/>

“Latinos Disproportionately Breathe Toxic Air from Big Oil and Gas”

<https://thinkprogress.org/latinos-disproportionately-breathe-toxic-air-from-big-oil-and-gas-5427e9de4f69#.f5povnpvy>

“Why the Native American pipeline resistance in North Dakota is about climate justice”

<http://theconversation.com/why-the-native-american-pipeline-resistance-in-north-dakota-is-about-climate-justice-64714>

Spring Break March 9th – 13th

Week 6 (March 16th): Environmental Justice Gender and Food Production.

Topics:

- Gender and Climate Change;
- Globalized Food System;
- Farming and Labor;
- Ethnocentrism and Gender Challenges to Theology.

Required Readings:

1. Warren, Karen J. 1997. “Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecofeminist Philosophical Perspective.” In *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, pages 3-20 [PDF].
2. Warren, Karen. 2000. *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, chapter 6 [PDF].
3. Ryan-Simkins, Kelsey and Elaine Nogueira-Godsey. “Tangible Actions Toward Solidarity: An Ecofeminist Analysis of Women’s Participation in Food Justice.” [forthcoming] [PDF].
4. Eaton, Heather. 2017. “Gender Injustice.” In *Routledge handbook of Religion and Ecology*, pages 326–335.

Watch: Carol Adams “#MeToo and the Sexual Politics of Meat”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kd9phAMfisI> and/or <https://vimeo.com/208589922>

Due: “Reading Response [Week 6].” This must be submitted under the Assignment tab titled “Reading Response [Week 6].”

Recommended Reading (Optional):

1. Bauman, Whitney A., and Heather Eaton. 2017. "Gender and Queer Studies." In *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, chapter 5.
2. Pui-Lan, Kwok. 2005. "Mending of Creation: Women, Nature and Hope." In *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology*, pages 209-230 [PDF].

Week 7 (March 23rd): Globalization and Economics.

Topics:

- Globalization;
- Human Desire and Economic Behavior;
- Consumerism and Greed.

Required Readings:

1. Hartman, Laura M. 2017. "Economics." In *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, chapter 15.
2. Lorentzen, Lois Ann. 2017. "Globalization." In *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, chapter 8.
3. Rieger, Annika, and Joerg Rieger. 2019. "Working with Environmental Economists." In *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Theology and Climate Change*, pages 55–64. [PDF]

Watch Documentary: *Surviving Progress*

<https://vimeo.com/56217994> This movie is also available to rent at Amazon or free for those subscribing to Amazon Prime.

Recommended Reading (Optional):

1. Mananzan, Mary John. 2004. "Globalization and the Perennial Question of Justice." In *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, edited by Roger S. Gottlieb, pages 611-617 [PDF].
2. Rasmussen, Larry L. 2013. "Asceticism and Consumerism." *Earth-honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key* pp. 239-254. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press [PDF].
3. Shiva, Vandana. 1997. *Biopiracy*. Boston: South End Press.

Recommended Documentary (Optional):

Life and Debt <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/life-and-debt/>

The Cost of a Coke: <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/the-cost-of-a-coke/>

Section III: Ecological Theology

Week 8 (March 30th): Epistemology

Topics:

- Epistemology and the Challenges it poses to Theological Justice;
- The Decolonial Theological Option.

Required Readings:

1. Gebara, Ivone. 1999. *Logging for Running Water*, Introduction and chapter 1.

Watch "The Danger of a Single Story" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>

Due: For 2–3 minutes six students will have the opportunity to share in class insights, realizations, complaints or experiences. There is no need to submit any written essay. Students will be graded on their preparedness and ability to develop self-reflexivity while engaging with the course's content, 5% for each time.

Recommended Readings (Optional):

1. Kearns, Laurel. 2003. "The Context of Eco-Theology." In *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*, edited by Gareth Jones, pages 466-484 [PDF].
2. Boff, Leonardo. 1994. "Social Ecology: Poverty and Misery." In *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, edited by David G. Hallman, 235-247. New York: Orbis Books [PDF].

