SEMESTER: Fall 2022

COURSE TITLE: Theology After Crisis (Facing God, Facing Trauma)

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST3212.01

TIMES/DAYS: TR 6:00 PM - 7:40 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Rosanna Lu

CORE AREA: Faith and Reason

FLAGGED: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

The world—in ancient and modern times—is filled with suffering. While the answers to why bad things happen have changed over time, the questions have remained the same: Why is this happening? How will I make it through this? This course examines suffering and crisis in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) to understand how ancient Israel developed a “theology of suffering” and faced God during traumatic circumstances. Students will read narrative and poetic texts (in translation) that describe deep emotions and ideological explanations for why ancient Israel suffers, and critically assess what we can learn from these accounts. Additionally, this course studies contemporary trauma theory and compares the implications of modern approaches with approaches found in biblical tradition, asking students to thoughtfully consider how trauma affects religious belief and practice.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course will have demonstrated:
(1) an understanding of ancient belief systems, questions, and approaches to suffering;
(2) an understanding of the search for God as a culturally and historically embedded process;
(3) a critical analysis of trauma in biblical tradition and its implications for ancient and modern faith;
(4) a critical assessment of contemporary trauma theory and its implications for religious, ecclesial and spiritual traditions

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

Juniors & Seniors

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Bible – New Revised Standard Version

Additional readings on Brightspace

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

1. Attendance and participation in class meetings
2. Weekly group discussion activities
3. Written assignments
4. Group projects and presentations
5. Reading quizzes, exams
SEMESTER: Fall 2022  
COURSE TITLE: U.S. Latinx Theology  
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3232 01 and CATH 3232 03  
SECTION TIMES/DAYS: MW 8:00 AM – 9:40 AM  
INSTRUCTOR: Cecilia González-Andrieu, Ph.D.  
CORE AREA: INT: Faith & Reason  
FLAGGED: Engaged Learning

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS  
This course examines the diverse origins and theological expressions of Latinx Christian communities in the U.S. with a special emphasis on the Catholic tradition. The course develops and employs a Latinx theological methodology to travel from the question of “why do this?” (por qué?) to the final question of “toward what goal?” (hacia qué?). Meant to problematize and contextualize the situation of Latinx Christianity in what today is the United States, the course aims to expose students to foundational theological developments in tandem with urgent contemporary questions. Students are invited to inhabit the challenges posed by a Latinx focus by engaging in researching a local Latinx community in all its particularity and the complex communities that it represents and to develop original theological approaches to the challenges presented to the church and the nation by the many communities grouped under the terms Latinx, Latino/a or Hispanic.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES  
The student will analyze and interpret primary foundational texts to contextualize the origins of U.S. Latinx theological reflection.  
The student will critically examine a range of theological concepts arising out of Latinx religious practices and experiences and assess their contribution to Christian Theology.  
The student will analyze and judge pertinent contemporary issues and socio-economic data.  
The student will formulate and articulate strategies to meet the challenge posed to the church by the needs and gifts of the community through their own particular area of interest (pastoral ministry, ecumenism, ethics, liturgical practices, immigration, education, ecology, anti-racism, etc.)

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND  
This is an upper division theology course which assumes lower division courses in theology have been completed.

REQUIRED TEXTS  
Select texts, demographic and socio-economic data, creative works and public theology articles along with other sources will be provided on Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS  
Engagement with all course readings evidenced in active participation in discussion board, written work and presentations.  
Comprehensive field research about a local community.  
Reading: All readings are to be done prior to the class meeting.  
Writing and presentations: Several short papers, discussion questions prepared every week, several class presentations and a final research article.
SEMESTER: Fall 2022

COURSE TITLE: God and the Human Experience

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3236-07

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: T 6:00-9:20 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. William J. Shaules

CORE AREA: Faith and Reason

FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
Using the Hebrew and Christian scriptures as a point of reference, this course examines experiences of individuals and communities in the search for God. It involves two related questions that seek deeper understanding of the human experience of the Divine. First, building on the foundational questions broached in Theological Inquiry courses, this course asks: How do communities articulate their experiences of divine absence, divine presence, life and death in their search for God? Second, the course asks: How have different interpretive methodologies informed, enriched, and even problematized the theological language and religious symbols used to depict the Divine?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Throughout the course students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the following through outside research and critical engagement of the materials presented:
- the question of ultimate meaning within human existence as linked to human expressions of the Divine
- symbols used to express the Divine governed by ideologies which reveal culturally and historically embedded factors within the development of religious expressions
- various interpretive methodologies governed by disciplines both within and outside of Theology
- different expressions of the Divine seen through different religious perspectives within the biblical text and seen within a variety of ecclesial and spiritual traditions embraced by communities reading the text
- the meaning of "imaginative traditioning" for ancient Israel, for early Christianity, and for modern "people of the book"
- major themes in the Hebrew and Christians scriptures that serve to articulate the quest for ultimate meaning.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None

REQUIRED TEXTS


A Bible: *New Revised Standard Version*

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
1. Attendance of all class sessions
2. Participation in class discussions
3. Completion of shorter assignments on assigned dates
4. Research project
5. Completion of a final exam
SEMESTER: Fall, 2022
COURSE TITLE: God and the Human Experience
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3236.03
TIMES/DAYS: MW 3:40PM–5:20 PM
INSTRUCTOR: L. Arik Greenberg, Ph.D.
CORE AREA: Integrations: Faith and Reason

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:
This course examines the modes of discourse, levels of reflection, and diverse experiences of individuals and communities in the search for God. [from LMU Bulletin]

