Eco-Care: Chaplaincy in a More-than-Human World (ET-550)
Fall Semester 2023

SYLLABUS

HIU Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land where we learn, teach, dialogue, and pray, and where some of us are blessed to live, is sacred. We pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land where the city of Hartford is situated. We honor their memory and hope for their future. We aspire to uphold our responsibilities on this land and to work for peace in this world, in accordance with their example.

<u>Instructor</u>:
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<u>Class Meeting Dates and Times</u>:
Thursdays 4-7pm, in Room 205 (77 Sherman Street Building), and via Zoom

<u>Course Format</u>:
Hybrid Synchronous

<u>Course Description</u>:
This course invites students into the emerging field of eco-care: the practice of chaplaincy in relation to ecology and the human relationship to place, other creatures, the more-than-human world, and the ecological threats endangering our shared future. This course will include attention to ecological literacy, climate change, climate- and eco-grief, eco-psychology, Nature Deficit Disorder, place-based forms of soul work and healing practices; wilderness rites of passage and other forms of ritual; human environmental and climate justice; and interspecies relationships. Student projects will center in one's own place and its creatures and needs and/or in some aspect of human need in relation to these daunting challenges.

Course Objectives (*correlating assignment numbers noted after each*): That students
1) attend to their relationship with God/the sacred/mystery and with Earth's creatures and wildness and in their capacity both to experience these relations and to articulate their experience (#1-3);
2) grow in awareness of emerging forms of spiritual care to, with, or in relation to ecological questions, non-human creatures, and ecosystems (#3,4);
3) become familiar with key concepts in climate science and policy, relevant ecological science and policy for their home bioregion, eco-psychology, and strategies of place-based community development and resilience as these inform the crises, tipping points, and needs we face today (#3,4);
4) grow in skills of spiritual care in light of the needs noted above, including practices of contemplative listening to the holy, to the world and one's own experience, and to others both human and not, and developing forms of ritual or practice adapted to and emergent from these relationships (#1,3,4);
5) deepen knowledge of a particular form of need today and design a strategy of response to that need, (#4).

Course Learning Outcomes (*referring to 2017 BCCI Common Qualifications*):
ITP 2: Incorporate a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines and religious beliefs and practices in the provision of spiritual care.
ITP 3: Incorporate the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human development into one's practice of care.
ITP 6: Articulate how primary research and research literature inform the profession of chaplaincy and one's spiritual care practice.
PIC 3: Attend to one's own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
PIC 6: Advocate for the persons in one's care.
PPS 1: Establish, deepen and conclude professional spiritual care relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect

Plus one or more of the following, depending on the focus of one's research project:
PPS 5: Provide spiritual care to persons experiencing loss and grief.
PPS 6: Provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the care recipients, families, and staff.
PPS 7: Develop, coordinate, and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.
PPS 8: Facilitate theological/spiritual reflection for those in one's care practice.

Required Texts: *Both are available via the DTL (Digital Theological Library)*
Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology, ed. Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim (New York: Routledge, 2016). Abbreviated **RH** in calendar.
Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown, *Coming Back to Life: The Updated Guide to the Work that Reconnects* (Gabriola Island, BC: New World Publishers, 2014). Abbreviated **MB** in calendar.

Assignments and Means of Assessment:

1) <u>Attendance and Participation</u> in class throughout the semester. Presence in class and substantive engagement with readings, discussions, in-class exercises, and one another. **20% of grade**.

2) <u>Narration of an Experience of the World's Wildness</u>, **due in Week 3.** In *five to six minutes spoken aloud*, narrate a recent or childhood encounter with some aspect of non-human wildness: a wild animal, a storm, an immersion in wild water, a beloved tree or other plant, a trip into wilderness, etc. Choose an experience that conveys for you something of the power, beauty, mystery, or terror evoked by course readings on wildness, including at least one quote from each reading. Where were you? What happened? Use as much sensory detail as possible – what you saw, heard, touched, felt, smelled, tasted, imagined – to invite the reader into your experience. How does this experience (or wildness more broadly) evoke or center or stretch what *the sacred* means for you? To be read out loud in class on September 21 and turned in. **10% of grade**.