Holy Week Break April 6th–9th

Week 9 (April 13th): Theological Anthropology.

Topics:

- Defining Theological Anthropology;
- Connections between Anthropocentric Readings of the Scriptures and Ecological Crisis;
- Human Exceptionalism and Creation Myth;
- What is to Be Human?

Required Readings:

1. Gebara, Ivone. 1999. *Logging for Running Water*, chapter 2.
2. Cater, Christopher. 2018. "Blood in the Soil: The Racial, Racist, and Religious Dimensions of Environmentalism." In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Religion and Nature: The Elements*, edited by Laura Hobgood and Whitney Bauman, pages 45-61 [PDF].
3. Peterson, Anna. 2001. "Not of the World: Human Exceptionalism in Western Tradition." In *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press [PDF].

Watch "The Iroquois Creation Myth"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aXWpMa_mXs&fbclid=IwAR3DwItaCEZQ1872NdJnyPPoziEBiNZj2MZRj4Hii3YlidzzOl5pMqLguNE

Due: For 2–3 minutes six students will have the opportunity to share in class insights, realizations, complaints or experiences. There is no need to submit any written essay. Students will be graded on their preparedness and ability to develop self-reflexivity while engaging with the course's content, 5% for each time.

Week 10 (April 20th): The Doctrine of God

Topics:

- The Doctrine of God and Ecology;
- Is Nature Sacred?
- Is God Part of the Cosmos?
- What Is Panentheism?

Required Readings:

1. Gebara, Ivone. 1999. *Logging for Running Water*, chapter 3.
2. Gebara, Ivone. 2016. "A Reform that Includes Eco-Justice." *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 55(2): 117-121 [PDF].
3. Bauman, Whitney A. 2007. "The Problem of a Transcendent God for the Well-Being of Continuous Creation." *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 46(2): 120-127 [PDF].

Watch "About Pachamama Alliance"

https://www.pachamama.org/about?_ga=2.118510665.1913578253.1580695259-2031525960.1580695259

and read "Legal Recognition of the Sacredness of the Earth: Rights of Nature"

<https://blog.pachamama.org/legal-recognition-of-the-sacredness-of-the-earth-rights-of-nature>

Due: "Step 1: Research Paper Topic" and "Outside Learning Reflection Essay" on Monday any time before class starts. Students will be graded on their ability to develop self-reflexivity while engaging with the course's content. This must be uploaded at Populi under Assignments "Outside Learning (Reflection Essay)."

Week 11 (April 27th): Trinity, Jesus and the Way to a New Understanding of Religion.

Topics:

- Trinity from an Ecological Perspective;
- Grace and Salvation;
- The Cosmic Jesus;
- The Cross and Human Suffering.

Readings:

1. Gebara, Ivone. 1999. *Logging for Running Water*, chapters 4 and 5.
2. Isherwood, Lisa. 2001. "The Tree, The Cross and Global Capitalism," *Feminist Theology* 28: 93-106.
3. Keller, Catherine. 2007. "Talking Dirty: Ground Is Not Foundation." In *Ecospirit*, pages 63–76.

Due: "Step 2: Research Paper Main Research Question"

Recommended Readings (Optional):

1. Martell-Otero, Loida I. 2015. "Who Do You Say that I Am? From Incomprehensible *Ousia* to *Presencia*: An Evangélica Reimagining of the Doctrine of God." In *Christian Doctrines for Global Gender Justice* pages 17-40. (PDF)

"Eating Together Faithfully" (April 30-May 2)

Week 12 (May 4th): Earth Ethics from the Grassroots (Part I)

Topics:

TBA

Required Readings:

1. Zachariah, George. 2011. *Alternative Unincorporated*, “Introduction” and Chapter 1 and 2.

Due: “Step 3: Bibliography”

Week 13 (May 11th): The Way to a New Understanding of Religion.