Professor’s Addendum: As this course is taught in uniquely diverse ways by individual instructors, we will critically engage the works of numerous religious thinkers and writers whose thought has focused on redirection and correction within their traditions—specifically in the face of oppression and failure of the tradition to respond to human rights violations. We will be focusing primarily on the works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, M.K. Gandhi, Julian of Norwich, Harold Kushner, Rumi, St. Teresa of Avila, Elie Wiesel, and Paramahansa Yogananda. Various notable writers and theologians will be discussed in the excerpted literature, including M.L. King, and others. Prepare for deep conversations about how our conceptions of the Divine shape our interactions with the world and our intentions for change.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Students will 1) be able to identify the major beliefs, practices and lives of several major religious thinkers from selected traditions; 2) examine how these individuals attempted to address the problem of human suffering and the assertion of human rights and social justice; 3) illustrate how they encountered and engaged with mystical union and interaction with the Divine; and 4) comprehend how they attempted to substantially change their traditions in some way or meld them with other global traditions. 5) Lastly, one goal of this course is to encourage students to view these thinkers as inviting them to be leaders and to shape the world in positive ways, taking up the mantle of altruistic and even sacrificial service to humanity and the world.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:
None, other than an open mind and a willingness to see the commonalities and cherish the diversities between people’s faith traditions.

REQUIRED TEXTS: [Some textbooks will be available through the bookstore, while others are available online]

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:
30% Class Attendance & Participation
30% Three Essay Assignments (approximately 5 pages each)
10% Group Presentations
30% Term paper (10-12 pages)
SEMMESTER: Spring 2022
COURSE TITLE: God and the Human Experience
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3236.3
TIMES/DAYS: T/TH 11:20am-12:50pm
INSTRUCTOR: Grace Y. Kao
CORE AREA: Integrations: Faith and Reason
FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:
Courses that fulfill your Faith and Reason integration requirement are designed to “institute dialogue between theology and other fields that inform and enrich the pursuit of questions of ultimate concern.” In this section of God and the Human Experience, we will approach the burgeoning field of animal studies theologically. We will explore how our theologies (e.g., about creation, incarnation, eschatology) prompt us to interact with and use nonhuman animals in particular ways just as our varied experiences of them—as food, as pets, as wild creatures to be admired or feared, and so forth—can inform our views about God if we but “ask the beasts” to teach us (Job 12:7). We will accordingly engage “the question of the animal” in a systematic, theological fashion by first considering what animals are principally for and thereafter, what are our obligations to them. Students will read diverse, even mutually incompatible, perspectives on these issues and will be encouraged to keep an open mind as they ponder matters they may never have seriously entertained before (e.g., can animals themselves be sources of revelation? Do they have rights? Will they be redeemed? Should animal suffering lead us to question the goodness or omnipotence of God?) This course will be taught in a “hybrid” fashion where students will attend class in person at least once per week, though approximately 30% of our regularly scheduled Tuesday classes will not meet in person as students work asynchronously instead.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. comprehend the meaning of key philosophical and theological concepts (e.g., anthropocentrism, speciesism, stewardship)
2. know why the Christian tradition has both incorporated and excluded non-human animals from the sphere of theo-moral concern
3. acknowledge the diversity of Christian responses to systematic theological issues (e.g., theodicy, animal sacrifice, soteriology) as they affect animals
4. reach and defend normative judgments about the theological and moral status of nonhuman animals, including how humans ought to treat them

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: junior or senior status; completion of requisite Foundations and Explorations core curriculum courses

REQUIRED TEXTS*:
2. Richard Bauckham, Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis & Theology (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2011)

*All required are available as e-books through Hannon library; other required readings will be made available on Brightspace

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:
Regular attendance & active participation (class meets weekly every Thu but substitutes 7 in-person Tue classes for asynchronous work) | weekly reading & “open book” quizzes (unlimited attempts) | weekly asynchronous discussion on Teams | untimed midterm exam (short essay responses) | final group project | 1 class field trip if pandemic conditions allow for it
SEMESTER: Fall 2022
COURSE TITLE: GOD AND THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3236-02 CRN 43493
TIMES/DAYS: MWF 9:25AM-10:35AM
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Leah Buturain
CORE AREA: INT: Faith and Reason

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

The practice of gratitude provides both the platform and runway for an inquiry into the inexhaustible ways that humans seek and experience the God of their understanding. This course examines the modes of discourse, levels of reflection, and diverse experiences of individuals and communities in the search for God. Building on the foundational questions broached in Theological Inquiry courses, class members develop a theology of struggle by studying how individuals navigate challenges, losses, and crises such as Hagar’s faith when abused by Sarah, and Etty Hillesum’s “thinking heart” suffering in Shoah. Exercises in gratefulness help focus the inquiry into ways students interview familial elders and reflect on intergenerational linkages; identify core values; discover or rediscover their definition of and relationship to spirituality, faith, hope, and love; and compose a personal mission statement to serve as an internal GPS for navigating the unknown while becoming attuned to divine absence and presence.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

• Students will identify their own family’s intergenerational linkages regarding attitudes toward cultural, religious, and spiritual practices by interviewing two familial elders and evaluating these experiences in the context of course readings.
• Students will design mission statements by identifying their ultimate questions to discern meaning of life and the role of faith, religion, and spiritual praxis in civic life.
• Students will develop an individual daily gratitude practice and in cohorts conduct and present continuing research on gratitude to develop a mindful awareness of their perspectives.
• Students will apply Charles Taylor’s heuristics of social and religious imaginaries to their and other’s cultural and historical experiences.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND Juniors and Seniors Only

