

LIDLAW COLLEGE

Te Wananga Amorangi

212.615 Ecology, God and Community Course Assessment and Delivery Outline

Campus: Distance Learning

Semester 2, 2015
NQF: Level 6, 15 credits

CONTENT OVERVIEW:

Section 1 explores the wonder of creation, the desecration of creation and an exploration of various explanations for this.

1. What a wonderful world (God, Community and Ecology)
2. The Plight of the planet (What is the Problem?)
3. Understanding the Predicament (What are the roots of the current environmental crisis?)

Section 2 picks up on the theme of Lesson 3 – that our ethical behaviour is determined by the stories/communities that shape us – and offers a brief Christian theology of creation care.

4. Inhabiting a New Story – Creation & Trinity
5. Inhabiting a New Story – Anthropology & Christology
6. Inhabiting a New Story – Pneumatology and Eschatology

Section 3 reflects on how inhabiting the Biblical narrative/being part of the Christian community should shape our ethics and explores different metaphors for our relationship with the rest of creation and the necessary virtues and practices required to live peacefully with creation.

7. Human Vocation - Models of Relationship
8. How do we Care? (Character & Virtues)
9. How do we Care? (Ecological Practices)

Section 4 puts this theology into practice by engaging with specific issues: Consumerism & lifestyle, food, and animal welfare.

10. Putting it into Practice #1: Lifestyle and sustainability / Consumption and Desire
11. Putting it into Practice #2: The Ethics of Food
12. Putting it into Practice #3: Animal Welfare

ASSESSMENT TASKS AND DUE DATES:

There are 4 assessment tasks.

1. Participation in online discussions

<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	1, 2, 3, 6
<i>Due Dates:</i>	Midnight Sunday of semester weeks 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11
<i>Percentage Weighting:</i>	15%
<i>Length:</i>	200 words per initial post, at least 50 words for follow-up posts.

Online discussion topics require you to engage with various themes that will have been raised during the course. These tasks will require you to prepare an initial post of 200 words, followed by at least one response to at least one class member of at least 50

words. Specific instructions will accompany each online discussion task. Students are expected to participate in all six online discussions.

2. Field Experience and Journal Reflection

<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
<i>Due Date:</i>	Journal due Midnight Sunday at the end of Study Week 1
<i>Percentage Weighting:</i>	30%
<i>Length:</i>	1500 words

Critical to this course is an understanding that a Christian ethic of 'creation-care' is formed by exposure to both theoretical and practical activities/exercise. As part of the course you are required to spend 15 hours involved in a practical conservation/ecological restoration project (e.g. an A Rocha, Forest & Bird, or any other appropriate **community-based** conservation/restoration project or community garden etc.) These 15 hours could be composed of two full-days, or a couple of hours each fortnight/week. Ultimately, the choice is yours. Likewise, you can choose to do more than the minimum requirement of 15 hours.

After undertaking this practical activity, you are to write a journal reflection upon your experience (it is a good idea to write your journal reflection as close to the experience as possible). As well as noting what you did, who you did it with, the number of hours etc., the primary emphasis is for you to reflect upon the learning/transformational aspect of the experience. Questions worth asking are:

- What have you learnt about yourself? God? Creation? Your relationship with each of these?
- What theological/ethical questions are raised by your involvement in this activity?
- What did you find difficult/challenging?
- What emotions were evoked during your involvement in the activity (wonder, surprise, joy, despair, sorrow?)
- In what ways did you experience God's presence/grace?

Your journal should show that you have integrated your personal experience with the material you have learned in this course, and made appropriate theological and ethical reflections.

3. Biblical-Theological Resource

<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	1, 3, 4, 6
<i>Due Dates:</i>	Midnight Sunday at the end of semester week 6
<i>Percentage Weighting:</i>	20%
<i>Length:</i>	1500 words

Choose a single biblical passage **or** a Christian ecological saint /theologian (not Saint Francis of Assisi!) Based around your chosen passage or person, develop (and if possible, trial) a pedagogical resource that would assist the Church/faith community in understanding its 'creation-Care' mandate. This may involve writing and delivering an ecological sermon, Sunday school lesson, youth group/small group bible study or creating a whole liturgy for a service. While the resource may involve a traditional written sermon, you are encouraged to be creative (remember, the medium is the message). To ensure that the resource is kept within manageable limits it is suggested that you base your resource/sermon/study/reflection around one biblical passage or the writings/life of one ecological saint/theologian and note how this passage/theologian/saint offers us wisdom in our contemporary context.