Topics:

TBA

Required Readings:

1. Gebara, Ivone. 1999. *Logging for Running Water*, chapter 6 and “Epilogue.”
2. Ramsay, Adam. 2014. “My Environmentalism Will Be Intersectional or It Will Be Bullshit.” <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/my-environmentalism-will-be-intersectional-or-it-will-be-bullshit/>

Due: “Step 4: Learning Contract”

Week 14 (May 18nd): Earth Ethics from the Grassroots (Part II)

Topics:

TBA

Required Readings:

Zachariah, George. 2011. *Alternative Unincorporated*, “chapters 3, 4 and “Conclusion.”

Due: Final Research Paper and Addendum.

VII. MTSO Standard Syllabus Statements

ADA / Disability Services

MTSO supports students of special populations in their efforts to reach their potential by encouraging self-advocacy and facilitating student accommodations, empowering students to help themselves, and providing the safe environment in which to do so. We commit to an inclusive learning environment and will support reasonable, documented requests for accommodations and learning adaptations. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact the director of student services at klofrumento@mtso.edu. For more information regarding 504/ADA Compliance, contact the ADA/504 coordinator at kdickson@mtso.edu.

Class Attendance

Regular attendance is expected in all classes. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will fail a course if he or she is absent for 25% of the class sessions. As it relates to blended courses, students may fail the course if they are absent for 25% of class meetings (including online meetings). Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance

Course credits	1 credit	1.5 credits	2 credits	3 credits
25%	3 hours	4.4 hours	5.8 hours	8.8 hours

Electronic Devices

As an institution dedicated to the advancement of learning, MTSO is firmly committed to a philosophy of mutual respect. To that end, we have established a policy regarding the use of mobile phones, computers, tablets, and other electronic devices. Instructors have the right to impose appropriate grading penalties for excessive classroom disruptions due to these devices.

All electronic devices should be silenced during class. Unless there is an emergency requiring immediate attention, phone calls should be returned during classroom breaks in an area of the building that is not disruptive to other classes. The noise created by playing audio equipment so that others can hear it, or by using mobile phones in areas where others are attempting to study or to do research is disruptive.

Notebook and tablet computers have become commonplace in the classroom. However, the use of such devices should be restricted to course-related purposes. General browsing of the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class time is inappropriate.

Human Subjects Research

Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.

Inclusive Language

In accordance with MTSO's inclusive language policy, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in classroom discussions when referring to human beings. Inclusive language is carefully and deliberately chosen to break barriers of exclusivity. It is for everyone and against no one. It focuses on the message given by guarding against inaccuracy in the vocabulary of the sender. Inclusive language is an intentional attempt to communicate in a universal way.

Grading Scale

MTSO's grading scale uses letter grades (A, B, C, D and F, with pluses and minuses as appropriate).

Outstanding work			Substandard but passing work		
A+	4.0	>=97%	D+	1.3	67%-69.9%
A	4.0	93%-96.9%	D	1.0	60%-66.9%
A-	3.7	90%-92.9%	D-	<i>not used</i>	
Good work			Failing work		
B+	3.3	87%-89.9%	F	0.0	
B	3.0	83%-86.9%			
B-	2.7	80%-82.9% (<i>lowest pass for D.Min.</i>)			
Work meets minimum standards			Other grades		

C+	2.3	77%-79.9%	P	Pass (equates to C- or higher)
C	2.0	73%-76.9%	WP	Withdrawn Passing
C-	1.7	70%-72.9%	WF	Withdrawn Failing
			IP	In Progress
			I or EX	Incomplete / Extension
			AU	Audit

Pass/Fail Grading Option

Within certain limits, a student may complete up to nine credit hours at MTSO on a pass/fail basis, rather than for a letter grade (A, B, C, D or F). Dual degree students may take three additional hours pass/fail. All students seeking ordination are encouraged to check with their annual conferences (or appropriate judicatory) before exercising the pass/fail option in any courses, since they may have limitations on pass/fail courses that are different from those prescribed by MTSO.