3) <u>Blogs</u>: Six of ten possible blog posts of 500 words, due Wednesdays 1:00pm Eastern in the weeks assigned (see calendar). *Everyone should do the first and the last of the semester's blogs, along with four others.* Reflect on what stirs in you from the readings, including at least one quote from each, in relation to your context and in conversation with the week's practice. **Do these readings, practices, and/or writing in physical proximity to a particular plant/tree, waterway, or sit-spot of your immediate environs**, to which/whom you will apprentice yourself in the process. The first five blogs are worth 6% each, and the last is worth 10% = **40% of grade.**

4) <u>Research and Class Presentation</u> (**30% of grade**):

   a. **Topic:** Listen for an ecological *context* and *need* you experience calling you into care: for humans in relation to Earth, for other creatures, for a place, for an ecosystem. Please schedule a conversation with the professor to take place by Week 6 of the semester to discuss your proposed topic: **1/6 of project grade or 5% of course grade.**

   b. **Research:** Conduct research using scholarly and, if relevant, non-scholarly sources to learn more about your topic and to guide your articulation of form/s of spiritual care you find most effective, healing, transforming (or other appropriate adjective). This might include rituals, programs, practices, interventions you learn about that others have already created, or it may include those you design yourself to supplement existing resources or to begin to address an absence of resources on your topic or for your context. Create a bibliography (rubric will be provided) of eight or more high-quality sources, at least four of them scholarly, **due in Week 9 of the semester: 1/3 of project grade or 10% of course grade.**

   c. **Class Presentation:** Create a 20-minute presentation to be given in class in the last three weeks of the semester. This presentation will show us what you learned in your research (if applicable, also invite us to experience something of this topic), as well as showing its significance for your present or possible ministry focus. Rubric will be provided. See how creatively or interactively you can present what you have learned. Give us a taste of your subject – help us experience how it works or why it matters. Please submit your PowerPoint or Prezi via Canvas by the beginning of the class session at which you are presenting. **1/2 of project grade or 15% of course grade.**
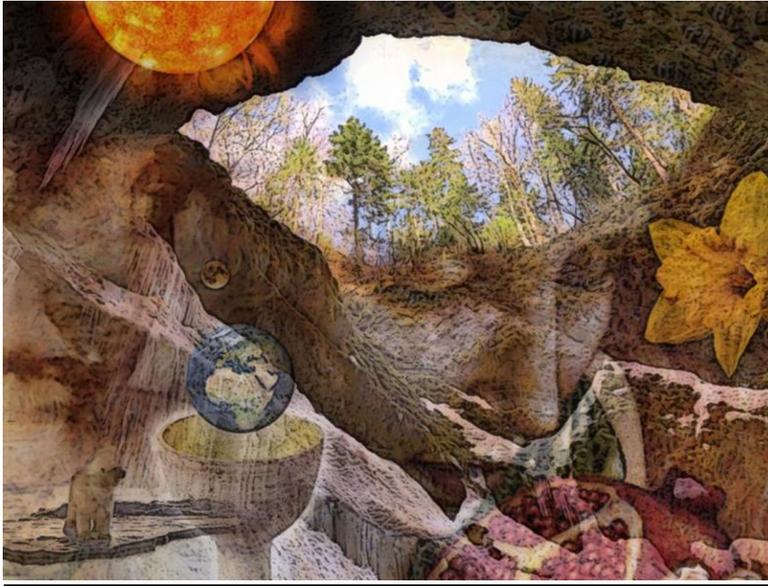
Image: Doug Van Houten

CALENDAR

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS OR DUE DATES at the *beginning* of class each week
Week 1: September 7, 2023	**Introduction to Course, Topic, and One Another**	*No reading due in advance*
Week 2: September 14, 2023	**Ecological and Religious Contexts: Our Larger Home**	**Blog 1 due** Readings for Week 2: Rasmussen, "Prelude" Two chapters from *Routledge Handbook* (RL), Parts 2 or 3: read the essay that best corresponds to your own religious tradition (however defined) <u>and</u> one you would like to learn more about *Optional:* Kingsolver, "Knowing Our Place"
Week 3: September 21, 2023	**The Wild and the Sacred**	**Experience of the Wild Paper due** Readings for Week 3: Berry, "The Wild and the Sacred" Plumwood, "Being Prey" *And, <u>either one</u> of these:* Snyder, "Etiquette of Freedom" <u>or</u> Loorz, "Into the Mountains to Pray"

Week 4: September 28, 2023	**Kin: Place and Its Creatures**	**Blog 2 due** Readings for Week 4: Bowen, chapters 1-4 Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals,* 1-14 Loorz, "Terra Divina" (practice) *Also, optional:* Cunningham, "Animal Spirituality"
Week 5: October 5, 2023	**The Science: Climate, Water, Extinctions, Tipping Points**	**Blog 3 due** Readings for Week 5: Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith,* "The World We Have," pp. 50-61, 67-71, 76-79; "On the Brink of Five Tipping Points," *The Guardian* *Routledge Handbook,* one chapter from Part VI ("Planetary Challenges")
Week 6: October 12, 2023	**Eco-Psychology 1**	**Blog 4 due** **RESEARCH TOPIC conversations due!** Readings for Week 6: Carson, "Neither Here nor There" MB chapters 2-4
Week 7: October 19, 2023	**Climate- and Eco-Grief**	**Blog 5 due** Readings for Week 7: MB chapter 7 Chapters from *The World As We Knew It: Dispatches from a Changing Climate,* TBD
Week 8: October 26, 2023	**Climate- and Eco-Justice**	**Blog 6 due** Readings for Week 8: MB chapter 12 Aph Ko, *Racism as Zoological Witchcraft,* 19-38; Rhonda Magee, "The End of Othering" https://oneearthsangha.org/articles/the-end-of-othering/

