

## **ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY STMA 569**

**Fall Quarter, 2011 – weekend format**

**3 credits**

**Dates:** Oct 1-2, Nov 4-6, 2011

**Times:** 9 – 4 Saturday and Sunday  
6 - 9 Friday evening

**Place:** Hunthausen 100

**Instructor:** Alexandra Kovats, csjp, PhD

**Phone:** 206 322 8560

**E-mail:** [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course draws upon the timeless wisdom of nature and the insights of scientists, theologians and mystics. The course will explore an ecological spirituality that emphasizes the Christian responsibility to listen to and live in harmony with **Earth** and creation, and to be co-creators with God in shaping the future. Insights from scientific evolutionary cosmology, Scripture, eco-feminism, and the mystics as well as the role and task of humans will be highlighted during this course grounded in the creation spiritual tradition.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To become familiar with understandings from scientific evolutionary cosmology especially with the cosmic principles of differentiation, autopoiesis and communion, and their implication for articulating an ecological spirituality.
2. To deepen appreciation of the sacredness of all creation.
3. To identify the gift of Scriptures, evolutionary cosmology, theology, ecofeminism and some creation-centered mystics in articulating an ecological spirituality.
4. To identify and develop attitudes and behaviors, including ritual making, that enhance the embodiment of an eco-spirituality.
5. To articulate the personal gifts, challenges and questions each student encounters during this course for the purpose of integration.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Fischer, Kathleen, (2009) *Loving Creation: Christian Spirituality, Earth-Centered And Just*. New York, NY: PaulistPress

Hessel, Dieter and Larry Rasmussen. Eds. (2001) *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice And the Church's Response*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Johnson, Elizabeth. (1993) *Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit*. New York, NY: Paulist Press.

MacIntyre, Margaret. (2010) *The Cosmic Pilgrim: A Spiritual Exploration of the New Story of Science and Religion*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Schut, Michael. Ed. (1999) *Simpler Living, A Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*. Denver, CO: Living the Good News.

Wallace, Mark I. (2010) *Green Christianity: Five Ways to a Sustainable Future*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

### RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Berry, Thomas. (2009) *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

MacGregor, Catriona. (2010) *Partnering with Nature: The Wild Path of Reconnecting with the Earth*. Hillsboro, OR: Beyond Words.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. Ed. (1996) *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

### PRE-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Readings:** Read *The Cosmic Pilgrim*, *Loving Creation*, and *Earth Habitat* before the first weekend of class.  
Please read these materials with your “head and heart.” Take notes (not to be handed in) and keep track of questions, resistances, “ahas” and concerns that emerge for you.

2. **Reflection Paper:** Write a three – four page, double spaced reflection paper exploring **one** of the following questions:  
How does your religious and theological tradition support and/or thwart your relationship with the natural world? **or**  
What is your greatest interest, concern, or passion in light of our present ecological reality? **or**  
What have you learned about Earth and creation from your experiences in your family, religion, education and the bioregion in which you live? **or**  
How does your spirituality and prayer practices/disciplines reflect your relationship to creation?

**Due: by first day of class**

(you may send it electronically to [cosmicancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicancer@comcast.net) or provide a hard copy on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011)

3. **Fill out and send the attached Questionnaire by September 15<sup>th</sup> to:**  
Alexandra Kovats, csjp, PhD at 1104 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112 or e-mail it to [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net)

### TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

#### First Weekend

Saturday  
morning

Introduction to Course  
Exploration of Ecological Spirituality  
Introduction to Cosmology

<b>Saturday afternoon</b>	<b>The Three Cosmic Principles Thomas Berry's Twelve Principles Discussion: <i>The Cosmic Pilgrim</i></b>
<b>Sunday Morning</b>	<b>Creation and the Bible Discussion: <i>Loving Creation</i></b>
<b>Sunday afternoon</b>	<b>Eco-Spirituality, Ethics and Justice Discussion: <i>Earth Habitat</i></b>
<b>Second Weekend</b>	
<b>Friday evening</b>	<b>Mystical and Sacramental Approaches to Eco-spirituality Discussion: <i>personal experiences</i></b>
<b>Saturday morning</b>	<b>Eco-feminism Discussion: <i>Women, Earth and Creative Spirit</i></b>
<b>Saturday afternoon</b>	<b>Eco-Spirituality and Sustainability Discussion: <i>Green Christianity</i></b>
<b>Sunday morning</b>	<b>Personal and Pastoral Implication Student Presentations Discussion focus: <i>Simpler Living, Compassionate Life</i></b>
<b>Sunday afternoon</b>	<b>Spiritual Disciplines and Ecological Spirituality Student Presentations</b>

### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

1. Attend all class sessions. Consult with instructor if emergencies arise. (206) 322 8560
2. Read assigned texts, review them and be prepared to discuss them during class.
3. **Reflection paper** on one of the four questions provided.
4. **Presentation and One Page Summary**  
Students will select a topic or area of interest that they want to explore further, such as: global warming, water, deep ecology, cosmological assumptions, eco-feminism, bioregionalism, sustainability, light pollution, eco-justice, creating creation based rituals, etc.

Create a one-page summary of your topic. Make enough copies for each member of the class. You will hand these out during the second weekend when you make a short presentation on the topic you selected on the last day of class focused on Objective #5 of the Syllabus. Further details will be given during our class time together.

**Grade Distribution:**

Class Participation:	20%
Engagement with readings:	30%
Reflection Paper:	20%
Presentation and Summary:	30%

**“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”**

**Aldo Leopold**

**Ecological Spirituality STMA 569**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Why did you choose to enroll in this course?**

**2. What are some workshops/courses you have attended that focus on your relationships to creation and the environment?**

**3. What are some important resources that you have found that nourish, inspire and/or challenge you to ecological awareness? (books, videos, music, etc.)**

**4. Name three personal goals you hope to accomplish during this course:**

1.

2.

3.

**5. What fears/concerns do you have about this course?**

**6. Surface some questions, topics or concerns that you would like to explore in this course.**

**7. What is your relationship to nature/creation?**

**8. How is creation/nature part of your ministry?**

**9. What situations/processes/activities help you to learn best?**

**10. Other questions, comments, or suggestions that might help in creating this learning experience for you....**

**Please fill out and send this questionnaire by September 15 , 2011 to:**

Alexandra Kovats, csjp, PH.D.

1104 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East

Seattle, WA 98112

**or**

e-mail it to: [cosmicdancer@comcast.net](mailto:cosmicdancer@comcast.net)

**Thank You!**