The deadline for pass/fail applications is the end of the second week of the course. For weekend courses, the deadline is prior to the second weekend. For intensive courses, the deadline is by the end of the second day of class. Requests should be made with the Application for Pass/Fail Credit or via email showing faculty advisor approval. Requests to change to pass/fail grading in a course received after the deadline for these requests will not be accepted. Once a course has been changed to pass/fail, the course may not be reverted to standard letter grading. When exercising the pass/fail option, to receive a grade of pass the student must do at least the equivalent of C- work in the course. For example, if the student opts for pass/fail grading and his or her performance in the course would have earned a D+ grade and would have earned the student credit for the course within the letter grade system the student will fail the course and will not receive credit.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of I (Incomplete) may be used under special circumstances on a temporary basis when a student needs additional time on course assignments. To receive a temporary course grade of Incomplete, students must petition the professor, their faculty advisor, and the dean. Students must complete the petition and obtain the appropriate signatures unless they are physically unable. The completed petition must be delivered to Academic Affairs before the last day of regularly scheduled classes (before finals week) as listed on the Academic Calendar. It is strongly recommended that students deliver the petition to Academic Affairs for review at least one week prior to this deadline as lack of sufficient lead time may result in the denial of the petition. The dean may ask to confer directly with the student, faculty advisor, and/or instructor before making a decision.

The date by which all course work must be completed will be no later than four weeks after the last day of the term as listed on the Academic Calendar. For incomplete courses in which a new letter grade has not been submitted after one week has passed from the date by which all course work was to be completed, the grade will be recorded as an F.

Grade Changes and Appeals

Students who believe that they have not been graded fairly should first speak to the instructor who gave the grade. If, after this conversation, the student still believes that the grade is unfair, the student may file a written appeal with the dean, within 30 days of having received the

grade, and set forth the reasons for the appeal. The dean will consult with both the student and the instructor. If the dean finds grounds to support the student's claim that the grade is unfair, the dean may modify the grade. The dean will render the decision regarding the appeal in writing.

Faculty members may change grades within 30 days after the final grade deadline for the term in which the course was taken. After the 30-day period, no grades will be changed unless there is a petition because of extenuating circumstances.

Documenting written work at MTSO

All written work submitted for courses at MTSO must conform to the Note-Bibliography style in the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition) or, for MACM students, the American Psychological Association (6th edition). A standardized format enables the readers to have full and immediate information concerning works cited and consulted by the writer. The format must be followed consistently throughout the paper, including footnotes, endnotes, in-line notes, and bibliography. Mixing the two styles in the same paper is not permitted. Papers not conforming to a proper and consistent style may be returned to the writer for a re-write or with a grade that reflects failure to follow the required format. If you have questions, please consult with the school's writing instructor, the dean, or a faculty member.

Instructors may designate one of the two styles as mandatory for assignments in a course. Papers not conforming to a proper and consistent style may be returned to the writer for a re-write or with a grade that reflects failure to follow the required format. If you have questions, please consult with the school's writing instructor, the dean, or a faculty member.

See https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html#cg-journal

For a helpful discussion of how to avoid academic misconduct, see the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02>.

Academic Misconduct Policy

Freedom of inquiry and expression are essential to the educational process, but this freedom must operate within a system of order. Accordingly, academic misconduct in any form will not be tolerated and may result in failure of course work or other sanctions up to and including expulsion.

The following are specific (but not all-inclusive) examples of academic misconduct:

1. Cheating on examinations of any kind by whatever means, including preparation for an examination by means of obtaining copies of examination, past or present, and copying from other students.
2. Use of oral and/or written private research of a paid or voluntary person and representing this work as one's own, whether within the classroom or in any context of the academic program.
3. Borrowing without attribution (plagiarism or misuse of sources) from published and unpublished works, including writings and media in any format taken from websites, apps, and other online sources. Plagiarism is defined for these purposes in a broad rather

than a narrow sense and therefore is not limited to definitions found in Civil Law which apply to Copyright Laws, the commercial reproduction of books, articles, images, and audio and video recordings.

