

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Course Profile - J Term 2009

Course: T-409 Theologies of Creation
Instructor: Robert Saler

Statement of Goals

This course will introduce students to a variety of historical and contemporary sources for their own constructive theologies on the topics of nature, environmental ethics, and the role of theology both in helping and hindering interventions on behalf of ecological health. While the class will discuss a wide range of seminal and contemporary theological projects, special attention will be paid to the work of Joseph Sittler, a Lutheran theologian who pioneered the links between Christian theology and ecological consciousness. Students will be expected to bring Sittler's work into dialogue with course readings, insights discovered in class discussions, and their own experiences.

The goal of the course is to equip those interested in connections between theology and ecological well-being with a broad survey of sources with which to continue their thinking/practices.

Outline and content of course:

The course will meet M-W-F for three weeks, from 9-11 AM and 1-3 PM. Each meeting will feature a brief lecture by the instructor as well as occasional student presentations, multimedia explorations of contemporary environmental issues (e.g. documentaries, Internet sources), and close reading of key texts.

Required work for course:

- Students will be expected to attend each session ready to discuss the assigned readings.
- Each student will briefly present a short 1-2 page outline of a non-assigned text once during the course of the term.
- Students will turn in two 1-2 page reflection papers discussing the key themes and argumentative strategies of chosen assigned readings.
- Students will turn in a final 8-10 page paper discussing their own constructive theologies of nature. In this paper students will be required to critically assess the work of Sittler as well as other relevant theologians in addition to offering their own proposals.

Bibliography:

Joseph Sittler, Evocations of Grace: The Writings of Joseph Sittler on Ecology, Theology, and Ethics
Joseph Sittler The Care of the Earth
Joseph Sittler, Gravity and Grace: Reflections and Provocations
Paul Santmire, The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology
Mark Wallace, Finding God in the Singing River
Sallie McFague, The Body of God
Karen Baker-Fletcher, Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit: Womanist Wordings on God and Creation

Additional Information

It would be preferable for students taking this course to have completed at least one introductory course in systematic or constructive theology; however, others may sign up for the course with instructor's consent.