

TR341 "Land: Ecology, Politics, Economics and Spirituality
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
Winter Interim, 2004
Joseph Bush, Instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Participants in this course will examine "the land" as a root metaphor informing cultural understandings of ecological, economic and political life for both rural and urban people. Participants will also analyze the land as a perennial--though frequently neglected--theme in theology and in Christian conceptualizations of the spiritual life. In addition to biblical and theological materials, the course will attend to theories of political economy and to changing economic and ecological realities for help in charting cultural understandings of the land in North American context. Cross-cultural perspectives will further be examined to provide alternative points of reference. The course will move through the tasks of describing and analyzing the multivalent reality and symbolism of land in order to engage in the constructive task of articulating a theological and ethical position that is grounded in the land.

ORGANIZATION

The structure of this class will be that of a seminar and will draw heavily on class discussion and class participation. It will meet four mornings per week for three weeks (exclusive of January 19 which is a holiday). Assigned reading will be discussed in each class session. Occasionally the instructor will also present material in lecture format. In addition, one field trip is planned for January 12 to the office of the Land Stewardship Project in White Bear Lake.

Three geographic areas will be used heuristically as cases at different points during the course. These cases are chosen because they each show a confluence of forces or factors at work in the land. They are: (1) the link between the farm crisis in the U.S. and the debt crisis in the two-thirds world (focus on the Midwest); (2) balancing ecology, development, conservation, and farming in land use planning (focus on the east coast); and (3) traditional communal patterns of land tenure and emerging issues of postcolonial sovereignty (focus on Melanesia).

"BETH-EL" ASSIGNMENT

There is one major written assignment--due January 30--which is to get to know and to describe some actual land or some actual place--from the different perspectives modeled in the course (e.g. ecological, political, economic, theological, spiritual). The land itself should suggest to writers the appropriate balance between these different perspectives as well as a sense of priority concerning the relative importance of these different perspectives for that specific place. The paper should be 20-25 pages long and is worth half of the final grade. Reference to class readings should be made as seems appropriate for telling this land's particular story.

READING REPORTS

Reading will be assigned to be discussed in each class session. The level of preparedness for such discussion is included in the grade for class participation (33%). Additionally, students will read and report on two books--one pertaining to Biblical theology (a choice of Habel or Brueggeman) and the other pertaining to "spiritual geography" (an open choice--see bibliography for suggestions). These reading reports should be no longer than 800 words each and are due as noted in the attached schedule; together, they are worth 17% of the final grade.

EVALUATION

"Beth-El" Assignment	50%
Class Participation	33%
Reading Reports	17%

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

- Jan. 5 Introductions
Biblical reflection: Genesis 28:10-22
"Zenith: A Documentary Feature" by Kirsten Tretbar
- Jan. 6 Mapping Theological Terrain
Biblical Reflection: Genesis 1:
Sacred Space Lane, Landscapes, ch. 1, pp. 11-35. (whole book recommended)
Land Ethic Leopold, Sand County, pp. 201-226.
Dominion White, "Historical Roots" ch. 3 in Readings, pp. 25-35.
Stewardship Dubos, God Within, ch. 8, 153-175.
- Jan. 8 Mid-western agriculture and global economics
Biblical Reflection: Genesis 9:1-20
Liedke in Faith and Science, pp. 73-80.
(recommended: Steck, World and Environment)
Strange, Family Farming, ch. 1 (15 pages).
Shiva, Stolen Harvest, pp. 1-54.
- Jan. 9 Agriculture, cont.
Shiva, Stolen Harvest, pp. 57-127.
(recommended: Kimbrell, Fatal Harvest Reader)
Food First, "Backgrounder" 8:3 (5 pages).

WEEK 2

- Jan. 12 Agriculture, cont.
FIELD TRIP: Land Stewardship Project, 4th St. at Banning, White Bear Lake 9:30-11:30
READING: Jackson, "Grassroots" in Abundant Harvest, pp. 123-135.
(recommended: Jackson, The Farm as Natural Habitat)
Bailey & Preston, Swept Away, Center for Rural Affairs, available at
<http://www.cfra.org/pdf/Swept_Away.pdf>
Daly & Cobb, For the Common Good, pp. 252-297 to discuss on Jan 13
(recommended: Counihan, Food in the USA, Part V.)
DUE: First Reading Report on Habel or Brueggemann
- Jan. 13. Enlightenment voices:
Locke, Of Civil Government, 2nd Treatise, Ch. 5. "Of Property"
Bacon, Novum Organum, Bk 1, para. 128-130, Bk. 2, para. 52.
Marx, pp. 79-85; 151-155; 344-351 in Tucker.
Land-use Planning in an urban area
Information, articles, and NJ State Plan available at:
<<http://www.njfuture.org/>> Further details TO BE PROVIDED.
- Jan. 15. Contemporary voices
Essays by Rachel Carson, Susan Griffin, Karen J. Warren, Shamara
Shantu Riley, Brian Swimme and Sallie McFague in Readings, chs. 2,
10, 11, 18, 20, 25. (remainder of book recommended)
- Jan. 16. Discussion of Reading
DUE: Second Reading Report on spiritual geography

WEEK 3 Indigenous People: Land, Spirituality and Sovereignty

Jan. 19. NO CLASS -- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan. 20. American Indian voices

Native American Theology, pp. 126-170.

Writings pertaining to *Johnson v. McIntosh* TO BE ASSIGNED.