This policy applies not only to the production of written assignments, but also to oral, electronic, and digital work presented in any format. Students are always expected to attribute clearly and explicitly work that is the intellectual and creative property of others.

Sanctions for Academic Misconduct

When academic misconduct has been established to a faculty member's satisfaction, the faculty member may assign the student a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and may recommend stronger sanctions to the dean.

Faculty members are required to report all incidences of academic misconduct to the dean. The instructor must submit documentation of academic misconduct to the dean and to the student. The dean's determination of whether academic misconduct occurred is not subject to appeal. If the dean determines that no violation has been committed, the dean will address with the faculty member penalties imposed in the class. The dean may impose additional sanctions to the student beyond those given by the instructor (e.g., required meetings with the writing instructor, reprimand, probation, suspension or dismissal). Sanctions will be communicated by the dean to the student and to the student's faculty advisor in writing with copies of all communications and documentation retained in the student's permanent record.

If a student is found to have committed academic misconduct a second time, the dean will typically impose the sanctions of suspension or dismissal. The dean shall initiate any suspension or dismissal for academic misconduct by giving the student written notice specifying the charge against the student and the sanctions imposed. The dean may in some circumstances meet with the student to communicate the charges and discipline prior to formal written communication.

Academic misconduct disciplinary appeals process

If a student wishes to appeal the sanctions imposed by the dean, the student shall inform the dean in writing within 14 days from the date contained in the dean's notification of sanctions.

The appeal shall be scheduled for hearing by an executive session of the Academic Affairs Committee of the School on or before the date of the Academic Affairs Committee's next regularly scheduled meeting. If a member of the Academic Affairs Committee must recuse themselves due to a conflict of interest, the Chair will ask another member of the Executive Faculty to serve in an *ad hoc* capacity, starting with members of the Faculty Personnel and Student Review Committees. The student shall have the right to present evidence of extenuating circumstances which would warrant leniency.

The Committee shall deliberate in private session and will decide by majority vote to accept, reject, or amend the discipline recommendation by the dean. The decision of the Committee shall be communicated in writing with documentation retained in the student's permanent record.

VIII. Supporting Materials

Requirements for Auditors

Auditors must partially fulfil the course requirements. These entail weekly readings (only the required listed readings), class attendance and involved participation as well as preparation

for in-class discussion. Students will receive weekly questions, the answers for which must be written or typed out and brought to the following class. Auditors will not submit any of the course's written projects for evaluation. Auditors must indicate to the course's professor if they wish to participate in the online discussions, e.g. Facebook Group and Introductions.

Policy on Children in Class

Currently MTSO does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The police described below is a reflection that came to me via Dr. Bridgeman. This was posted by an unidentified student who shared their professor's policy online, which I agree with and adopted for myself.

"The police described here is just a reflection of my own belief and commitments to student, staff and faculty parents:

1. All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as necessary;
2. For older children and babies, I understand that unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to miss class to stay home with a child. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
3. I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status;
4. In all cases when babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met;
5. Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have finally gone to sleep. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance.

ADDENDUM A – Final Research Project

Instructions:

Final research paper must be double spaced (min. 2000 and max. 3000 words). It must be well structured, this includes paper's cover, clear introduction, conclusion and bibliography, use subheadings. Students can find Final Research Paper Grading Criteria at Populi under Assignment tab "Final Research Project."

Final Research Paper must follow this format:

1. Paper's font size 12p, margins are 1" and aligned left or justified. The standard fonts for academic papers are Times New Roman, Arial and Helvetica, paper's body must be double-spaced and have page numbers. The paper's cover page and bibliography are not double-spaced and appear on separate pages.
2. The papers must have a cover page, which includes the research paper's title, student's name, instructor's name, date and institution. Let me know if you need assistance with templates.
3. The paper's body must be clearly structured with subheadings, a clear introduction, body, conclusion and bibliography. See at Populi the attachments on how to structure a research

essay, write an introduction and conclusion. They can be found under the Assignment tab “Final Research Paper.”