REQUIRED TEXTS

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Students commit to keeping a gratitude journal and to practicing mindful movement, breath work, and meditation techniques. This course requires a weekly average of nine hours of work for readings and assignments, including but not limited to, one paper or project based on interviews of familial elders, one group project and presentation, an ongoing mission statement creation project (including multiple written assignments, one paper, and one presentation), and reading quizzes. During the semester, the class will visit one or more religious sites. Students, by identifying their core values, meaning and purpose, are challenged to articulate their present relationship to spirituality and religion.
This course is focused on the question of what it means to learn how to pay attention—become aware, to stand in open-hearted relationship to others, oneself, the world, God. And what it means to integrate such deep seeing into a simple, encompassing spiritual practice—*the practice of everyday life*. This question has long occupied the thought of artists, philosophers, poets and contemplative practitioners. And it stands at the heart of the Ignatian vision of what it means to be a “contemplative in action.” In this work, one encounters a continuous effort to truly see and form a relationship with those things that matter most. In this course, we will consider the question of what it means *pay attention*—to pay such careful attention that one becomes a person (as novelist Henry James described it) “on whom nothing is lost.” And to ask how the cultivation of this capacity can transform the way we think about personal and spiritual identity, social engagement and shared cultural reality.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

+ To develop a capacity for reflecting critically on what it means to see—oneself, the other, God, and the living world—drawing on the art, literature, philosophy and spirituality to interpret these elements of experience.
+ To learn to reflect critically on what it means to integrate *intentionality* or *awareness* into ordinary activities—as part of the work of learning what a practice is and can be and how it can come to have meaning.
+ To learn how to form critical judgments about the relative meaning and value of *disciplined practice* (whether spiritual, artistic, social or political), undertaken repeatedly, over time. What kind of transformation does such practice make possible? In behavior? In thought? What is the significance of *shared practice*? How does such practice reshape the identity of a community?
+ To deepen one’s capacity to see both the surface and the undercurrent of charged contemporary social and political realities, and to consider the kind of tactics that might enable one to respond meaningfully to them.

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND**

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

+ Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir* (Harry N. Abrams)
+ Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (Spiegel and Grau).

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS**

+ **Participation:** Thoughtful and informed engagement in class discussions (responding to both the common reading material and to the work and thought of your fellow students); and regular written responses to the readings in Brightspace.
+ **Mid-Semester Essay:** This essay (four to five pages double-spaced) will be tied directly to the reading material and will invite you to offer your own critical, interpretive response to what you have read.
+ **Practicum:** You will be asked to engage in certain practices (individually and collectively) aimed at helping you develop your capacity for paying attention and being aware. You will also be asked to make a presentation on this experience at the end of the semester.
+ **Final Synthesis Paper:** The final paper for the course will be a ten to twelve-page essay representing your best attempt to integrate your understanding of the central questions we have engaged it throughout the course.
SEMESTER: Fall 2022
COURSE TITLE: BUDDHISM
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3282.01 and 02
TIMES/DAYS: TR 11:50am – 1:30pm and 3:40-5:20pm
INSTRUCTOR: Karen B. Enriquez, Ph.D.
CORE AREA: Integrations: Faith and Reason
FLAGGED: Engaged Learning, Writing

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
This course is a survey of Buddhist traditions tracing them through their historical development and seeing how historical, social and cultural circumstances have influenced the interpretation and development of sacred texts as well as religious beliefs and practices. We will also look at some of the ways that each tradition gives expression to ethical action in daily life and its relation to spiritual practices and central Buddhist teachings. This will be done through a combination of readings (primary sources as well as contemporary ones), class discussions, as well as other media such as art, music/chanting, and documentaries.

We will also look at the transmission of Buddhism both to the East and the West and how doctrines and practices developed in new ways through these encounters, paying particular attention to the development of some of the Buddhist traditions such as Zen and Tibetan Buddhism as well as Buddhism in America. In so doing, we will investigate ongoing tensions and questions related to the diversity of perspectives in the Buddhist traditions including questions about authority, power and privilege, including debates about who speaks for or who gets to represent Buddhism, especially in America.

As an Integrations course meant to encourage students to develop more mindful engagement with the world, we will look at the significance of various Buddhist teachings and practices for contemporary social issues such as poverty, violence, and the environmental crisis from an intersectional perspective.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Students will understand the richness and complexity of theological and religious traditions, especially in light of contemporary issues and diverse voices within a tradition. In this way, students will value the use of multiple perspectives and viewpoints to address contemporary issues.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast the diverse ways in which religious beliefs and practices change across time and space thereby appreciating how questions of ultimate concern are answered in their historical and cultural complexity.
3. Students will refine their ability to use intellectual inquiry as a means for fostering empathy and understanding across human difference, including sensitivity to dynamics of power and privilege.
4. Through dialogue with various voices in the Buddhist traditions, students will be able to construct and begin to articulate their own perspective of the world including their role and response to the challenges confronting the world today.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: Upper Division status

REQUIRED TEXTS
- Other readings will be available as pdfs on Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
Active participation in class discussions
Exam
Short reflection/response papers
Final paper/project
SEMESTER: Fall 2022

COURSE TITLE: Women and Religion

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3285.02

TIMES/DAYS: MW 8:00am – 9:40am

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Christopher A. Daily

CORE AREA: Faith & Reason

FLAGGED: Information Literacy; Oral Skills

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course provides students with a basic understanding of the historical development and content of gender studies (broadly defined), its relationship to the academic study of religions, and the various ways in which gender and queer theory can be applied to the analysis of a variety of religious phenomena, such as ritual, asceticism, fundamentalism, sacred texts, theological discourse, and discipleship. We will take a comprehensive and comparative approach to the study of gender and religion by investigating how religious phenomena (symbols, rituals, narratives, texts, etc.) relate to 'genderedness', rather than studying women's religious roles and behavior exclusively. That is, we will examine the ways in which various religions (including Christianity, goddess spirituality, indigenous traditions, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism) construct notions of gender and sexuality, and we will study how these constructions shape and affect religious participation and experience, especially for women. In addition, we will explore how these gender constructions impact relationships between participants. We will also consider the influence of religions’ constructions of gender, sex, and sexuality on societies more broadly.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will have acquired:

1. a broad knowledge of the historical development of both women's studies and gender studies (broadly defined) in relation to the study of religions and theological studies;
2. a general understanding of the significance of some of the key issues and arguments in both feminist and queer theologies and the study of gender in relation to the study of religions;
3. an understanding of the ways in which a variety of religious traditions respond to questions of gender, sex, and sexuality;
4. and knowledge of contemporary religious beliefs and practices, analyzing these with reference to feminist and gender-critical research methods.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

Juniors and Seniors only. Otherwise, no prior study of religion or gender studies is required.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The course will make use of readings from a wide array of primary sacred texts and supporting scholarly studies. Students should obtain a copy of Wade, Lisa and Myra Marx Ferree (2019). Gender: Ideas, Interactions, Institutions, 2nd ed. London: W.W.Norton. All other readings will be uploaded to Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

1. 50% Two Research Papers (worth 25% each)
2. 30% Learning Journal (reflective entries are written throughout the semester)
3. 20% Class Preparedness and Participation
This course explores Christian perspectives on the ethics of war and peace as a subset of the larger question of the relationship between religion and (non) violence. We will proceed thematically and roughly chronologically as we cover the major approaches in Christian theo-ethical reflection on the subject matter: holy war, pacifism, just war, and (Christian) realism. We will also consider whether the more recently proposed conceptual frameworks of “just peacemaking” or peacebuilding and “just policing” can break the centuries-long impasse between pacifism and just war. Other topics to be discussed include weapons of mass destruction (WMD), guerilla warfare, terrorism, torture, humanitarian intervention, the responsibility to protect (R2P), preemptive and preventative war, postwar justice, “just rebellion,” drone warfare/targeted killings, and moral injury. While not the focus of this course, some comparative references to Jewish and Islamic reflections on war and peace will be made where relevant. This course will also be taught in a “hybrid” fashion with synchronous in-person and asynchronous components.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. know the major traditions of Christian ethical reflection on matters of war and peace, with special emphasis on pacifism and just war theory.
2. comprehend the meaning of key theological, philosophical, and ethical terms as they relate to the subject matter
3. participate intelligently in contemporary discussions about important theological, ethical, and public policy issues that are at stake in either supporting or objecting to war as a means of resolving conflict.
4. analyze, weigh, and develop one’s own moral assessment of the major rationales for conducting, limiting, or objecting to the use of force with reference to real or hypothetical scenarios.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: junior or senior status; completion of the requisite Foundations and Explorations core curriculum courses

REQUIRED TEXTS*:


*Other readings will be made available via PDF on Brightspace. This book list is provisional and might change over the summer.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:

Regular attendance & active participation | weekly reading and “open book” Brightspace quizzes (unlimited attempts) | weekly asynchronous discussion on Teams | two take-home midterm exams (short essay responses) | final group project
SEMESTER: Fall 2022

COURSE TITLE: Sacred, Sinister, and Strange

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3287.01

TIMES/DAYS: MW 6:00-7:40

INSTRUCTOR: Tiemeier

CORE AREA: Faith and Reason

FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS: This course interrelates theology and critical theory to examine the ways in which diverse religious and speculative sources from around the globe reflect on self, other, good, evil, and the divine through stories of terrifying creatures, otherworldly visitors, tricksters, and bloodthirsty deities. Portrayals of the alien, monstrous, and divine “Other” often function to map out, define, control, engage, host and/or construct religious, racial, and gendered others. The class looks at how a number of religious traditions and speculative sources use stories of strangers and monsters to negotiate unknown territories of self, other, and divine in creative and sometimes problematic ways. It then discusses the implications of those stories for an ethics of encounter and the subversive power of (inter)religion.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Value the existential importance of ultimate questions in their historical and cultural complexity.
Understand the search for God as culturally embedded process.
Analyze the meaning of theological ideas, drawing on critical theory to inform, explicate, or challenge these ideas.
Compare different perspectives on religious, ecclesial, and spiritual traditions.
Assess the significance of the monstrous and alien.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: Junior Standing

REQUIRED TEXTS:

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
Course Engagement (40%)
Two Critical Analysis Essays (40%)
Research-Based Video Presentation (20%)
SEMESTER: Fall 2022

COURSE TITLE: Punishment and Mercy

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3560.1

TIMES/DAYS: Mondays/ Wednesdays / Fridays 9:25-10:35

INSTRUCTOR: Jonathan Rothchild, Ph.D.

CORE AREA: Ethics and Justice  FLAGGED: Information Literacy; Oral Skills

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
This course will explore the many theoretical and practical difficulties that arise in attempting to reconcile an effective and just system of social punishment with the virtue of mercy. The relationship between mercy and punishment is frequently viewed as mutually exclusive or contradictory. Can a system forego punishment (through mercy) for some and still have equality? Can a system punish offenders and still uphold the dignity of the individual? How does one mediate between impunity and vengeance? Utilizing the lenses of thinkers within political theory, philosophy, law, and theology as well as current case studies, this course analyzes this relationship in terms of competing strategies of punishment, social sins and institutional racism, and theological visions of forgiveness and mercy.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
• Understand one or more of the major ethical theories: virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology, natural law, various theories of justice (SLO # 1)
• Understand the difference among ethical theories, by investigating ultimate grounds of their validity (SLO # 2)
• Value the importance of striving to be virtuous, ethical, and just, as well as the importance of rational reflection and engaged discourse with a diverse perspectives in such striving (SLO # 3)
• Develop ethical strategies for the analysis of complex situations (SLO # 4)
• Appreciate the possibilities of interdisciplinary conversations, particularly with respect to political theory, philosophy, and theology (SLO # 5)
• Differentiate and analyze critically the major approaches to mercy and punishment through the lenses of seminal voices within theology and political theory (SLO # 6)

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: Junior standing

REQUIRED TEXTS
• Alexander, Michelle. The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness, 2020
• Taylor, Mark Lewis. The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America, 2015

