

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Course Profile

Title: ML/SF 403 Liturgy and the cycles of creation

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Stewart **Semester/Year:** J-term 2021

Short description

What do the cycles of the seasons and the days have to do with our rituals? And how do these rituals form our senses of self, creaturehood, racialized identities, and cosmos? This course explores such questions expansively, through ample time in prayer and outdoors (including for remote learners), and prepares course members to plan and lead liturgies that are in fruitful dialog with the cycles of creation.

Delivery mode: options for 1) fully remote, and 2) hybrid (online/remote + in-person distanced outdoor sessions). Local course members may choose how many – if any – sessions they complete in person.

Times for course sessions

- class meets online 10:30a - noon CT and 1:30-3:00p CT daily
- pre-read books before course begins
- reserve 30m each day at your local sunrise and sunset for offline prayer and meditation (calculate your local times here: <https://sunrise-sunset.org>)

Dates for course sessions

- Week one: M-Th (Jan 4-7)
- Week two: M-F (Jan 11-15)
- Week three: T, Th, F (Jan 19, 21-22)

Course **Rationale** and Description

(Why do we offer this course? Which of LSTC's degree program learning outcomes does it address?):

Offered with fully remote and (hybrid, safely distanced/outdoor) local options, this course studies how daily prayer and the liturgical year relate to the ecological cycles of the earth. Drawing on the fields of liturgical studies and ecotheology; practicing a cycle of daily prayer in your own locale; and spending considerable time outdoors, course members develop skills for interpreting and leading liturgy in an ecological and missional era.

Course Learning **Outcomes** (Learners will be able to):

(What *difference* will this course make to students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices?)

- theologically describe and compellingly interpret the ways that natural cycles of day and season interact with the cycles of Christian worship
- illuminate connections between cosmology, ritual, and race/racism
- develop processes for baptismal formation rooted in the interplay between ecological cycles, liturgical celebration, daily life, and the renewal of creation
- articulate a sympathetic description of Christian religious sensibility that accounts for the human sensorial response to the natural world and non-human creaturely existence

Strategies for Learning):

(How shall we go about achieving these outcomes?)

- class gatherings for lecture/discussion/experiential learning
- time for exploration (walking, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing), contemplation, conversation, reading, and writing
- Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer
- a core set of readings and a wider optional bibliography
- course members offer leadership of online rituals and preparation for asynchronous outdoor rituals
- conversational and written reflections

Assessment:

(How shall we know if we—students and instructors—have been successful in achieving the outcomes?)

- Participation in the many experiential dimensions of the course
- Daily journaling
- Successful leadership of class session (including liturgical/experiential component, and with feedback from instructor and class members)
- Final ritual and reflection project, incorporating feedback from class
- Short presentation on course learnings
- Course evaluation

Bibliography:

Text Title	Author	ISBN#
<i>Race and the Cosmos</i> , 2 nd Edition (2020)	Holmes, Barbara	978-1-62305-050-4
<i>Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology</i>	Lathrop, Gordon	978-0800696559