5. In order to guarantee a good grade and fruitful learning process, make sure that you send your project to the writing structure, Dr. Trad Nogueira-Godsey for feedback before submission.

➤ Projects that do not follow academic structure and proper editing will be returned. Students will have two days to resubmit their papers. Failure to comply will lead to failing this assignment.

This Final Research Essay is self-graded.³ Here is how this will work and the steps to be followed so that we can get the most possible out of this assignment:

Step 1: Research Paper Topic, post at Populi under the Discussion tab titled “Research Paper Topic” the topic of your research paper on Week 10 (April 20th) by 12pm. If by that time, you already have your research paper title then post the title and a description of what it entitles. If not, a few sentences about the paper’s topic will do.

Step 2: Research Paper Main Research Question, post at Populi under the Discussion tab titled “Research Paper Main Question” your paper’s main question on Week 11 (April 27th) by 12pm. If by that time, you already have your research paper’s title then post the title and a description of what it entitles. If not, a few sentences about the paper’s main question will do.

Please note that although the links below will help you to be prepared, the best resource is to consult with Dr. Trad Nogueira-Godsey.

1. How to Write a Research Question <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/how-to-write-a-research-question>

2. How to Write a Thesis Statement <https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/how-to-write-a-thesis-statement.html>

3. Research question examples <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-question-examples/>

4. Developing strong research questions <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/>

Step 3: Bibliography, write up your paper’s bibliography (working in progress) and share with us by posting it at Populi under the Discussion tab titled “Research Project’s Bibliography” by Week 12 (May 4th). Final research papers must have a minimum of 8 entries. Remember that a research paper’s bibliography is comprised by the list of titles that were cited in a paper. If you have read something, but decided to not use it in your final paper, this resource will not make it into your final bibliography. It is likely that your bibliography will undergo some changes after you conclude your paper and this is fine.

³ The self-graded structure of the final research per has been developed by professor Yvonne Zimmerman and adapted to this class by professor Elaine Nogueira-Godsey.

Step 4: Learning Contract, on Week 13 (May 11th) all students must email me a learning contract by 12pm. This must be sent as a proper written attachment and not in the body of an email. A learning contract consists of a short paragraph for each point below that details:

What you intend to learn, develop, or construct with this assignment,

How you will know if you've achieved this,

How you will evaluate the quality of your reflection/construction, and

What grade you intend to achieve.

➤ *This paragraph will serve as the formal learning agreement between you and me.*

Step 5 (Optional): Blind Peer-Review, weeks 12–14 (May 4th–May 19th) students are encouraged to send their drafts to Dr. E who will circulate these drafts blindly among those who opted to participate in this activity. Peer-reviewers are encouraged to comment on sentence clarity, argument development and evidence, grammar and provide bibliographical suggestions. I will provide written guidelines to willing peer-reviewers.

Step 6: Final projects are due by midnight on Friday Week 14.

As an addendum to your final project, and referring to your learning contract (above), you will provide me with a written evaluation that discusses how you think you achieved your goals, your evaluation of the quality of your work in the project, and what grade you would assign to your work. *This is not a full guarantee that I will give you the grade you choose for yourself. As the instructor, I retain the prerogative to adjust your grade if I feel you are being either too lenient or too harsh with yourself.* But this is an opportunity for you to set clear and specific benchmarks of scholarly accountability for the work you produce.

Options for Final Research Paper

Option 1: Theological Paper

“What is the point to learn about ...?”

Students have to choose one ecotheological topic to support or argue against. They have to develop an argument that will either support their stand (in favor or against) on an ecotheological topic or support a specific ecotheologian's perspective on a specific topic.

Option 2: Biographical Paper

Choose an ecotheologian or ethicist that has most shaped their own religious tradition's thinking in relation to one or more theological positions. Explain what is the main theological stand, perspective, position or teaching that this theologian became known for. Identify and argue who was/were the historical figure(s), philosophy or context most influencing their thought. Who or what was this theologian responding to?

Option 3: Design your own project

Students may propose what kind of project they would like to develop and discuss with the instructor.