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
• Critical Response Papers
• Group Presentation
• Final Research Paper (including annotated bibliography)
TERM: Fall 2022

COURSE TITLE: INTO THE DESERT
COURSE NUMBER: THST 3750.01/ENGL 4998.05
SECTION TIMES/DAYS: W 6:00 to 9:20 PM
INSTRUCTOR: Douglas Christie (& Ruben Martinez—ENGL)
CORE AREA: Integrations/Interdisciplinary Connections
FLAGS: Engaged Learning

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
This interdisciplinary course aims to encourage students to reflect on the meaning of the desert as it has been conceived in the literatures of ancient Christian monasticism and contemporary contemplative practice, as well as in the art, literature and politics of the American West and Borderlands. The course fulfills the “engaged learning” flag by offering students an embodied experience of the desert through an intensive field trip to the Mojave. We will explore the varied meanings of the desert in diverse historical and cultural moments and ask what it means not just to imagine but also inhabit the desert today. These inquiries have real implications for what it means to inhabit the world with some sense of meaning and purpose—both in the profound sense of individual spiritual development as well as the pursuit of social justice. Into the Desert seeks to entwine these threads through close readings across genres as well as through embodied experience: a key class activity is a field trip into the desert itself.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
+ Knowledge of ancient Christian literatures of the desert and their social-historical context.
+ Knowledge of historical and contemporary representations of the deserts of the American Southwest and Borderlands and the critical models that engage them.
+ Knowledge of spiritual and contemplative traditions specific to the desert.
+ Engaged learning: experiencing the desert through a field trip to the Mojave.
+ Integrative vision of the desert and its importance as both a material and spiritual site.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
Students should have upper-division standing.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Gary Paul Nabhan, ed. The Nature of Desert Nature
Martin Laird, Into the Silent Land (Oxford)
Mark Salzman, Lying Awake
Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony
Guzmán, Patricio, Nostalgia de la luz (film); Pawlikowski, Pavel, Ida (film).
(There will also be selected PDF readings posted on Brightspace)

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
+ Regular class participation including leading selected class discussion.
+ Participation in class field trip to the Mojave (mandatory).
+ Regular reading responses, in response to the course readings.
+ A mid-term essay of approximately five pages.
+ A personal essay, approximately three pages, to be presented orally in class.
+ A final paper of 8-10 pages that will combine material from the short papers with additional research and critique.
World Religions and Ecology, THST 3780, Spring 2022
Monday and Wednesday, 2:20 to 3:50 p.m.
Instructor: Christopher Key Chapple, University Hall 3328
Office Hours: by Mon and Wed noon till 2 p.m. and via email and Zoom appointment
Office Location: U Hall 3763; Office Phone: 310-338-2846
email address: cchapple@lmu.edu

Course Description
In this four unit interdisciplinary connections engaged learning writing intensive course (phew!) we will explore responses to ecological degradation from a variety of the world’s religious traditions. We will also engage in service projects that help to correct and improve the state of the environment. We will also participate in a group service project at the Benedict Canyon Retreat Center of InsightLA, a meditation center.

The course will explore how the world’s meditation traditions (Hindu, Buddhist, Jain) and Christian thought and practice are responding to such issues as global climate change, rising species extinctions, issues over access to clean water, and the effects of chemicals within the environment.

Engaged learning options will involve volunteer work at several different agencies and organizations and locations, including Tree People, Holy Nativity Church, the Learning Garden at Venice High School, the various organizations devoted to the rehabilitation of the Ballona Wetlands, Animal Acres, the LMU Garden, the Surfrider Foundation, Global Green USA, the Bay Restoration Committee, and others.

As we enter the spring semester for 2022, we find ourselves far from “normal.” In many ways, the content of this class can enhance our understanding of what it means to be human in these uncertain times. Though our underlying theme will be a celebration of biodiversity, this work takes place in the midst of two persistent social problems and a problem that is thankfully intermittent. The two persistent social problems are climate chaos and legacies of injustice toward indigenous and enslaved peoples; the hopefully intermittent problem is the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will read the Pulitzer Prize winning novel, The Overstory by Richard Powers.

We will study how some of the world’s religions are responding to ecological challenges. We will begin with indigeneity, with an exploration of the first peoples of Los Angeles. We will then delve into a study of elemental meditations that originate in India and are practiced by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainas. We will study Christian ecological thought and practice as reflected in the work of Christie, Berry, and Pope Francis. We will conclude with a celebration of biodiversity through primatology and scientific discoveries about Aotes (South America) and the Golden Bamboo Lemur (Madagascar).

Student Learning Outcomes:
Students will learn about the threats posed by climate change and loss of biodiversity. They will learn indigenous, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jaina attitudes and approaches to nature. They will learn about the Roman Catholic Church’s response to the environmental crisis, informed by incarnational theology. They will also learn about field ecology. They will develop and implement skills of service work through an online environment. They will gain competency in two forms of writing: reflective responses and a research paper.
Required Texts:
All materials for the class will be available online except *The Overstory*. You are encouraged to purchase the following required books. However, they are each available as e-books at the LMU Hannon Library except *The Overstory*. Additional shorter readings are posted in scanned or linked form on Brightspace.

Richard Powers, *The Overstory*
Christopher Chapple, *Living Landscapes* [https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b5087774](https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b5087774)
Douglas Christie, *Blue Sapphire of the Mind* [https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b2631168~S2](https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b2631168~S2)
Brian Swimme, *Journey of the Universe* [https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b4942914~S2](https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b4942914~S2)
Thomas Berry, *Evening Thoughts* [https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b3280493~S2](https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b3280493~S2)
Patricia Chapple Wright, *High Moon Over the Amazon* [https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b4324698~S2](https://linus.lmu.edu/record=b4324698~S2)

Website:
The Forum on Religion and Ecology maintains a comprehensive website. It includes excellent bibliographical references that will be helpful as you seek resources for your final paper. Go to: [https://fore.yale.edu/](https://fore.yale.edu/)

Course Work/Expectations:

As a writing intensive class, students are required to complete the following:
I. Reflections on your service hours (see below). Please describe your work and document your hours in a journal to be submitted along with your final paper.
II. Five responses to posted questions on the discussion board
III. A three to six page film summary and analysis paper (see below)
IV. A ten to fifteen page paper at the end of the course, articulating an environmental problem and then providing a theological analysis, drawing from one of the religious / cosmological / ethical systems we have studied: the New Story / Journey of the Universe; Christian theology; Hindu, Buddhist, Jain Yogas; indigenous perspective/s; or a tradition chosen by the student with the professor’s permission.