Jan. 22 Voices from Fiji

Tuwere, Vanua

Bush, "Defining Group Rights"

Jan. 23 Conclusions: Sharing our work in progress on theology of land.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"REQUIRED" (Much of book is required)

Bailey, Jon M. and Kim Preston, Swept Away: Chronic Hardship and Fresh Promise on the Rural Great Plains: A Socio-Economic Study of the Rural Great Plains., Center for Rural Affairs, available at <http://www.cfra.org/pdf/Swept_Away.pdf>

Brueggemann, Walter. The Land: Place As Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 1) Fortress Press, 1977. ISBN: 0800615263

OR

Habel, Norman C. The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies (Overtures to Biblical Theology) Fortress Press, 1995.

Food First: Institute for Food and Development Policy, "Giving Away the Farm: The 2002 Farm Bill," Background, 8/3 (Summer 2002).

Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology, edited by Mary Heather MacKinnon, Moni McIntyre. Rowman & Littlefield, 1995. ISBN: 1556127626

Shiva, Vandana. Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply. South End Press, 1999. ISBN: 0896086070

Tuwere, Ilaitia Sevati, Vanua: Towards a Fijian Theology of Place. Suva; IPS, 2002.

"RECOMMENDED" (Some of book is required)

Bacon, Francis: The New Organon. Cambridge University Press, 2000. ISBN: 0521564832

OR

Bacon, Francis. The Great Instauration and the Novum Organum. Kessinger Publishing Company, 1997) ISBN: 1564596389

Bush, Joseph E. "Defining Group Rights and Delineating Sovereignty: A Case from the Republic of Fiji" Reprinted from American University International Law Review, 14/3:735-759.

Cobb, John and Herman e. Daly. For the Common Good Beacon Press, 1997. ISBN: 0807047023

Dubos, Rene. A God Within. Scribner Book Company, 1984. ISBN: 0684179792

Faith and Science in an Unjust World: Report of the World Council of Churches' Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, Vol. 1 Plenary Presentations. Geneva: WCC, 1980.

Kidwell, Clara Sue, Homer Noley and George E. Tinker. A Native American Theology. Orbis Books, 2001. ISBN: 157075361X

Klimoski, Victor and Lance Barder, eds. Abundant Harvest. Saint Paul: Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools.

Lane, Belden C. Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality (Isaac Hecker Studies in Religion and American Culture) Paulist Press, 1988. ASIN: 0809129884

Leopold, Aldo. A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There: With Other Essays on Conservation from Round River, Oxford University Press, 2000. ISBN: 0195007778

Locke, John. The Second Treatise on Civil Government. Prometheus Books, 1986. ISBN: 0879753374

Strange, Marty. Family Farming: A New Economic Vision. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press and San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1988.

Tucker, Robert C., ed. The Marx-Engels Reader. W.W. Norton & Company; 2nd edition (May 1978) ISBN: 039309040X

OPTIONS suggested for "Spiritual Geography" requirement:

Abbey, Edward. Desert Solitaire. Ballantine Books, 1990. ISBN: 0345326490

Berry, Wendell. The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry. Shoemaker & Hoard, 2003. ISBN: 1593760078

Berry, Wendell. The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture. Sierra Club Books, 1996. ISBN: 0871568772

Dudley, Katheryn Marie. America's Heartland. University of Chicago Press, 2002. ISBN: 0226169138

Lane, Belden C. The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Leopold, Aldo. A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There: With Other Essays on Conservation from Round River, Oxford University Press, 2000. ISBN: 0195007778

Norris, Kathleen. Dakota: A Spiritual Geography. Mariner Books, 1994. ISBN: 039571091X

Thoreau, Henry David. Walden: Or, Life in the Woods. ISBN: 1590300661

Williams, Terry Tempest. Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert. Vintage Books, 2002. ISBN: 0375725180

WEB SITES (sources of further required reading)

<<http://www.cfra.org/>> Center for Rural Affairs

<<http://ili.nativeweb.org/>> Indigenous Law Institute

<<http://www.njfuture.org/>> New Jersey Futures

"SUPPLEMENTAL" (not required)

Bratton, Susan Power. Christianity, Wilderness, and Wildlife: The Original Desert Solitaire. University of Scranton Press, 1993. ISBN: 0940866145

Burton, Lloyd. Worship and Wilderness: Culture, Religion, and Law in Public Lands. University of Wisconsin Press, 2002. ISBN: 0299180808

Clark, Mary E. Ariadne's Thread: The Search for New Modes of Thinking, Palgrave Macmillan, 1989. ISBN: 0312015860

Counihan, Carole, Ed. Food in the USA. Routledge, 2002. ISBN: 0415932327

Debt Crisis Network. From Debt to Development Alternatives to the International Debt Crisis. Institute for Policy Studies, 1986. ISBN: 0897580419

Gardner, Bruce L. American Agriculture in the Twentieth Century: How It Flourished and What It Cost. Harvard University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0674007484

Kimbrell, Andrew. The Fatal Harvest Reader. Island Press, 2002. ISBN: 155963944X

Jackson, Dana L., Ed. The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems. Island Press, 2002.

Martin, Joel W. The Land Looks After Us: A History of Native American. Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN: 0195145860

Rynkiewich, Michael, Ed. Land and Churches in Melanesia: Issues and Contexts. Point Series, no. 25 (2001) ISBN 9980-65-000-3 Melanesian Institute, P O. Box 571, Goroka, EHP 441, Papua New Guinea. phone (+675) 732 1777; fax (+675) 732 1214; e-mail: <emmai@online.net.pg>

Steck, Odil Hannes. World and Environment, Biblical Encounters Series. Nashville: Abingdon, 1978.
