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## **Faithful Earthkeeping**

**PURPOSE:** In this course we will consider the Christian foundations for care of the earth. In particular we will look at the following theological paradigms: the Stewardship approach; the Social Justice approach; and the Contemplative approach. Our discussions, readings and lectures will be framed by the Christian and Hebrew Scriptures in the context of environmental issues such as food security and land ethics.

**COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:** This course will equip students to identify various theological paradigms for Christian earthkeeping. Drawing upon these paradigms, students will be able to articulate a coherent and sustaining theological approach for their own ecological relationship and practice in the world. Students will further be able to apply this personalized approach to specific environmental practices they hope to incorporate into their daily lives beyond the course.

**FORMAT AND CONTENT:** Faithful Earthkeeping is a three-credit, one-week Intensive Field Education Course held at Naramata United Church Camp near Kelowna, BC. The course will combine lectures, morning and evening prayers, readings, physical engagement with the natural world (gardening!) and group reflection.

The Daily Format:

3 hours of class time (beginning with morning prayer)

Lunch

2 hours of garden work

Rest

Dinner

1 hour of group reflection

Evening Prayers

**TEXT:**

**The Blue Sapphire of the Mind**, by Douglas Christie. Available at the UBC bookstore.

**RESERVES:**

All reserve articles will be listed and available through the Moodle site for the course.

**COURSE POLICIES**

1. **Attendance:** Because this is an intensive course, VST requires 100% attendance.
2. **Reading and assignments** Students are expected to read all required assignments before the beginning of the course and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.
3. **Academic honesty** Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.

4. **Inclusive language** In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when making reference to God.
5. **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
- Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is “Not Approved”) including narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.
  - Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.
  - For a passing grade in the course, all assignments must be Approved.
6. **Late assignments**  
Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.  
Three assignments are due on the dates specified. If one or more assignments for the course are submitted late without a reasonable excuse, the final grade will be reduced by one mark (a B+ becomes a B) with further reductions possible for very late assignments.
7. **Limitation on use of social media**  
There will be little need for electronic devices during this class. Students are free to bring devices and use them outside of class, work and reflection times.
8. **VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment.** If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

### CALENDAR

<b>April 24</b>	READ: Blue Sapphire of the Mind and all reserved articles
<b>April 24 - 28</b>	COURSE TIME
<b>May 12</b>	DUE: Paper One
<b>May 26</b>	DUE: Papers Two and Three

### EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

1. **Class participation:** Students are expected to participate in class discussions and do adequate preparation of in-class discussion exercises. Evaluative criteria: comments and questions show adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings and exercises, and a readiness to apply readings to interpretive questions and insights.

2. **Paper One:** Identify the three theological models foundational for Christian earth care and further identify which one best resonates with you. (5 - 6 pages) Evaluative criteria: Student shows a thorough understanding of the three theological models with appropriate references to articles and lectures.
3. **Paper Two:** Reflect theologically and personally on the course's rhythm of study/pray/work. Identify how and why this rhythm was or could be personally transformational. (3 - 4 pages) Evaluative criteria: Reflection shows a personal engagement with the process of work/pray/study and an integration of the theological underpinnings for such a process.
4. **Paper Three:** Articulate a coherent earthkeeping practice (or practices) based on a preferred theological paradigm that can be sustained after this class. In other words, "Given who I am and given what I've learned during this course, here's how I'm going to live."(4 - 5 pages) Evaluative criteria: Student can adequately identify a preferred theology paradigm and it's extended practice(s) for his/her own life. Attention is given to how this practice can be sustained beyond the course.
5. **Audit students** are required to do all the readings and participate in the class discussions and exercises.
6. **Certificate students** are required to do all the reading, participate in the class discussions and exercises, and complete one of the three paper assignments.

### **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (Listed by Category)**

#### **Stewardship Model**

Bouma-Prediger, Steven. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision of Creation Care*. Baker, 2001.

Ellen Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Sleeth, J. Matthew. *Serve God, Save the Planet*. Chelsea Green, 2006.

Wilson, Jonathan. *God's Good World, Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation*. Baker Academic, 2013.

#### **Social Justice Model**

Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Orbis Books, 2002.

Bahnsen, Fred and Wirzba, Norman. *Making Peace with the Land, God's Call to Reconcile with Creation*. IVP Books, 2012

#### **Contemplative Model**

Christie, Douglas. *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind, Notes for a Contemplative Ecology*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

#### **General**

Berry, Wendell. *Home Economics: Fourteen Essays*. San Francisco: North Point Press. 1987.

Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture*. New York: Avon. 1977.

Bruggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place, Gift, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. Augsburg Fortress, 2nd edition, 2016.

Capon, Robert Farrar Capon. *The Supper of the Lamb: A Culinary Reflection*. The Modern Library edition, 2002.

Durning, Allan T. *This Place on Earth: Home and the Practice of Permanence*. Sasquatch Books, 1999.

Hayhoe, Katharine. *A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts for Faith-based Decisions*. Faithwords, 2009.

- Houston, James. *I Believe in the Creator*. Eerdmans, 1980.
- Kostamo, Leah. *Planted, a Story of Creation, Calling and Community*. Cascade Books, 2013.
- Leopold, Aldo. *Sand County Almanac*. Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1968.
- Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Algonquin Books, expanded edition, 2008.
- Macy, Joanna and Christ Johnstone. *Active Hope; How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy*. New World Library, 2012.
- McKibben, Bill. *Eaarth, Making Life on a Tough New Planet*. Times Books, 2010.
- Moltmann, Jurgen. *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. Harper & Row, 1985.
- Miles, Sara. *Take this Bread; A Radical Conversion*. Ballantine Books, 2008.
- Orr, David. *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World*. SUNY, 1992.
- Wilkinson, Loren and Mary Ruth Wilkinson. *Caring for Creation in Your Own Backyard*. Regent College Publishing, 1992.
- Wirzba, Norman. *Food & Faith; A Theology of Eating*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.