Make certain that your research paper includes proper citations and a bibliography of at least seven sources, only two of which may be web-based. Wikipedia is not appropriate for citation, because its articles are not signed.

During the last few days of class, students will present summary overviews of their work.

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space, Animals

Students will be grouped into five different “interest groups” that correlate to the five elements and a sixth group with an interest in animals. Each group will select a film to view together and present in summary form to the class related to the group’s theme. You might want to align your final research project along similar lines. For instance, if you are interested in the **earth**, then you might want to conduct research into soil and food (Vandana Shiva is a great resource). Another project might be to work at the renovation of the two acre western perimeter
of the LMU campus, continuing student-initiated work to introduce indigenous chapparal plants and replace the dead and dying invasive species. Another project might be get involved with the LMU student sustainability garden.

Students interested in water might want to investigate the proposed do-over of the local Ballona Wetlands or look at water purity issues in Flint.

Transmutations of fire in the form of energy play a vital role in human involvement (and interference) with the world of nature. Those who are interested in the element of fire will be encouraged to research the various developing options for solar energy, geo-thermal energy, and electric and hybrid cars and to delve into the work of Bill McKibben and 350.org.

Clean air has been protected for generations by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. In light of global climate change, the reduction of greenhouse gases has been touted by politicians and scientists as an important piece of the puzzle. Students will be encouraged to discover how California and other states are taking the initiative to reduce CO2 in the atmosphere. The status of the Paris Climate Accord (2015) and the Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) would be an excellent topic.

The final element to be discussed and studied is space. How do urban issues such as zoning, housing, and traffic help or hinder environmental health? How have traditional religious worldviews responded to land usage? Housing size? Racial discrimination? Students with this interest will be encouraged to consider working with and writing about the proposed project at 8333 Airport Boulevard, and consult with neighborhood associations active in zoning and land use issues.

Those of you with an abiding interest in animals might want to participate in a service project in service of animals and do your final research project on a particular animal issue. It is suggested that the groups collaborate on the service learning portion of the course.

**Service Learning Placement**

The service learning placements will be arranged in cooperation with the Center for Service and Action. Each student will be required to document between fifteen and twenty hours of service with an organization, which must be pre-approved by the professor.

Specific descriptions are as follows:

- Green Yoga at Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center, West Adams, LA
- Earth Day at LMU Friday, April 22nd
- Benedict Canyon Retreat Center, InsightLA: Fri, Feb 4; Sat, Feb 12, Fri, Mar 18; Fri, Apr 8
- Heal the Bay: Cleanup, Grunion Watching
- Friends of Ballona: Cleanup, Education
- TreePeople: Tree planting and maintenance
- Animal Acres: Farm Animal Sanctuary
- LMU Office of Sustainability / LMU Garden / green@lmu.edu
- Coalition for Environment in Jewish Life, Environmental Changemakers, Westchester / Holy Nativity Church Garden
- Learning Garden at Venice High School
- Star Eco Station: nature education for teachers
- Center for Urban Resilience (CURES) / LMU
- Santa Monica Bay Restoration Committee / The Bay Foundation (LMU)
- Urban Ecology Institute; outdoor classroom at Playa Vista (LMU)
- Global Green: office, promotion
Santa Monica Office of Sustainability, Dean Kubani
Path to Positive Los Angeles: Local Climate Leadership
ClimateResolve.org
350.org
Interfaith Power and Light, MDR
Solar companies
Automotive companies
Buddhist Eco Activism
Santa Monica Community Corporation (Housing)

It is suggested that you align your final paper topic with your service project.

Film Summary and Analysis Paper:

Several feature films and documentaries have received wide acclaim due in large part to ecological themes. These include but are not limited to: *A Civil Action*, *Erin Brockovitch*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *The Eleventh Hour*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Wall-E*, *FernGully*, *Cowspiracy*, *Forks Over Knives*, *Earthlings*, *The Revenge of the Electric Car*, *Hike the Divide*, and so many more. Most are available through the LMU screening services such as Kanopy or Films on Demand. Feel free to propose a different film, but please check with the professor.

The film paper, of three to six pages, must include the name of film and date, a summary of main themes/plot, and your own research into the issue being highlighted. For instance, if the topic is chemical pollution, do an internet search on the nature of the chemical, possible hazards, laws that govern its use, court cases. Be wary of what the internet yields: many corporations undertake a defensive posture if their product comes under scrutiny and pay to wage their own information campaign. Also, include your own reflections on this issue. Is the message clear? How did you react to this issue? To the presentation of the issue? Was the film effective in conveying its message? Do you feel a need to take action? Each film report paper needs to include a bibliography with the name and date of the film, and at least five bibliographic references. For instance, if the film’s topic is global warming, then five documented websites or books or journal articles must be cited, according to the format given in the LMU Manual of Style. Each group will present to the class collectively; each student will submit an individual paper.