Week 9: November 2, 2023	**Eco-Psychology 2 Dreamwork**	**Blog 7 due** **BIBLIOGRAPHY due!** <u>Readings for Week 9</u>: Wildbear, *Wild Yoga,* 64-71, 132-35
Week 10: November 9, 2023	**Eco-Psychology 3 Becoming Animal: Ritual and Ceremony**	**Blog 8 due** <u>Readings for Week 10</u>: Macy/Brown, chapters 5, 8, and 9 Dahill, "This Creek Is the Baptismal River" Prechtel, *The Smell of Rain on Dust,* 9-19
Week 11: November 16, 2023	**Spiritual Care for Future Generations: Advocacy, Action, Love, and Outrage**	**Blog 9 due** <u>Readings for Week 11</u>: Macy/Brown, chapter 10 Wildbear, *Wild Yoga,* 139-50
THANKGIVING WEEK		
Week 12: November 30, 2023	Presentations 1	***Class Presentations due this week or next!***
Week 13: December 7, 2023	Presentations 2	
Week 14: December 14, 2023	Final Wrap-Up	<u>Reading for Week 14</u>: MB chapter 1 **Blog 10 due**

COURSE POLICIES

On Communication:
I prefer e-mail communication over campus phone/voice mail, which I do not check regularly. I generally return e-mails within two business days, usually quicker; I may or may not be on-line on weekends, however. **Please do not use email to discuss grades.**

On Attendance:
Your presence truly matters *every class session* to me and your classmates. This is a class that includes substantial experiential material in class. You can't easily make up a missed session, which is why class participation is a key part of the course assessment.

> **Details:** One class may be missed for any reason (no excuse needed). Beginning with the second, the attendance/participation portion of your final grade will drop for each absence. I generally include Participation together with attendance. That is, everyone who shows up in person or with your camera on via Zoom will get usually get full participation credit. Camera off in Zoom means I can't track your presence visually and will grade you for participation based on your actual engagement in the session.

On Timely Completion of Assignments:
The blog assignment is geared around timely completion so that I can use your reflections to guide my preparation for the class session engaging a given set of readings. The blog grade drops a full letter grade for late submission – however, I am generally happy to give you an extension *without penalty* if you request it in advance of the weekly deadline.

The grades for the in-class presentations at the end of the semester are similarly tied to actually presenting on the date you agree to – but if something arises, we can almost always find ways to be flexible with no drop in grade.

> As per the Student Handbook, other assignments will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for every two days they are late.

On Plagiarism:
Plagiarism, cheating, unethical computer use, and facilitation of academic dishonesty are examples of behavior which will result in disciplinary sanctions. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Word for word copying without using quotation marks or presenting the work as yours
- Using the ideas or work of others without acknowledgement, *even if you do so in your own words*
- Not citing quoted material. Students must cite sources for any information or insight that is not *either* the result of your own original research and thinking or common knowledge.

PLAGIARISM steals from both the author *and* your own learning, reputation, and integrity.

On ChatGPT and Other Forms of Artificial Intelligence Software:
For purposes of your (and my) exploring this technology to see how it might work, I will allow you to use ChatGPT or some other form of artificial intelligence software for *one* blog posting this semester (only if you wish to do so – this is totally optional).

> Since this technology is now a "thing," in widespread use in some circles, please also provide a statement on your honor *on every assignment you submit* as to whether you did or did not use artificial intelligence in any way in producing that assignment. I realize this is cumbersome, and presumably we will find our way together (at HIU and in the broader culture) as to how to use these technologies more straightforwardly. But for now as we fumble along in the early stages of their use, please provide this documentation on every assignment you submit.

> If you choose to submit one blog post using artificial intelligence software, you are still responsible for the presence and accuracy of the citations you are choosing from the readings, as well as for the accuracy of the statements in the blog. It's still your work, for which you are being credited as (co-?) author.

For all other questions of policy, see the HIU Student Handbook:
(https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/current-students/student-resources/student-handbook) and/or the HIU Academic Policies website (https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/current-students/academics/academic-policies).

Note: This syllabus is subject to change. I will make every effort to alert you to changes promptly.

I look forward to this semester
and to the growth and insight we will experience together