

(1.5 credits per term – students can register for both or for one or the other)

This course will reflect on the question of God in a time of crisis due to climate change and human poverty. It will consider divine transcendence and immanence in the writings of postmodern theologians and philosophers who are questioning supernatural understandings of God as well as privileged views of human beings. Thus, we will read critiques of dualistic, hierarchical, metaphysical views of reality as well as such new interpretations as spirited matter, flat ontology, species interrelations, biological democracy, radical incarnation, and other ways in which contemporary thinkers are re-imagining the relations between transcendence and immanence. Such reflections by contemporary scientific and philosophical views of transcendence and immanence should provide a basis for Christian and other religious re-interpretations of the place of human beings on the planet as well as God's relationship to the world.

During the fall semester, we will focus on postmodern critiques of supernaturalism as well as contemporary interpretations of transcendence and immanence. The second semester will consider a range of Christian and other theologies attempting to apply such contemporary interpretations to climate change. In other words, we will consider how some revisions on conceiving of the relations between transcendence and immanence (the doctrine of God) are relevant (or not) to the crises facing the planet.

Thus, some readings for the fall semester:

Timothy Morton, The Ecological Thought (all)

F. Apfel-Marglin, "Re-entangling the Material and the Discursive" in Subversive Spiritualities

Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," in Signs, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Spring 2003)

Richard Nelson, section from The Island Within

Jane Bennett, Vibrant Matter, Preface, Chs. 1-3, 7-8

Jane Bennett, "Vegetal Life and OntoSympathy," in Entangled Worlds

Bruno Latour, The Politics of Nature (Selections)

Gilles Deleuze, A Thousand Plateaus, Chs. 1, 6

Gilles Deleuze, What is Philosophy?

Claire Colebrook, Gilles Deleuze (all but Chs. 2 & 6)

Readings for spring semester:

Mary-Jane Rubenstein, Strange Wonder, Introduction, Chs. 2-4, Postlude

Jean-Luc Nancy, Adoration, Prologue, Chs. 1-3

Karmen MacKendrick, Divine Enticement, Introduction, Chs. 1-4

Catherine Keller, Cloud of the Impossible, Before, Part I, Ch. 5, After

Catherine Keller, "Tingles of Matter," in Entangled Worlds

To meet on the following Wednesday mornings from 9:30 until noon during the fall semester: September 16, September 30, October 14, November 4, November 18, and December 2. The class will be conducted in seminar format with students taking responsibility for introducing readings and making suggestions for discussion. Written requirements will follow the guidelines under each degree program: a final paper expanding on class presentation.