Final Paper: Here is a suggested list of final paper topics:

*Water Quality in Flint Michigan: A Theological Response*
*Global Warming and Consumerism*
*Animals and Nature*
*Eco-justice*
*Race and Environmental Ravage*
*Human Health and the Environment*
*Real Estate, National Parks, Exclusionary Zoning*
*Air Quality Struggles*
Politics, Environment, and Justice
The History of Greenpeace, 350.org and/or other nonprofit advocacy movements
Vandana Shiva
Bill McKibben
Plastics
Food
Transportation and Its Effects: Planes, Trains, Cars, and More
Paris Climate Accords

Outline for final paper project, World Religions and Ecology THST 3780

1. Title
2. Introduction:
   a. Identify your core issue
   b. Explain how your service hours relate (if applicable)
   c. Name the “frame” through which you will interpret this issue
3. Present your research on the issue
4. Provide your meditative/theological interpretation and cite resources
5. End with a reflective, personally invested conclusion
6. Include a bibliography
7. Citations may be either footnote/endnote or embedded references with author and page number with details in reference list at end
8. Attach your service journal to the final paper

Reminder of possible “frames” through which to interpret your issue:

- Native American traditions: Tongva or other
- Contemplative Ecology: Douglas Christie: *Blue Sapphire of the Mind*
- Christianity: Laudato Si
- Christianity: Thomas Berry / Thomasberry.org / Evening Thoughts
- Cosmology: Journey of the Universe
- Hindu practices and principles; Yoga
- Buddhism: Buddhism & Ecology; meditation
- Jainism: life abounds and merits protection through observance of nonviolence

Grading policies and standards
Assignments I, II, and III (see above) will count for half the final grade. The final paper will count for half the final grade. The grading scale is as follows: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 84-86 = B; 82-83 = B-; 77-81 = C+; 74-76 = C; 70-73 = C-; 60-69 = D; <60 = F.

D: minimal performance; C: basics are covered with organizational and grammatical errors; B: solid material, solid presentation; A: creative, articulate, inspired

Please plan to attend all Zoom sessions. Please leave your camera operative during class times. Recordings of the class sessions will be uploaded to Brightspace.
Please make yourself available for e-mail communication. Forward your LMU account to your preferred e-mail account if necessary.

Please follow the Lion's Code and the LMU Community Standards.

If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision.

POST indicates response to discussion question is due on Brightspace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reading/Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 10</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Jan 12 Introductions: Read Rogerio Rocha / Mary Austen “Little Town of the Grape Vines” and “The Sound of Silverbells” by Robin Wall Kimmerer link and posts on Brightspace</td>
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<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr Holiday, no class start reading Living Landscapes, xi-xxv, 1-22; Read Faith for Earth</td>
<td>Jan 19 Earth Read Living Landscapes, 23-70 “Between A Rock and Hard Place,” by David Haberman on Brightspace</td>
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<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Jan 26 Roots Read The Overstory, 1-152 POST</td>
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<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Feb 2 Groundhog Day Trunk Read The Overstory, 153-352 Discussion of Field Projects</td>
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<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Air Read Living Landscapes, 109-124</td>
<td>Feb 9 Crown Read The Overstory, 352-472 Discussion of Final Paper</td>
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<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Space Read Living Landscapes, 151-186 Read “Private Agreements, Government Enforcement,” Rothstein on Brightspace</td>
<td>Feb 16 Seeds Read The Overstory, 473-502 Yoga Session Read Living Landscapes, 188-198 POST</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Animals Read Living Landscapes, 125-150 and Animals from Yoga &amp; Luminous, Brightspace</td>
<td>Feb 23 Animals Read chapter from Becoming Animal, Abram, Brightspace Final Paper Topic Due</td>
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<td>Feb 28 – March 4th</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Reading/Assignment</td>
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<td>Mar 7</td>
<td>Christian Contemplative Ecology Read <em>Blue Sapphire</em>, 1-69</td>
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<td>Mar 9</td>
<td><em>Blue Sapphire</em>, 70-178 FILM PRESENTATIONS</td>
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<td>Mar 14</td>
<td><em>Blue</em>, 179-224 FILM PRESENTATIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td><em>Blue</em>, 225-353 FILM PAPER DUE POST</td>
<td>Fri March 18 7 am to 2 pm Benedict Canyon Retreat 9940 Westwanda Dr 90210</td>
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<td>Mar 21</td>
<td><em>Journey of Universe</em> Chapters 1-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 23</td>
<td><em>Journey of Universe</em> Chapters 6-11 <em>Journey Film</em></td>
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<td>Mar 28</td>
<td><em>Evening Thoughts</em>, 9-74</td>
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<td>Mar 30</td>
<td><em>Evening Thoughts</em>, 75-170</td>
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<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>Laudato Si’</td>
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<td>Apr 6</td>
<td>Mark Graham, “Thomas Berry and the Reshaping of Catholic Environmentalism” POST</td>
<td>Fri April 8 7 am to 2 pm Benedict Canyon Retreat 9940 Westwanda Dr 90210</td>
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<td>Apr 11</td>
<td>Wright, High Moon Over the Amazon, 1-148</td>
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<td>Apr 13</td>
<td>EASTER BREAK</td>
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<td>Apr 18</td>
<td>Wright, High Moon Over the Amazon, 149-318</td>
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<td>Apr 20</td>
<td>Wright Presents Read “Ecological Disaster in Madagascar and Prospects for Recovery” on Brightspace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 25</td>
<td>Students Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 27</td>
<td>Students Present POST</td>
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Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter with severe consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests, failing the class, to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has not been authored by the student, such as work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard set forth in the “Academic Honesty Policy” (see [http://academics.lmu.edu/honesty](http://academics.lmu.edu/honesty).) Suggestions for preventing plagiarism and the use of resources can be found at the above link.

Special Accommodations: Students with special needs who require reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, or Psychiatric) needing
academic accommodations should contact the DSS Office (Daum Hall 2nd floor, 310-338-4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS: As an LMU Lion, by the Lion’s Code, you are pledged to join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship and to show respect for staff, professors, and other students. Faculty are required to report any case of suspected sexual or interpersonal misconduct and cannot protect student confidentiality. For information about confidential counseling on campus and for general information about consensual relationships, sexual harassment, and sexual assault, please see the LMU Cares website: http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/lmucares/.

