

# **The Land is Sacred**

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This course explores Indigenous Spirituality with a focus on place of land. This study will create a discussion about the locative nature of Indigenous identity. Land or place is more than merely a thing to be used, it is place of our life in the Creator. We will explore what it means to hold that the land is sacred.

## **Competencies**

1. Define Indigenous Spirituality with accuracy and respect.
2. Differentiate Indigenous Spirituality from other accepted world religions traditions.
3. Document the environmental, cultural and historical influences on the spirituality under study.
4. Relate the spiritual principles to other aspects of the nation being studied, including land-theology, law, worship and national continuity.
5. Compare and contrast Indigenous Spiritualities from the Christianity of the student's ministry location.

Activities in the course will vary but would include a resource bibliography, participation in course presentations and discussions, interviewing practitioners of the specific spirituality under study, researching academic and living personal practitioners of other Indigenous Spiritualities for comparison, identifying print and other records of Indigenous Spiritual practices including, but not limited to, worship, arts, athletics, political, and social expressions, documenting findings and summarizing learnings for dialogue with the instructor and other students. This may use written notes, artistic, video and other formats.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

A Variety of PDF from different text books dealing with land.

## Suggested TEXTS

Kidwell, Clara Sue, Homer Noley, and George E. Tinker. *A Native American Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001.

Friesen, John W. *Aboriginal Spirituality & Biblical Theology: Closer than you think*. Calgary: Detselig, 2000.

Peelman, Achiel. *Christ Is a Native American*. Ottawa, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Novalis-Saint Paul University ; Orbis Books, 1995.

Treat, James. *Native and Christian : Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Day	Daily theme	DATES
1	Defining Spirituality and Land	July 18
2	Indigenous Creation stories	July 19
3	Land and its voice	July 20
4	Christian View of Creation and Creation stories	July 21
5	Reconciliation and covenant	July 22
	Reconciliation and land: Towards a shared story	July 22

## COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is structured around a shared praxis model of teaching and learning.

A shared praxis approach involves five movements:

1. An initial response on one's present actions with regards to a particular topic.
2. Critical reflection on why we do what we do.
3. The Christian story and vision on the topic is taken in by the learner.
4. The learner reflects on the Christian Story and their story. Does the Christian story call anything in my story or my local Churches story into question? Does the Christian story affirm anything that I do or my local church does?
5. The learner envisions a future scenario for the Church and themselves.

Over the class topics learners will work through movements 1-3 of the shared praxis model. The movements 4 and 5 will be worked out in the assignments for the class.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Class Participation & Class Discussion:** Each student will participate and/or lead our daily discussions on an issue relevant to the readings that are assigned for the day. The student will be graded both on his/her preparedness and participation. To this end each student will come to class with at least one central quote from the reading for the section along with one question. These will be emailed in each day.

**Daily Reflection:** The student will take time to go out on the land or in the ocean to reflect on the significance of the day's discussion and activities and then record the significant points of those reflections around three themes. First, what did the day's discussions remind you of in our own life? Second, what questions were raised in your mind about our relationship with the earth? Third, how would you put into practice one thing from the day's activities that you learned. These may be emailed to the instructor.

**MDiv. Research Project:** If this course is being taken for MDiv credit, each student is required to complete one research project which focuses upon a theology of land. If a paper, it needs to be about 4,000 words (about 12 double-space pages). If the learner chooses another format it must be about the same number of hours of preparation and involve research in theology. Whatever the project the topic needs to be approved by the instructor.

Possible topics and approaches for the project include, but are not limited to: the student might choose to exegete a traditional ceremony or dance with the goal of seeing how it might help the church develop or continue to develop a healthy ethic towards creation. The student could develop a theology of land and a 45-minute presentation on an indigenous theology of land, which could be used to present in a class setting. Whatever the project be creative in bringing together an Indigenous perspective on creation along with Christian theology. Completed projects may be emailed to the instructor.

**Due Date: May 30**

### **Course Work Load MDiv**

<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Reflections</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Research Project</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## **GRADING**

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

This course is a pass/fail format. However the instructor will give feedback on the learner assignments.