4. 'Care for Creation' Sustainability Community Project Proposal

<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	1, 2, 3, 6
<i>Due Dates:</i>	Midnight Sunday at the end of Study Week 2
<i>Percentage Weighting:</i>	35%

Length:

2000 words

Central to this course is the belief that care for creation is not an added-extra for 'green-minded' Christians but rather is integral to genuine Christian discipleship, worship and mission. This assessment requires you to reflect on how you could encourage the development of an ethic of creation-care within the Christian faith community you are part of (whether this be friends/house-mates, an intentional community, a home-group, a traditional church congregation etc.) Write a proposal for a potential community-based 'creation-care' project to be implemented in a specific context. The proposal should not be fictitious, but rather based on a geographical setting and community that you are familiar with. The proposal could take a number of forms. For example, you may want to develop a proposal for a 'community-based' ecological restoration project in your own local context. If so, your proposal should probably include (but not be limited to):

- a description of the existing ecosystem (is it a patch of bush, an urban stream, a farm, your backyard?)
- the challenges/pressures faced by those within this environment (species present/biodiversity, health of environment – pollution etc.)
- how the human community could assist in restoring the health of this ecosystem
- the role that a faith community could play in this process.

Or alternatively, you may want to develop a proposal for the development of a 'community garden' or a car-pooling initiative, offer a sustainability audit of your congregation paying attention to areas such as energy and water use, waste, transportation, food etc. and detailing what practices/initiatives could make the congregation more sustainable. Ultimately, there are countless potential projects/practices that could be initiated within Christian communities that would demonstrate our conviction that the Earth belongs to God and that we are called to 'serve and protect it.' While this assessment will involve some biological/ecological/sociological economic analysis, your proposal will not be assessed primarily on its scientific/economic logic. The primary criteria will be a demonstration that you understand the concept of a 'community of creation' and have reflected critically on how creation-care and sustainability can be made a practical and integral part of the Christian community within which you are involved.

If you would like to run your proposal past your tutor for comment before you begin, please contact them through Moodle and let them know what you are planning.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT:

1. Online Discussion

Before beginning your first online discussion, please see the grading grid (rubric) on the "online discussion grading guide and mid-semester feedback" for further details on how these criteria will be applied.

- Engagement with material
- Constructive engagement with others
- Structure and presentation
- Timeliness

2. Field Experience

- Evidence of at least 15 hours of practical participation in an ecological/conservation activity/experience.
- Depth of reflection in journal
- Theological engagement with issues discovered
- Evidence of meaningful personal interaction

3. Biblical-Theological Resource

- Evidence of creativity in developing resource
- Usefulness of resource in Christian ministry setting
- Depth of interaction with biblical passage or chosen person
- Theological insights woven into resource
- Linkages made between passage or person and contemporary context
- Communication & Presentation: Clarity, format, spelling, grammar; annotation and bibliography

4. 'Care for Creation' Sustainability Community Project Proposal

- Evidence of careful thought about the rationale for the proposal
- Awareness of the ecological/sociological and other types of issues driving this project
- Depth of theological and ethical justification for the project
- Demonstration of the concept of creation care as a community responsibility
- Communication & Presentation: Clarity, format, spelling, grammar; annotation and bibliography

LEARNING HOURS:

212.615 is a 15 credit course consisting of 150 learning hours. The tasks and associated learning hours are as follows:

Interaction with course materials and reading	50 hours
Participation in online discussions	15 hours
Field Experience	30 hours
Biblical-Theological Resource	20 hours
'Care for Creation' Sustainability Community Project Proposal	35 hours
Total:	150 hours

Although this guideline regarding learning hours is not intended to be applied rigidly, it should help ensure a balanced workload.

TEXTBOOKS:

There are no set texts for this course.

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