Emergency Preparedness: To report an emergency or suspicious activity, contact the LMU Department of Public Safety by phone (x222 or 310-338-2893) or at the nearest emergency call box. In the event of an evacuation, follow the evacuation signage throughout the building to the designated safe refuge area where you will receive further instruction from Public Safety or a Building Captain. For more safety information and preparedness tips, visit http://www.lmu.edu/emergency.

**Engaged learning outcomes:**
The experience must address at least one of the following outcomes:
- Respect for others: Students will demonstrate respect for individual and group difference in their interaction with others
- Civic Knowledge and engagement: Students will apply their knowledge and experiences to address problems of social justice
- Ethical reasoning: Students will be able to identify ethical issues and propose effective approaches to their resolution, or
- Habit of service: Students will participate in activities that engage them in the service of human communities and the natural environment.

**In engaged learning experiences, students should:**
- Increase content knowledge.
- Enhance their ability to apply that knowledge.
- Enhance their ability to integrate knowledge across contexts, disciplines or subdisciplines.
- Improve their critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Foster self-awareness and personal development as individuals.
- Addresses one of the following: respect for others, civic knowledge and engagement, ethical reasoning, or habit of service.
- Significant amount of time is devoted to building connections between course content and engaged learning activities.
- Assignments reflect attention to course content and engaged learning activities

At least 15 hours of relevant engaged learning experience is required
Assignments that develop engaged learning outcomes account for at least 20% of total course grade
Ability to integrate knowledge across contexts, disciplines, or sub-discipline
Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are improved
Self-awareness and personal development is fostered

Writing flag learning outcomes:
Courses flagged for Writing reinforce students' ability to write in ways that emphasize clarity, coherence, intellectual force and stylistic control. Writing skills include the ability to understand and engage the discourse, rhetorical situation, and written conventions of a particular discipline; to express and interpret ideas—both their own and those of others—in clear written language; and to critique and revise written work, both their own and those of others.

The writing flag is founded on two principles. First, writing is a complex, extended process of discovery, knowing, and persuasion. Second, writing is most improved when revision is emphasized both as an investigative and as a critical component of the writing process.

30 written pages of text or 9,000 words
Feedback is provided on 30 pages or 9,000 words
Types of reasoning, arguments, evidence, demonstration, and citation common to the disciplinary discourse are addressed
A specific portion of class time is committed to the instruction of drafting, revision and proofreading skills specific to course assignment or relevant disciplinary discourse.

30% of the final course grade will be determined by 30 pages, or 9,000 words

FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES:
If you have a positive diagnostic (viral) test result for COVID-19 you must notify your close contacts that they could be infected and need to quarantine. Give them the home quarantine instructions. They are available in multiple languages at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine. Your close contacts must quarantine even if they feel well.

Definition of a Close Contact: A “close contact” is any of the following people who were exposed to you while you were infectious
Any person who was within 6 feet of you for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period

Any person who had unprotected contact with your body fluids and/or secretions. For example, you coughed or sneezed on them, you shared utensils, a cup, or saliva with them, or they cared for you without wearing appropriate protective equipment.

You are considered to be infectious (you can spread COVID-19 to others) from 2 days before your symptoms first appeared until your home isolation ends. If you tested positive for COVID-19 but never had any symptoms, you are considered to be infectious from 2 days before your test was taken until 10 days after your test.
If you work or study in a setting where you could have gotten COVID-19 or passed it on to others, please tell your workplace or school so that they can advise others to test and/or quarantine as needed.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO REVISION
COURSE TITLE: Care of our Common Home
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 3998-04/CATH 3998-04
TIMES/DAYS: MW 9:55 AM – 11:35 AM
INSTRUCTOR: Cecilia González-Andrieu, PhD.
CORE AREA: INT: Faith & Reason
FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

In 2015, Pope Francis addressed an Encyclical to the world titled Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home. This document, the fruit of lengthy consultation with climatologists, economists, scientists and theologians from the world’s major religions begins by expressing praise as the result of human gratitude when encountering wonder. A substantial document of over 80 pages, Laudato Si repeatedly speaks about beauty and wonderment, pointing theologians to its best interpretive tool: an engaged and liberative theological cosmology based on the unity of aesthetics and ethics. Spurred by the encyclical we explore the questions posed by the climate crisis in light of the Christian tradition. Using a five-step methodology developed from theological aesthetics, Liberation and Feminist theologies and Ignatian spirituality, we journey through the course by studying, experiencing, and dreaming up, creative ways to extend the encyclical’s vision of Creation to our context so it may ably serve our communities of accountability.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students successfully engaged in this course will: a) Know the central contours of theological methodology incorporating multiple strands into a five-step process. b) Know and develop proficiency in engaging complex texts in environmentalism, ecological harm, theological cosmology and eco-theology. c) Be able to write well and present their findings orally. d) Be able to actively engage and reflect upon the complex work of wrestling with an ancient religious tradition as it engages robustly with urgent current issues. e) Extend their critical engagement with theological questions through the production of original theological thought in academic writing, participant observation and multimedia presentations.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

This is an upper division course and recommended for students with junior or senior standing.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Pope Francis, On Care for our Common Home, Laudato Si. Available online from the Vatican. Those who have Spanish proficiency are encouraged to read the Spanish text.
6. Other readings and materials will be made available through BRIGHTSPACE.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

1. Reading: All assigned readings are due prior to the class meeting.
2. Participation: In class discussions, presentations and processes, engaged field work outside of class with a non-profit organization involved in ecological justice.
3. Writing and presentations: Participation in discussion board, several short papers, oral presentations, field work and midterm multimedia report and a final research paper/project/presentation.